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RESOLUTION;

OR,

THE SOUL OF POWER.

BY
A. S. ROE,
AUTHOR OF

A LONG LOOK AHEAD. — TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED. — TIME AND TIDE.
— I'VE BEEN THINKING. — THE STAR AND THE CLOUD. — TRUE TO
THE LAST. — HOW COULD HE HELP IT? — LIKE AND UNLIKE.
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CLOUD ON THE HEART.



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And studies

RESOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

NO doubt, often, while passing in the cars from New York to New Haven, the eye of the traveller has been caught by a snug homestead situated on one of the estuaries that dot the shores of the State of Connecticut. It was not remarkable for anything beyond a certain homelike look, that made one think of quietness and peace, and substantial living. The building was of stone, one story in height, broad on the ground, well proportioned, with snug-looking outbuildings, a lawn in front, with large trees scattered around, looking like guardian angels, sheltering the retired location from the blazing sun of summer and the cold and storms of winter. The house stood upon a plateau which lined the shore, and from it was not only a pretty view of the waters of the inlet, but also of the Sound itself.

It might have been taken for the abode of a wealthy farmer, or of a retired sea captain, and had, in fact, embraced tenants of that description. It was evidently an old place, but had been well preserved, and in appearance was good for a century or more of reasonable service yet.

A large family had been reared here, whose members, having scattered far and wide over our vast country, their interest in it had been lost; and it had been sold, first to a retiring merchant, who, mistaking a desire for rest from the activity of mercantile life for a love of the country, soon left it in disgust, selling it, for comparatively a small sum, to a sea captain — and with the family of the latter our story begins.

Seamen make their money by hard work and great exposure,

but are seldom careful in the spending of it; and such, unhappily for the little ones he left behind him, was the case with Captain Bellfield. He had married rather late in life for one of his profession, but, no doubt, this fact was the reason that he had married so well. Having risen to the command of one of the line of packet ships between New York and Liverpool, he had been thrown in contact with gentlemen and ladies, and had in a great measure laid aside the roughness of the sailor, and assumed a refinement of manners that gave him *éclat* among his passengers; and he was often mentioned in public as the gentlemanly Captain Bellfield.

On one of his return voyages from Liverpool he had commended to his charge a young lady who had been abroad with her father. The father had died in England, it was said of a broken heart, from misfortunes by connection with a large London firm. His all had been swallowed up, and he was about returning to his native land, a ruined man so far as property was concerned, when a sudden sickness seized him, and, his mind already prostrate, the disease had a double advantage, and soon laid him in the grave.

The delicate attention of Captain Bellfield to the unfortunate young lady during the voyage won her good-will and sincere respect, and the lovely manners and lovely person of the lady took a strong hold of the heart of the Captain. The intimacy being kept up after their arrival, the result was, that the accomplished Miss Ransom accepted the hand, as she had won the heart, of the noble seaman. He was worthy of the prize he had gained, and manifested his nobility by offering a home to the widowed mother, who, by the misfortunes of her deceased husband, had been left penniless. Unfortunately, the Captain, at the commencement of his new relation in life, threw up his command; he had accumulated a pretty property, and thought he had battled the storms of Ocean long enough to entitle him to rest for the remainder of his life. Awhile the little family lived in the city. After the birth of their first child, Captain Bellfield finding an addition to his income somewhat desirable, formed a connection, rather privately, with a house in the city doing a fair business in the grocery line; he took no active part in the business, nor was his name published as a partner in the concern: only, for a certain amount of capital which he advanced, he was to receive a share of the profits. The business was apparently profitable, and perhaps really was so; but that fact was absorbed in the destruction which occurred from

the great fire of 1836, which swept away so large a portion of the business part of the city.

In the course of a few years, three children were born to them, and at the birth of the last, Mrs. Bellfield's health failing, he resolved to try the virtue of country air; and hearing of the place which has been already described as for sale, and at a low price, purchased it, and thither removed with his family.

But not to tire the reader with these particulars, which have only a relative connection with our story, we will merely say that Mrs. Bellfield lived barely long enough to impress her own lovely character upon her children. It was done during years of weakness, but done effectually—their minds received an impulse for improvement, their manners were refined, and, above all, their hearts had been trained to the most tender attachment to each other. No doubt she anticipated their loss, and felt desirous to bind them together by the power of a strong natural cord, that would prove a defence to them against many evils in life, a stimulus to effort, and a solace under the bereavement she anticipated for them.

Her death occurred when the oldest child was in his twelfth year. And after two years of mourning, and with a dark shadow on his earthly prospects, although not without hope in his death, her loving husband followed her to the spirit-land.

CHAPTER II.



WE will now enter the dwelling, at whose external appearance we have glanced in our first chapter. A wide hall receives us, opening upon which are four large rooms. We enter the first on our right—a well-proportioned apartment, and neatly furnished. A few elderly people are gathered here, and are clad in mourning; they are seated near each other, and deeply engaged in conversation. The principal speaker is a gentleman of rather fine appearance, and with an open, kindly countenance; he is addressing his wife, who sits nearly opposite to him—a lady of commanding figure, of middle age, good-looking now, and in youth no doubt was distinguished for her beauty. There is, however, at pres-

ent, a stern aspect to her features, and a mark of coldness that would make one cautious in taxing her benevolence. She is richly dressed for a mourner, and holds herself quite erect, and one would think feels herself of more consequence than the other two ladies seated near her, who are plainly dressed.

"I think, Margaret," said the gentleman, "you do not feel just as you ought about this matter, seeing you are the nearest relative these children have. Now, for my part, although merely connected with them by marriage, I cannot bear to think of their being put out to trades. Think how delicately they have been brought up!"

"I know that, Mr. Tyson; and that was all the fault of their mother. She wanted to make them fine ladies and gentlemen, when she must have known that James had no means to carry out her high notions; and I've no doubt it was nothing but her extravagant ideas and her poor management that brought James to poverty."

"Not quite right there, my dear. I have heard that the house with which Captain Bellfield was connected in New York was really making a good deal of money, and his share of profits warranted a fair style of living, but the great fire swept everything off."

"Were they not insured?"

"Yes, to the amount of eighty thousand dollars; but the insurance companies have been ruined, and will be able to pay but a moiety of the demands against them."

"It seems to me, sister Margaret," replied the lady sitting next to her, "that the case is this: Here are these three children; their parents is dead; we are their nearest kin. My husband is, to be sure, but half-brother to Captain Bellfield; but he telled me, when I left home, to come on to the funeral! 'Charlotte,' says he, 'if things is as I hear they be, them children have got to be took care on—and we must do our part, if the rest is willing to do theirs. We are plain folks, you know, but we've got enough to eat and drink.' That's just what he said; and now it seems to me we had better just make a division of 'em amongst us. I ain't got no daughters, and so, if you are willing, I'll take Maggie, and mebbey James might be took by Mr. Tyson—that is, if sister Margaret can make up her mind to it; and if Aunt Lucinda will take little Tom, that would just make an even thing of it, and be done with it. And as to putting them out to trades, if sister Margaret will just think a minute, they ain't none of them old

enough for to do that; nobody would have 'em. James, the oldest, ain't but just fourteen; and then he is delicate like: he ain't never been used to hardship, that I know."

The lady called Aunt Lucinda—a lady quite advanced in life—felt called upon to reply:

"It seems to me, Charlotte, you speak without consideration, when you talk of my taking that child,—a woman of my age, sixty-seven last March, and never having been used to children, as you all know. It ain't the expense of the thing; for, as to that, I have enough to do with,—that is, I ain't particularly straitened; but a boy, you know, will want to be here and there, and everywhere, a-running all kind of risks, like as not getting drowned in the water; for, you know, we live close to the Sound, and it's dreadful tempting to boys to see boats a-sailing, and it would keep me in a twitter the whole blessed time; and my nerves ain't no wise strong as they used to be: your uncle's death and other things have clean broken me up, so that I ain't nothing like what I once was. No, no! I feel for the child, but as to taking such a charge upon me as that, I tell you I ain't equal to it. But now I think of it: there is the widow Salter—you know her, Charlotte?"

"What! Joe Salter's widow?"

"Yes, he died, you know, a year ago—no, it's a year coming Christmas; it's eleven months he's been dead."

"I guess she wont be a widow eleven months to come!"

"I can't say how that will be, but she has said there couldn't no man persuade her ever to change her name. I know she is rather well-favored, and has got a sprightly way with her, and she's got a snug property into the bargain; so there is no telling what might happen. Men like pretty faces, and they like money too, and women sometimes are easily persuaded. But be that as it may, she is a likely young person, and she said to me only the other day, 'How I do wish somebody would give me a child, boy or girl, I don't care which; for it's so lonesome without a chick or child,—nobody but the servants!'—'What would you do with it?' I said.—'Do with it?' says she. 'Why, I'd just bring it up as my own—just as if it was my own, and when I died, just give it all I've got; for as to letting them as are hankering for it have a cent of it, they never shall.' Now it's my belief, that, if she was to see the child, and that he's come of a good family, there ain't a doubt in the world but she would jump at the chance."

This proposal seemed to meet the views of all parties, so

it was finally arranged that Mr. Tyson should take James; his wife consenting thereto the more willingly, as she had been apprehensive, from the free and easy character of her husband, and the fact that his circumstances were far above those of the other relatives, and she herself more nearly related to the children than were the other kindred, that all three of them would be saddled upon her. To take the one boy, then, was comparatively a light matter. Mrs. Charlotte Bellfield was to take Maggie, and little Tom was to be taken by Aunt Lucinda Wainwright, and bestowed by her, with consent of the other parties, as a gift to the widow of the deceased Joseph Salter.

While this arrangement was being made, the three individuals more particularly interested were forming their own plans, — children-like, — and we will now take a look at them.

It was a few days after the funeral, and towards the close of the day. Although the latter part of November, the weather was mild, and the children had resorted to a favorite seat upon a rock, over which spread the thick branches of a large apple-tree; the sun was declining in the west, and his slanting rays just swept beneath their covering. Maggie, the darling of the two boys, sat between them, — Tom, the younger, leaning against her, with his arm upon her shoulder; while James, as though he already felt the responsibility of his position, sat very erect, with one arm thrown around his sister's waist, while one of her hands rested on his lap. It was a beautiful sight; and if those friends who had, in their cold, calculating way, been apportioning them to a separation of many miles, distance from each other, could have witnessed it, or could they have known how strong was the loving cord which bound them together, they might possibly have felt that other reasons than those of mere convenience had a rightful claim upon their attention.

"Shall you, brother James," said Maggie, turning her sweet face up to her brother as she spoke, her auburn hair, in long ringlets, at the same time almost covering the face of little Tom, — "shall you go back to school, do you think?"

"I don't know, dear; but I think not."

"Oh, I am so glad! it is so dreadful lonesome when you are away!"

James made no reply, other than bending over and kissing the little ruby lips that were so temptingly near; and as he did

so, a slight sigh escaped him, and Maggie saw his dark eyes were dim, as though tears were about to gather.

"Do you feel sorry, brother James, not to go back to school again?"

"Not particularly on that account, although I like my school well enough; but, sister dear, I fear there will be no means to enable me to go back. Aunt Sophy told me to-day, that, from what she heard Uncle Tyson say, our house must be sold, and our furniture too, and we have all got to go somewhere else."

"Where, brother?"

"I do not know."

"And Aunt Sophy too?"

"She, you know, has a home of her own; she has only been living with us as a nurse, and to take care of the house."

"Can't we go and live with her, then?"

"Oh, no! She is poor, and has to work for her living. No — I do not know where we can go; I only hope, wherever it is, we shall all be together."

"But why?" said Maggie, "must our house be sold? and why cannot we live here as we have always — cannot Aunt Sophy take care of the house, and see to our things just as she has done; wont you tell Uncle Tyson not to let them sell our house, and that we had rather all live together here? Please, brother James, do tell him so."

"It would do no good, dear sister. Uncle Tyson could not prevent its being sold, without he should pay the price the house would bring, and give it to us. Perhaps, one of these days, when I grow up, and go into business and earn money, I shall be able to buy it, and then we can come here and live together, and you can see to things, just as Aunt Sophy does now."

"I don't see why the bad men want to sell our house, and make us go away. Why wont you tell them, brother James, that we had rather stay here, and that we have got no other house to go to?"

"It would do no good, dear Maggie; and we have no right to think them bad men, because they take away our house. There is a great deal of money owing to them, and our house, and our furniture, and our horses and carriage, and cows, and everything we have got, wont they say, amount to half what is owing them — so Aunt Sophy says."

"Well, children, you have got a nice seat here, but are you not cold?"

This address started the children to their feet, and little Maggie caught hold of her uncle's hand, and looking up to him in a beseeching manner, —

“Oh! Uncle Tyson, James says that some men, I don't know who they are, are going to sell our house and all our things. Now wont you please tell them, that we don't want to have it sold, nor the horses, and cows, and things; we want them to be just as they have been, for we have not got any place to go to. Wont you, now, uncle?”

Mr. Tyson felt badly, for he was a kind-hearted man; and the earnest look of the child, as well as her pleading words, deeply moved him. He had come to them for the purpose of unfolding the plan which had been arranged by the friends. It was not a task he would willingly have chosen, but he had been selected as the proper one to make the communication; and although his wife would willingly have been the bearer of the tidings, yet he thought he could himself, perhaps, break the matter to the children in a manner that would be less startling to them. His design was to begin by revealing to them the condition in which they had been left, and in that way prepare them better for a separation, and state of dependence upon their friends. This revelation, he found, had already in some way been made to them. So far, it was an unexpected relief; but that look of Maggie's and those pleading tones startled him. It was an unreasonable and childish request, but he saw that her heart was in it, and he did not know but her elder brother united also in the strange appeal.

As the uncle did not immediately reply, the child, no doubt, thought an impression had been made upon him favorable to her request, and she continued to urge her plea.

“Oh, do, dear uncle, let us stay here! You don't know how happy we are here; my flower-beds are here, and the pretty arbor where all my playthings are, and the little trees my dear papa set out for me, and my little room he furnished for me so prettily, where I can pick the apple-blossoms right from my window; you don't know, dear uncle, how sweet it is in the morning, when the sun shines in through the leaves. Please don't let them sell the house, and drive us away; and James says, too, he don't know where we can go to.”

James would have stopped her in her plea, but the mention of the things that were so dear to her had recalled to his more matured mind the many things which made the place dear to

him too; so he sat down upon the rock, and, covering, his face, let the tears have vent.

Mr. Tyson was not a religious man. He could not sit by them, and talk about a Heavenly Father, and repeat to them the precious words of Scripture, and the promises it contains for those who, like those little ones, had been written fatherless. Such a course would have had a mighty influence, for they had been religiously trained by their faithful mother. All he could do was to try and explain to them, in the hard words of business dialect, the exactings of necessity.

“You are surely old enough, James,” — Mr. Tyson now addressed himself to the brother, — “to comprehend the state of things, and to realize the impossibility of preventing the sale of the house. Your father's estate is bankrupt, and what property he has left, of course, belongs to the creditors. I am sorry to see you do not know better than to unite in the childish request of your little sister.”

James wiped away his tears, and, turning towards his uncle, in rather a broken voice, replied, —

“I did not unite in Maggie's request, Uncle Tyson. I have heard the place must be sold, and have endeavored to make her understand the reason why we must leave it. We have been very happy here, and you must not wonder if we feel sorry to leave it.”

“Oh, yes, that is very natural; but you will soon get over *that* feeling; and you ought to be very thankful that you have friends that are able and willing to provide homes for you. Now we have been consulting together, and we have come to this conclusion: You, James, will go home with me; your Aunt Margaret is willing to take charge of one of you, and she prefers that you should come and be with us; your cousins will, no doubt, be very glad to have you with them, and you can go with them to school. Maggie is to be taken by your Aunt Charlotte. Your Aunt Charlotte is a kind-hearted woman, and though she has several children, and their circumstances barely comfortable, yet seeing you have got to be supported somehow or other, she is willing to take the burden of supporting one of you, and she prefers taking Maggie. And your Aunt Lucinda will take Tom, as she knows of a person who wants a child of that age to bring up. So, you see, you are all provided for, and I hope you will all behave yourselves, and make no fuss about leaving the place, and all that. Many children in

your circumstances might have been thrown upon the town, or been put out to service."

By the time Mr. Tyson had finished his communication, the tears were all dried. The cold, business-like tone in which their uncle spoke had checked their emotion. They sat perfectly still; even little Maggie's face was settled into a calm, although for her a stern aspect. She had caught a look at James, and saw his fine face all aglow; but the feeling displayed was far removed from that which excites the tears, and she knew how he felt, and she had caught the spirit of restraint that she saw he was exercising. It was the first taste they had been allowed of the cold, stern world into which they had entered, and their young hearts, shivering under the influence of its chilly atmosphere, folded their warmer feelings close within. It was an impulse of nature.

There was a moment's pause on the part of Mr. Tyson; he looked at each of the children in turn, as if to ascertain the effect of his communication, and then, in a mild tone of voice, said, —

"The air grows chilly. Had we not better all go in?"

They arose at once, and followed their uncle into the house, and then made for the room where they knew Aunt Sophy was to be found.

Mrs. Sophia Haines had in her early life lived in the family of Mr. Ransom, first as a little girl to wait on their daughter, and, as she grew up, to assist in the lighter work of the family, and be near Mrs. Ransom, to aid or give advice in the little matters of domestic economy. She was never kept at a servant's distance by the mistress or master of the family. She had such an innate sense of propriety, that prevented the necessity for that reserve in general requisite for the maintenance of due respect on the part of domestics.

In process of time she was sought for by a worthy young mechanic, and, with the approbation of those with whom she had lived so long, was married. The husband dying soon after their marriage, and about the time that Miss Ransom gave her hand to Captain Bellfield, she again took the place of an assistant with the daughter that she had filled with the mother; and a valuable assistant she proved, for the poor health of Mrs. Bellfield prevented her from attending closely to the supervision of domestic affairs, and almost the sole care of household matters devolved upon Mrs. Haines. After the death of Mrs. Bellfield she had taken the sole charge of the children, and of

the house in general. Being naturally of an amiable disposition, and fond of the children, it is no wonder that, in their present trial, they should cling to her for sympathy and advice; and it was well for them that she was so well fitted to be a comforter.

As the children entered the room, she saw at once they were under some strong excitement; and as Maggie came up to her, and putting her arms around her neck, burst into tears, Mrs. Haines asked, —

"Has your uncle been talking to you, dear?"

"Oh, Aunt Sophy! what shall I do? what shall I do?"

"Tell me, James, what is it?" said the good woman; at the same time pressing little Maggie closer to her, and smoothing the fair brow that rested on her breast.

"We have got to go away, Aunt Sophy."

"That's what I've been expecting. Does your uncle say where you are to go?"

"I am to go to his house; and I had as lief go to prison! I don't like Aunt Margaret, and Rudolph I hate, and Joe is a mean fellow, and will lie like anything: he told wicked lies about me when I visited there last summer; and Aunt Margaret believes every word he says."

"And is Maggie and Tom going there with you?"

"Maggie, he says, is going to Aunt Charlotte's; and Tom, Aunt Lucinda is to take, and she is going to put him with some woman or other, I don't know who, that wants a boy of his age."

Aunt Sophy did not make an immediate reply; she was, apparently, busy soothing Maggie, who became more and more agitated as her brother was giving particulars as to the disposition to be made of them. Aunt Sophy was thinking, though, all the time — thinking how sad it was that the little brood, which had hitherto been nestled together in love, should be so widely separated — at distances, too, that forbade all intercourse with each other, except at rare and occasional visits. She thought, too, of the different circumstances under which each was to be placed: for Mr. Tyson was a rich man, and lived in a style superior to any in the village where he resided; while Mr. Bellfield, the half-brother of Captain Bellfield, was a plain farmer, comfortable in circumstances, no doubt, but living in a part of the country where few advantages for culture were enjoyed, where manners were rough, and the schools of the simplest kind — how great a change for her darling Maggie, from the

sweet influences under which she had hitherto lived! As to Tom, she could not guess how he was to fare — whether he was to be nurtured as a child in the family to which he was going, or reduced to the station of a “took boy,” to labor and get along as he could. It all looked unfavorable for them, one side of the great evil, as she esteemed their separation. But Mrs. Haines was a Christian woman, and a firm believer in a divine and particular providence. She did not believe that this trial to the children had come without a design, and that in the end for their best good. In much less time than we have taken to record her train of thought, she had concluded what she ought to say to them.

“Well, well, my darlings! perhaps, if you and I had had the planning of all this, and had the means of doing what we liked, in some things we might no doubt have fixed it different. But you know what your dear ma often taught you, ‘That the Lord’s way is best.’ He sees, you know, all round, and all the way to the end; and He knows what is for our good. I don’t mean only what is good for us just now, but what is going to be the best for us in the long run. And now, darlings, you must all of you, when you pray to God every night and morning, ask Him to give you patience, that you may bear with the ways of them you are to be with. I know Aunt Margaret has her ways, and they are not like the ways of your dear ma; and maybe James may not find his cousin just like his own brother and sister; but I hope he will try to do right himself, and who knows how they may come round and do right too. And then I want James to think how soon he will grow up to be a man, and if he is a good boy he will be a good man; and if he minds his lessons and is industrious, by and by he will get into some business; and if he is honest, and careful, and saves his money, maybe he will be able to buy your old home back again, and then you can all come back and live here; and then you will be so happy you will forget all the trouble you now have.”

“And oh! Aunt Sophy, you will come and live with us too, — wont you, Aunt Sophy?” And Maggie’s eyes sparkled through the tears as she raised her head and looked into the face of her good friend.

“And I mean to do it,” said James, his countenance brightening up, — “I mean to do it, Aunt Sophy; see if I don’t!”

“I hope I may live to see it, my dear boy; but stranger things have happened than that you should all be living here together again, and a prettier place to live there ain’t that ever

I see. And now, children, don’t you take on bad, and be sulky; but try to put on a cheerful face, and do what you are bid, and let them all see that you ain’t forgot the good things your dear ma has taught you.”

It was a happy thought in Mrs. Haines to have thrown out the hope that they might all one day again occupy a place so dear to them. Its effect upon James was like the breaking of day upon a night of darkness and gloom; a spark of hope had been kindled in his breast; he felt stronger — stronger to bear and stronger to do; and the change in his mind was evident in his brighter, calmer look. Maggie was affected by it most happily, and the sunshine was playing about her lovely face where but a few moments before were clouds and rain.

The next morning the children were up with the rising sun; not because they were in such a joyful mood, for it was the morning of their departure, and of their separation from each other and the home they loved so well; but Maggie was anxious to take a last look of her flowers and trees, and the friends wished to be on their way as early as possible.

James was with her, — his arm resting on her shoulder, and hers entwining his waist. First they visited the tree she called her own, — a pear-tree which, a few years ago, she had held upright, while her father with his own hands threw in the dirt about its roots, and he called it hers: it had thriven well, for it had been tended with care, and no weeds or grass allowed to grow around or near its smooth, shining trunk; then to a peach-tree, from which she had this year plucked some luscious fruit; and then to a cherry-tree, tall and straight, and giving signs of vigorous growth. This last she laid her hand upon saying, as she did so, —

“Is it not pretty, brother James? Do you think they will ever cut it down?”

“They would not be likely to do so if it should prove to have good fruit.”

“But, dear brother, it bears most beautiful cherries — large, light-colored cherries, and oh! how sweet and juicy. I wanted to send you some, that you might just taste how good they were, but there was no chance then.”

“You need not fear, then; their own interest will forbid them to cut it down.”

“And now let’s go to the arbor. I want to see my roses.”

The arbor was a simple affair, made by James, with the aid of their coachman, from small trees cut from the woods, the

bark stripped off, and their branches twisted together above. It was rustic in appearance, but being placed alongside of a small brook of clear, sparkling water that ran outside the garden, it was a pleasant resort for Maggie, and for hours she would sit there reading or sewing, enjoying the murmur of the little stream and the music of the birds. Here, too, she had placed some of her house-plants, in order that they might be sheltered from the direct rays of the mid-day sun.

As they entered the bower James exclaimed, —

“Why, sister dear, how beautiful your plants look! What good care you have taken of them! The roses, too, are full of buds, and that heliotrope scents the whole arbor. What a pity you cannot take them with you!”

Maggie could not at once reply: her heart was too full. These plants, to her, were almost endowed with consciousness; they had been nurtured by her from small beginnings, and had repaid her care by rapid and thrifty growth; and every bud as it opened and sent forth its fragrance had a voice that her exquisite sensibility could hear—it was the voice of her Heavenly Father. It told her of His love, of His regard to her enjoyment; the beauty was His; the perfume had been dropped by His hand upon those soft and delicate petals, — their perfection, their purity were emblems of His own spotless being.

“Brother James,” she said at length, “do you think Aunt Charlotte would object to my carrying these with me?”

“All of them?”

“All of them, if possible.”

“You can ask her.”

“Well, I will ask her. Let us go in at once.”

“You must not be too sanguine, dear; if I am not mistaken, Aunt Charlotte has no taste for flowers, — but you can ask her.”

The sweet child hastened into the house to find her aunt. She was in the large parlor, looking, but with no feeling of admiration, at some flowers in vases. To be sure they were fall flowers, but pretty of their kind. They had been gathered some time since, and in the confusion caused by sickness and death, and the care about the funeral, had been overlooked and left. Aunt Margaret was also in the room, seated near a window, and looking, with jaundiced eyes, at the fair scenery without. As the child entered the room and bade her pleasantly “Good-morning,” she turned and gazed, but made no response. The

little darling was too like the mother, whom she had never loved.

“Please, Aunt Charlotte, have you seen my flowers in the arbor?”

“Flowers, child! I ain’t seen no flowers but these faded things; and I wonder Mrs. Haines could have left them here, — during the funeral, too. I don’t care much for flowers.”

“But those in the arbor are so sweet and beautiful, and I want you to see them; and if you thought best, I would so like to take them with me. There are only four pots of them.”

Mrs. Bellfield looked at her niece with an air of astonishment.

“Flowers, child! four pots of flowers! Why, what do you want them along for, and how are we going to carry them? I am willing to do anything reasonable; but to be lugging a parcel of flowers along with us, how would it look? It ain’t no condition of things to be thinking about flowers; we’ve all got something else to think about; and, besides, when we get home there won’t be much time to think about flowers, there is so much work to be done to get ready for winter; you can sew and you can knit, can’t you?”

“Oh, yes, aunt!”

“Well, then, you will find plenty to do; for the boys, I don’t believe, have got a woollen stocking to their feet, and it will soon be cold weather. The flowers will only be a bother to you, and to me too. As things are as they be, we’ve got to think about what is necessary; flowers won’t put food into our mouths or clothes on our backs.”

Maggie made no further plea for her flowers. She went at once into Aunt Sophy’s room, and although she shed no tears, there was sadness upon her countenance.

“Anything trouble you, my dear?” said Aunt Sophy.

And when she had gone over with the account of the interview she had just had with her aunt, Mrs. Haines replied, —

“Do not let that trouble you, dear; I will see to the flowers. You see, I can take them with me in the boat all the way to York, and it ain’t fur from the city where my home is. I will get them there somehow, no fear; and they will be a great comfort to me, for I shall think I see you, dear, whenever I look at them.”

“Oh, Aunt Sophy! if I was only going to live with you!”

And she hid her face upon the shoulder of her good friend.

“Well, dear, it ain’t so to be — not just yet; we must keep

up a good heart, and be chirp and patient. The good Lord knows all about things. There is no doing anything but what He sees, and when it is best that our wishes should be gratified they will, and all the world can't hinder it; and when it's better that we bear the cross, we must bear it as patient as we can. This is a cross to you. I know some would think it a very little one; but I know it presses as hard on your young heart as a heavy one does on many that are older. And now, children, I want to say a word to you both. I've learned some things since I saw you last night. I fear as how you may have some trials you may not be able to think of now. I know you are not going among strangers; yet uncles and aunts sometimes are very different from our fathers and mothers. Things what your parents might overlook, other friends might take you to do for; but you must try to bear it—you must pray God to give you patience. It is a great thing for us all to exercise patience: it saves a world of trouble; but you will need it very much, and must remember and pray God every day to give you patience—you, more especially, James; for you know your feelings are very strong, and you are quick to feel when any one puts upon you; but try and bear and keep in, and don't answer back. God will see to righting things; leave that to Him."

"I will try, Aunt Sophy," said James.

"And so will I," said Maggie.

"That is right; try hard, for I think, like as not, when you have been there a while, and things become an old story, why—well, it ain't no matter—only remember what I say. And then there is another thing I want to say to you, James: you are the oldest; in a few years you will be able to do for yourself; there ain't no fear but you can take care of yourself; but don't forget that you have got to take care for this little darling too."

"Oh, Aunt Sophy!" and James looked at her with a countenance suffused with feeling, "need you tell me that!" And Maggie sprang to him, clasping him round the neck, while the ardent boy, overcome by the emotions excited by the words spoken to him, and the fond embrace of his sister, stood looking fixedly at Aunt Sophy, while the tears streamed down his cheeks.

"There, James, there!" said the good woman, seizing his hand; "I know how you feel; maybe I had not ought to have said it. I know you think more of her than you do of your-

self; but I have seen so many young men, that, when they got of age, seem to feel that they have only themselves to care for, and leave their sisters, and maybe younger brothers, to shift for themselves. But there, dear, there; I know it wont be so with you, so don't think no more about it."

Just then little Tom came into the room; he paused a moment, and then said,—

"Aunt Margaret says it is time to be getting ready."

"Well, then, children," said Aunt Sophy, her voice rather broken, "now is the best time to say good-by to one another: you wont want to do it before folks. And don't you feel cast down: they can't separate your hearts, though"—but here Aunt Sophy broke down. She did not break into crying; only her voice failed her, and her lip trembled very much, and her eyes grew red. But she knew things must not be allowed to go any farther for the children's sake.

The good-by was a silent one; from Aunt Sophy down to little Tom, not a word was said. A warm embrace, a fond pressure of the lips, a sudden breaking away, and the little band of young loving hearts was torn asunder.

CHAPTER III.

WELL, Jim, you come, too!" This was said by his cousin Rudolph, whom he met on the back piazza, a short time after his arrival at the home of his uncle. There was a sinister smile on the countenance of young Tyson, which, in connection with the words of his salutation, affected James most sensibly. He made no reply; merely gave his hand, which Rudolph took without any cordiality in the grasp.

"I thought Maggie was to come here! Why didn't she come?"

"Maggie is with her Aunt Charlotte," replied James.

"I wish she had come here," answered Rudolph. "Ma said she should bring her."

"Then I presume she has changed her mind, for I understand it was her wish that I should be here; if it had not been,

it is not very likely I should have troubled you." The bright eye of the youth was fixed in a keen gaze at his ill-mannered cousin; and as he said this, the latter quailed beneath it. He turned suddenly round, and seeing his brother Joseph coming in from the garden, called out, —

"Here, Joe, come and welcome your cousin Jim; he's come to live with us instead of Maggie. Ain't you so happy?"

"Who says so?" replied Joe, as he ascended the stoop; and then approaching his cousin said, in rather more bland tone than his brother had used; —

"Well, Jim, how goes it?" There was also a more hearty grasp of the hand, which was met by James in a cordial manner.

As they were now called in to supper, nothing further transpired of an unpleasant nature. Only, James noticed that his two cousins, who lingered behind, were quite merry over something, for they were whispering and giggling together.

Mrs. Tyson was quite fatigued with her ride, and Mr. Tyson having been engaged before supper in bestowing some hard epithets on one of his men, who had not accomplished the amount of ditching which he thought might have been accomplished during his absence, was not in a mood calculated to make the evening meal a pleasant one. He was not an ill-natured man, nor was his temper easily ruffled; but when anything occurred to stir up the angry feelings, they did not easily subside, and those about him who might be perfectly innocent of the cause of irritation were made very uncomfortable. His first attack was upon the boys. As has been said, they lingered after the call to supper, and when at length they came to the table, those present had already been served.

"Why is this, Rudolph?" His voice was stern, and his look angry. "Didn't you boys hear the bell?"

"I heard the bell," said Rudolph, looking down towards his plate, but at the same time casting a side glance at his brother, while a slight smile was visible as he caught the frightened look of Joe.

"Why did you not come in then at once? You know the rules; you both deserve to go without your supper. None of your smiling, sir, or I'll give you something to smile at the other side of your mouth!"

"Do, Mr. Tyson," said his wife, who was always ready to justify the boys when any one besides herself was finding fault with them, and more especially if the fault-finder was her hus-

band. "Do, Mr. Tyson. Where's the use of putting yourself into a passion about such a trifle; and blaming your children before strangers, too! (James was the only stranger present.) I suppose you have got angry with some of your men, and you want to vent it on your children. Try to be reasonable!"

Now there is nothing more trying when a man is angry than to be told of it, and especially to ask him to be reasonable, just as if he was not acting in the most proper and rational manner. The fire raged worse than ever.

"Mrs. Tyson!" He said nothing more, but fixed upon her a look of anger and intense astonishment.

The lady returned his gaze at first with a scowl on her brow, which relaxed into a contemptuous smile, when, turning her eyes to her boys, she said, —

"Do, Rudolph and Joe, eat your supper, and get through with it. For my part, I don't want any; I have had enough. Oh, dear! how strange it is!"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Tyson? What is strange? — that I should insist upon having order in my house?"

"Order!" said Mrs. Tyson, with a slight smile around her lips.

"Yes, order! I insist upon it there shall be order in my house, and every one shall obey the rules of the house!"

"Oh, Mr. Tyson! I am sure you are the last person to talk about order. Oh, dear!"

"The d——!" And Mr. Tyson pushed his plate from before him.

"Don't swear, dear; think of the children!" And Mrs. Tyson assumed a look of severe piety, and gave a deep sigh.

"It is enough to make a saint swear!"

"What is, my dear?" No one who did not know how great a change the human countenance can exhibit could have believed that her usual physiognomy could assume such a meek and martyr-like cast.

Mr. Tyson saw that he was getting the worst of the fray, and concluded that it would be wisdom for him to go no farther; and by degrees his appetite returned, the plate was drawn back, the knife and fork resumed, and silence reigned.

"Shall I replenish your cup, my dear? It must be cold."

"No; it is well enough." Mr. Tyson was the martyr now; his eye was fixed upon his plate, and his voice soft and husky.

"Joe, pass your father's cup."

Mr. Tyson said nothing; the cup was passed, at the same

time the boys' plates were replenished with abundance of chicken-pie, and Mr. Tyson took the liberty of replenishing his own; and Mrs. Tyson, after sending back her husband's cup, began, in a very moderate way indeed, to help herself to the hitherto untasted supply upon her plate.

James had gone on eating during the whole scene. He kept his eye steadily fixed upon his plate, and the work before him, lest he should appear to notice the family disturbance. It was a new scene to him, although he had made short visits at his uncle's before this. Probably, while his parents lived, some regard was had to the report he might make on returning home, and a consequent restraint put upon untoward conduct; but he was not now a visitor. He had no home nor parents to return to; he was a fixture where he then was, his opinion of no consequence, and his dependence a guarantee against his telling tales. But James was thinking, while apparently solely engaged with his meal. A dark cloud was gathering about him. "If so little consideration was exercised towards the rightful members of this family in these social relations, how could he expect to be dealt with, and what a contrast to the circle in which he had been nurtured!" But he dared not think much on that head: his feelings might get the better of him. He must be alone when thoughts of his own home were to be indulged. He felt sad, and longed to get by himself.

The lights had been placed upon the table when they began supper, and as some time had been consumed in that meal, he thought probably it was later in the evening than it really was; and he sat waiting in the parlor until his aunt should come in, that he might ask to be shown to his room. That parlor had a cheerless look to him; it was so unlike the cosy room of that character at home. It was square, with high ceiling; a paper of dark ground, with gilded spots, covered the walls; the furniture costly, no doubt, but looking dark and gloomy to James. It was not large between the walls, and had a stiff and unsocial appearance. His heart sickened, as he sat there alone, thinking of the past; and perhaps tears may have started, but he was not conscious of them. At length the door opened, and his aunt came in.

"What! are you here, James? Why don't you go with the boys?"

"If you please, aunt, I should like to go to bed, if I knew which room I am to take."

"Oh! you will sleep in the boys' room; I have had a small bed made up for you there. But it is not bed-time: you had better wait until the boys go, as one light will answer for all of you."

James made no reply; he had been in hopes of having a room to himself, he did not care in what part of the house, or how small, if he could only be alone.

"You had better go out and be with the boys; they have gone into the back room to get their lessons. I suppose you begin school to morrow, so you can be looking over the lessons with them."

James would have preferred a day or two of rest, that he might get a little used to things, and his mind become somewhat settled. The trial of separation from his home, and those so dear to him, occurring so soon after the death of his father, had for the time mitigated the pain of bereavement; but now the combined trouble began to press upon his young heart; he had no one to look to for sympathy — no one near him who seemed to regard his situation as even calling for sympathy — but felt that he was rather lucky in getting so good a place of refuge. His uncle had even told him as much when he said, "Many children left in their situation would have been put to service or sent to the town-house." James remembered with sickening interest that address, and he felt from every manifestation he had witnessed, both on his journey and by his reception, that he was regarded as peculiarly fortunate in having so respectable a shelter, and that no manifestation of sympathy was in the least necessary. Such being the case, it was perfectly natural that he should prefer being alone.

So far as his character had developed, no very striking traits had been manifest. Nurtured in love, with those whose hearts were lovingly in unison with his, had given him no occasion for the development of any bad passions. The government of his parents also being of that gentle character that shrinks from using the check or holding a tight rein, he had no consciousness of restraint; his wishes had ever seemed to meet those of his parents, and all things had worked in harmony, and neither he nor any one with whom he was now acquainted could tell "what manner of spirit he was of."

His personal appearance for a boy was prepossessing; of fair size for his age, a good form, easy and self-possessed in manner, a bright, open countenance; a clear, dark eye, that had never yet been cowed by sternness, or by the consciousness of a mean or

unworthy act. He looked at you with a firm and unflinching gaze, and yet without *hauteur* or boldness; his laugh was hearty and full of cheer, but the settled aspect of his countenance quite sober, and not often yielding to a smile. He would have been noticed by a stranger as a manly, active, bright boy; and such he was, although as yet the energies of his nature had not been called into exercise.

The injunction of his good nurse, "that he must try to exercise *patience*," was not lost upon James. Sorely had he been tempted at the first interview with his cousins, and had come near breaking through the resolution to follow her advice; but he saw more and more that his best course was to submit quietly to the condition of things, however contrary to his feelings. So, immediately rising, at his aunt's request, he went into the room where his cousins were supposed to be learning their lessons.

As he opened the door he heard a noise like the rattling of marbles or dice, and met the gaze of the two boys with marks of confusion on their countenances. As he closed the door behind him, they burst into a loud laugh.

"O Jim!" said Rudolph, "how you frightened us!"

"Why so?" said James, utterly at a loss to comprehend the cause of their fright.

"Don't tell him," whispered Joe.

"Yes, I will; who cares? I don't! Well, to tell the truth, Jim, we thought it was the old man or woman."

"What old man or woman?"

Another burst of laughter followed.

"O Jim! you are greener than I thought you was!"

"He is making believe, Ru; he knows well enough. It's the old folks. Now do you know?" replied Joe.

James did comprehend at last, and was sadly shocked, but had sense enough to make no remark as to its coarseness or impropriety.

"You see," said Rudolph, "Joe and I were having a game of dominos, and when we heard the latch turning we hustled them off the table in no time, but the blamed things made such a noise we knew they must have been heard. But come, let's have a game; we can all play."

"Thank you," said James, "I should only trouble you, for I never learned the game; and besides, Aunt Margaret requested me to look over the lessons with you, as she says I will commence school to-morrow."

"Hang the lesson; I've been looking at it. I can't do the sums—I know I can't; and old Flatfoot must show me; he's paid for it. And the grammar lesson is easy; I can get along with that, I know; and besides, you wont know what class the old fellow will put you in. Have you studied grammar?"

"A little."

"How far?"

"I have been through the rules, and commenced parsing difficult passages."

"How far in arithmetic?"

"I had commenced compound fractions."

"By George, Joe, he'll get in the first class."

"No, he wont, Ru, for he never puts the new boys up there unless they're something more than common; but maybe he is."

James took no notice of the rudeness of the closing remark of his cousin Joe. He began to think that they were so accustomed to rude speeches, they were not, perhaps, conscious when they used them, or did not realize their effect upon others.

"Here is the grammar and the arithmetic; you can study what you please in them. Come, Joe, let's have another game."

James looked over what he had already learned, that he might assure himself of being perfect so far as he had gone; but it was with difficulty that he accomplished his task, for the two boys kept up a constant conversation between themselves. They had no confidence in each other, and the rude words used by them to one another at times brought the flush of shame upon his cheek.

Bed-time at last came, and in a noisy, boisterous way they rushed up to their room, and then commenced a playful scuffle between the two before they began to prepare for bed. James sat silently down by his bedside: he was in a great doubt what to do. To kneel down in the solemn act of prayer, amid noise and laughter, was abhorrent to his sense of propriety; and to go into his bed without the act of prayer, he had never been accustomed to. He could not remember the time when he had omitted that duty, or when he commenced it, for he had been taught to pray as soon as he could lisp the words of prayer.

He sat still watching his cousins, until Rudolph, noticing that he was making no preparation for bed, called out,—

"What are you about, old fellow? Are you not going to bed?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you undress, then?"

"I will, presently."

"Don't you like your bed?"

"I presume I shall like it."

"Ain't waiting to say your prayers, are you?"

"I was waiting for that purpose."

"Then pray away. Joe, come, be still."

And they ceased their noise, and seated themselves on their bed, with their eyes fixed upon their cousin. It was a trying ordeal for James, — a perfectly new event in his young life. But either divine grace or the strong force of habit enabled him to face the trial. Deliberately he knelt, and offered up his silent prayer. For a time, unseen by him, they amused themselves by smiling at each other; but their merriment was put on. The stillness in the room, the suppliant youth bending low, with covered face, before the unseen God, had its influence. They ceased to smile, and both looked down, and a flush spread over their faces; they knew and felt that he was right, and they were in the wrong. And when he arose from his knees, and began to undress for bed, they felt so thoroughly ashamed, they turned their backs, unwilling to meet his eye, and without word or noise of any kind, retired to their bed. In the morning he arose before the others, and when dressed, bowed down and committed himself to God, and sought his blessing for the day. His cousins were awake, but they lay in perfect stillness until he had arisen and left the room.

"I say Joe, Jim is better than we are; you nor I wouldn't have had spunk enough to have acted so."

"We never learned any prayer. I guess Aunt Sally was a good woman; what makes ma always speak against her as she does?" asked Joe.

"I don't know," said Rudolph; "she has got some prejudice, I suppose. But I tell you what, Joe, we both behaved like fools last night. I shan't dare to look Jim in the face; I have a good mind to tell him I'm sorry."

"I wouldn't do that, Ru; he will think he's got the better of us, and hold his head up higher than ever."

How little it takes sometimes to prevent the carrying out of a good resolution! An impression had been made upon the elder of these boys, by the manly conduct of his cousin; and if his expressed intention of making an apology had been carried out, very happy consequences might have resulted; but an idea had been suggested, involving humiliation on their part, and the elevation of their companion, and the further

idea that he already thought himself their superior. It was enough; and the jealous feelings which had so long been indulged by Rudolph against his cousin were aroused in all their strength. These feelings, it is sad to say, were first kindled by his mother: she had never liked the wife her brother James had chosen; not for any fault that she had discovered, either before or after the marriage; but she knew that Miss Ransom had been accustomed to move in the first circles of the city, and she, Mrs. Tyson, had never enjoyed any advantages beyond a very plain circle, in a very plain country village; and having a suspicious temper, she had taken for granted, that she was looked down upon by her sister-in-law. She never felt easy in her company, and misconstrued the polite attention of her sister, when visiting at her house, as wishing to show off her "city manners." There was such a vast difference, too, in the mental acquirements of the two ladies — of which Mrs. Tyson was sensitively conscious, although the other never manifested, by her treatment, that she felt her superiority — that they never separated, after a visit at each other's home, without an increasing dislike, by Mrs. Tyson, of her gentle, accomplished, and lady-like sister.

Having such feelings, she did not hesitate to let them have vent in her own family; and hence was engendered in the minds of her boys a jealousy of their cousins, and especially of James, who was of their own age, and whose manners, in consequence of very different training, were in strong contrast with theirs.

James had taken quite a walk that morning; the air was cool and bracing, and his spirits, depressed and sad when he left the house, gradually revived. He knew not what was before him, but he had a consciousness of dependence on God, and a belief, in a general way, that if he did right he would be taken care of — how it was to be done, he did not yet consider; some vague idea had got into his mind, in spite of all which he had heard of the situation of his father's affairs, that there would be something left, from which his uncle would be paid for his board and clothing. It is hard for old or young, who have never known what it was to feel dependence, to realize at once the full meaning of the word; and more especially is it difficult for the latter. The child who has been accustomed to have every want supplied by an indulgent parent, and one who seemed never straitened for means, becomes so used to relying on the bounteous store, that the question, perhaps, never arises in his

mind: "Will a time ever come when this supply will cease?" So at least it had been with this youth. It was no doubt a fault in the management of his parent, that the idea of self-dependence had been wholly kept out of view; and at present, without scarcely a thought on that subject, his mind is occupied with the painful fact of separation from his sister and brother, and the rude treatment of his cousins. A mere boy of fourteen, perhaps more could not be expected of him.

At breakfast that morning a new trial awaited him. In consequence of his prolonged walk, he was not at the table until the family had been helped round: he at once apologized.

"I ask your pardon, Aunt Margaret, for not being here in time; I walked farther than I at first intended; I will try to be more particular in future."

"Ah, well!" his aunt replied, "we like to have all the family in when we sit down, or else Mr. Tyson has to be hindered after he has begun to eat. I know you have never been used to be regular at your house, but we are different here; it saves a world of trouble. Nothing I hate so much as irregularity."

James felt reproved, but was not conscious that the habit at his own home had been exceptional in that respect; certain he was, it had not been the cause of his present delinquency. He took the reproof in silence, however, determining to guard against the necessity for it in future.

"There is another thing," continued Mrs. Tyson, "I want to say to you boys — and I was afraid it would be so when I concluded to have you all sleep in one room: I mean as to the noise made when you go to bed, and when you get up. I was really ashamed last night, and this morning too: I cannot have it; it is really disgraceful."

James made no reply; conscious of his own innocence in that matter, he continued eating; his aunt in the meantime watched him closely, but perceiving that he took no notice of her remarks, either by word or look, and having worked herself into a severe state of mind, she must let out on some one; so, turning upon her own boys, she said, in quite a stern manner, —

"Do you hear what I say, Rudolph? you needn't smile — I say the disturbance was a disgrace to the house; and if other people don't regard what I say, I trust my own children will. You may well blush, Joe; I am glad to see that you at least feel some shame about it."

"Oh, mother!" said Mr. Tyson, who had recovered his usual calm and peaceful state of mind, "don't say any more about it;

when a parcel of boys get together, you must expect a little noise; that's so — isn't it, James?"

"I believe so," replied James, looking toward his uncle, with a slight smile on his face, incited merely by the pleasant look of his uncle and the pleasant manner in which he had spoken to him.

"Mr. Tyson!" and Mrs. Tyson looked at her husband a moment in silence.

"Well, mother, what is it? I hope you are not going to lay the blame on me; I did not make any noise, that's sure."

"Mr. Tyson, it is no laughing matter; and I wish James to know that I have some little right to regulate matters in my own house. He thinks now, no doubt, that he is at perfect liberty to treat all I say with contempt. I saw how he smiled when he looked at you, and how perfectly indifferent he looked while I was reproving him, as well as the others, for their very unseemly conduct; it is not treating me with common decency."

Poor James was utterly confounded; he could not reply, for he knew not what to say. He might indeed have cleared himself from all blame in regard to the noise in their bed-room, but he thought it would be dishonorable in him to do so, especially as they were present, and had it in their power to set the matter right; and in fact he was expecting every moment to hear them acknowledge their fault; he felt sure that he should, if in their case, not allow an innocent person to suffer for what he was alone to blame.

He had never before known, either, what it was to be reproved in so harsh a manner; his feelings began to get the upper-hand of him, and in spite of all his efforts, the tears started. His uncle saw how he felt, and, sympathizing with him, lost his own temper; he looked at his wife a moment, and then broke out, —

"The deuce take it all, wife — what is the matter?"

"There's matter enough, Mr. Tyson! I am not to be insulted in my own house, and that by those dependent upon me."

"Who the —— wants to insult you! you make me swear, whether I will or no. What has got into you! Can't you let the boys eat their meals in peace, but you must be dinging at them about some foolish thing or other? Let them fill their bellies, and then, if you want, take them out of hearing and cowhide them."

At that moment Joe snickered aloud.

"There! you see, Mr. Tyson, what you've done! Leave the

table, sir!" turning to Joe, who, glad to be relieved, hastened from the room. Rudolph rose to follow him.

"I didn't tell you to go."

"I'm done."

"Sit down, I tell you!"

Rudolph, in sitting down, had like to have missed his chair and fallen, but grabbed the table-cloth to save himself, and made a general jumble of things on the table, and then snickered louder than Joe had done. Snickering is very catching, especially with boys. James, in spite of all his bad feelings, was so affected that he responded at once; he made a strange chuckle in his effort to restrain a laugh, and Mr. Tyson burst into a loud "ha, ha!"

Mrs. Tyson sat a moment, silently looking at her husband.

"Well, Mr. Tyson!"

"Fire away, my dear."

"Are you not ashamed of yourself? How am I to manage the children, if you set them such an example."

James had now recovered himself, and turning towards his aunt,—

"Aunt Margaret, I am very sorry to have done anything to offend; I assure you I have not intended any disrespect. Will you please forgive me?"

"By George!" exclaimed Mr. Tyson, "Jim, you're a man! That shows your bringing up; you've got the gentleman in you. I've always said your mother was a lady, every inch of her. Now, ma, say you forgive him, and let all be square again."

Mrs. Tyson had settled back in her chair, and looked steadily at her husband. He had planted an arrow in her heart that would rankle there for many a day. He could not have done a worse thing, than to have said a word in praise of James's mother — and to praise the boy too! It was the most unfortunate thing for poor James that could have happened.

As Mrs. Tyson did not reply at once, her husband said again. "Come, ma, say the word. Accidents will happen; but when an apology is made — in such a handsome manner too — come, say you forgive, and that will square all up!"

"I don't see as there is any need of my saying anything; the young gentleman has had praise enough, I think; all I ask is decent behavior at the table, and decent behavior in the house."

"Come, boys," said Mr. Tyson; "let's go; I'm done, if you have; it will soon be time for school."

"James," said Mrs. Tyson, as he arose from the table, "you had better put on your every-day clothes before you go to school; I suppose you have got on your Sunday suit?"

"No, aunt, I have a better suit than this!"

"Well, I should think those you have on are too good to knock round in at school. Have you no common clothes?"

"Do, ma," said Mr. Tyson, "let the boy go as he is; he looks well enough now; the first day or so, you know, boys like to look a little nice going among strangers. I ain't forgot my boyish feelings yet, though I have a few gray hairs; and besides, boys and men are apt to pay a stranger a little more attention if he is well rigged out."

"I will do as you say, aunt," said James, looking at her with a countenance expressive of his perfect willingness to abide by her decision.

"Oh, well, I have nothing to say; I suppose your uncle knows best."

"Yes, yes, Jimmy; go just as you are to-day, and in a little while, if you've a mind to put on your old duds, you can do so. I've no doubt you wont lose your gentlemanly manners, dress as rough as you may."

Mrs. Tyson smiled contemptuously at this latter remark, but James did not notice it; and although not quite satisfied that his aunt approved the decision Mr. Tyson had made, he concluded, as she made no further remark, to do as his uncle said.

"Well, James," said his uncle, as they were all at the tea-table in the evening, "how did you get along to-day?"

"Very well, sir."

"Didn't get a knock side of your head?"

"No, sir."

"What class did Mr. Stevenson put you in?"

"The first class, sir."

"Yes, pa," said Joe; "and he's got up head in that."

"Well done, Jimmy! Have you been much to school? — but now I think of it, there were not any good schools near you. How long were you at boarding-school?"

"Only six months, sir; but mama used to teach me. I learned more with her than I did at school."

"I tell you what, boy, you don't know what you lost when that mother of yours was taken away. She was a true lady; she made it pleasant for every one that entered her house; and she seemed to know about everything,—history, religion, politics, and what not; and so gentle too, and such an easy way she

had! No wonder your poor father doted on her; I believe it killed him at last; he was never the same man after her death — his spirits broke all down.”

Mr. Tyson had a kind heart, but very little sensibility. He did not seem to realize that James had but just buried his father, and that the wound was still fresh on his young heart. He meant well, but did not consider that, thus even in kindness, bringing the remembrance of his lost parents to his mind, that the sore was yet fresh. James had been greatly excited all day. The scene at the breakfast-table left a gloom upon his mind; the strange faces at school, the rough appearance and rough manners of the boys, so different from those of the school he had so lately left, and the novelty of his whole situation, had been operating upon his sensitive mind; the fact, too, of his utter loneliness had been weighing upon him. He saw no one to whom he could look for sympathy either at school or at home; his cousins had lost his confidence; he thought they disliked him, and he certainly felt no regard for them; and his aunt had treated him so strangely that he even dreaded her presence. He felt alone and a stranger; and to have the names of the dear ones he had lost thus brought to mind, and with them all the associations of his own lost home, was more than he could bear just then. He felt the storm coming, and not caring to expose his feelings to those present, some of whom he thought would only ridicule his weakness, he arose from his seat, and, turning towards his aunt with a flushed face and tears already gathering,—

“Please excuse me, aunt,” he said, and hurried from the room.

“What ails the boy?” said Mr. Tyson, astounded at the sudden move, and wholly unable to comprehend what had caused it.

“He is homesick,” said Rudolph, smiling; “he’ll soon get over it.”

“It is all your own doing,” said Mrs. Tyson to her husband.

“What have I done? I’m sure I spoke in the kindest manner about his parents.”

“It was that worked him up so, pa,” said Joe; “for I was looking at him all the time; and I see his face grew redder and redder, and then the tears began to come. How he went, though, Ru! — like shot out of a gun!” and both boys laughed quite heartily.

“I think, Mr. Tyson, it is hardly worth while for you to be

forever talking so much about James or his mother either; he thinks enough of himself already; he’ll think by and by that he is of more consequence than any one else in the family. It don’t do boys any good to praise them to their face.”

Mr. Tyson said no more, but ate his supper in silence.

CHAPTER IV.

IT did not take James many weeks to learn that however kindly his uncle felt towards him, and however welcome he might be to the comfort of a home under his roof, yet to his aunt his being there was a source of annoyance. Why he could not please her was a mystery to him; for he was careful to comply with all her regulations, and he was enabled to follow the advice of Aunt Sophy, and bear patiently her unreasonable rebukes. But although a mystery to him, it need not be to my readers. Captain Bellfield was, as has been said, originally from a very low family; he had raised himself into a position of respectability, and been enabled to connect himself with a lady of refinement and education. His sister, Mrs. Tyson, remaining at home, grew up under all the disadvantages of vulgar society. She was in her youth very handsome, and attracted the attention of young men in her own station. Among them was Mr. Tyson, a laborer in a cotton mill. Being prudent and industrious, he rose by degrees to be a foreman, and then an agent; and from that to be principal owner of a mill of respectable size. Before he had taken any step on the upward scale, he married Miss Bellfield. Her education was of the simplest kind: she could read and write; her moral training was merely calculated to enable her to maintain, in general, external propriety. She was fond of show; jealous of those who moved in a higher circle, while anxious to be noticed by them; her temper was almost ungovernable when aroused, and like all ignorant persons, easily prejudiced, and when once biased against an individual, retaining her dislike with great tenacity.

As has been said, she had from the first taken a dislike to James’s mother. The vast difference between a refined and cultivated mind and that grace of manner which can only be acquired by familiar intercourse with polished society from early

years, and her own attempts at imitations, were too palpable not to be realized to her own consciousness: the effect was to excite hostility; it was unreasonable, but it was real. Mrs. Bellfield had always treated her with unfeigned kindness, and with true generous hospitality; but the bitter feeling never subsided, not even when the grave had closed upon the lovely object of her hatred. It was no doubt unfortunate that her husband viewed the character of Mrs. Bellfield in such a different light. At least it was unfortunate that he had not prudence enough to restrain his praises of one with whom he knew his wife had no sympathy; as it only aggravated and increased her animosity.

James resembled his mother not only in his look, but in ease of manner and natural politeness. He was not forward, yet never abashed when suddenly brought into company of strangers; if they were young persons, whether boys or girls of his own age, he had no difficulty in entering at once into conversation, and keeping up an agreeable chat; while his cousins would be skulking in a corner, twittering to each other, or refuse to come into the room at all.

"That Jim," said Mr. Tyson one evening, after some company which had been assembled there by accident, had departed, "is a real little gentleman; he kept the young folks agoing all the time."

"Yes," responded Mrs. Tyson; "he's full of gab; he is all Ransom; there is no Bellfield about him."

"I don't know about that; I guess he's got some of the old Captain's spunk; but as you say, he must have got his polite disposition from his mother. She was a lady, every inch of her."

Then there came occasional invitations to James by boys to attend parties at their homes, which were not extended to his cousins: this was unfortunate, but not the fault of either James or those who invited him. Boys at school, as well as elsewhere, will choose their associates; and James had become acquainted with one or two of his own age who did not attend school, and they belonged to families where Mrs. Tyson did not visit—families that she pretended not to like, although in heart she would have been glad to be on visiting terms with them. This was a cause of much irritation.

"I don't know what you mean to do with that boy," she said one evening to her husband; "he is only fit for running about into company. I should think it would be better he should be

put to some trade, without you mean to bring him up to do nothing, and make a gentleman of him."

"There is a good deal of the gentleman about him now; but he is a boy yet. I think he has spunk enough in him to take hold of business when the time comes."

"Well, you'll see: he is getting high notions every day; and I don't think it is doing him any good to be visiting as he is with rich families. Rudolph says, since he has got intimate with those Pearsall boys, they are always together, and that he don't keep with the school-boys hardly at all."

"Oh, well, you know, wife, 'Birds of a feather will flock together.' But I saw him the other day sitting on the stoop, at the window; Porters and he and Sam were talking together sociably as if they were intimate friends. Now Sam is a good boy, but he don't belong to the rich class; you know that."

James was not blinded as to the feeling of his aunt towards him, nor to the fact that his cousins participated in her dislike; and often, when alone, his mind was deeply agitated, and the question would come up to him, and a very serious one it was, "*What is before me? and how long must I bear it?*"

One day, after some rather cutting remark by his aunt, which reflected upon his dependent condition, he walked away from the house, crossed the woods, and seated himself on a rock under a large chesnut-tree which stood a little apart, and near a road seldom travelled. There was quite an extended view from this spot; and a very pleasant view it was, embracing not only a glimpse of the Sound, although a distant one, but of a range of mountains far in the west; while the foreground presented a pleasing view of fields and farm-houses, enlivened by a sparkling stream winding in and out, and losing itself in a large pond, whose pent-up waters made the power which supplied the factory establishments of the place.

James had often sought this spot when he wished to be alone, but never before had his mind been so disturbed, nor his feelings wrought up to such a pitch; he did not take a look at the scenery, but seating himself upon the rock, leaned his head upon his arm as it rested against the tree, and gave vent to his feelings in a flood of tears. So absorbed was he by the rush of feeling that he did not notice the approach of a person who had just turned into the road from a lane that crossed it but a short distance from where he was seated. This person was a young girl of perhaps twelve years of age. She was neatly dressed, with a small basket in her hand, into which she had

already placed some of the wild flowers that warm days of April were bringing forth. She did not notice that any one was at the place towards which her steps were tending, until she was close to the tree, and then she stopped, and was on the point of turning back, when James, aroused by a slight exclamation which slipped from her unconsciously, turned, and at once arose, and, advancing to her, extended his hand. The burst of feeling was over, and his tears had been dried. But the smile upon his lips could not altogether hide the tokens of the storm which had passed. She took his hand and smiled in return, but her countenance at once assuming a serious cast, she said, —

“What is the matter? — are you not well?”

“Oh yes!” was his reply.

“But something is the matter! You must be in trouble!”

“Come, and sit down, will you not?” was his reply.

“I was intending to sit on that rock, and sort my flowers, not expecting to find any one there — it is such a pretty spot, and there is such a fine view from it.

“Come, then, and I will assist you, if you will let me.”

Without further reply, she suffered him to lead her to the seat, as he had not relinquished his hold upon her hand.

“What a pretty variety you have gathered!”

“Beautiful, are they not!” she replied, as she held up the basket, and looked at him with her face all aglow with pleasure. His sombre countenance again attracting her notice, she said, —

“Do please tell me what is the matter?” The look she gave him was so marked with interest, and the words were emphasized with so much earnestness, he could not resist the appeal.

Before, however, we proceed any further, it must be said, that between these two young persons, there had, within a short period, sprung up quite an intimacy. She had come to the place on a visit to one of the families where James was frequently invited, and, as it often happens among persons of their age, a gentle liking for each other had taken place. On the very evening previous to this interview, he had attended a party at the house of her friends, and had her as his partner during the dance, and both seemed more than ever pleased with each other, and indeed were so sociable together, that her young friends, after the company had left, more than once rallied her for so completely absorbing the attention of Bellfield; and it may be

further said, that James so far forgot his aunt's strict rules, as to overstay her regular bed-time, so pleased was he with the company. And this had caused an outbreak of Mrs. Tyson's bad feelings, and led her to say things that brought on the trouble that caused his present sober look. His reply to her appeal was, —

“I am very unhappy.”

“I know that by your looks; but what makes you unhappy?”

“Oh, there is a great deal — everything.”

“You were not unhappy last evening, were you? You was the most lively of the company.”

“I was not unhappy then, because you were all kind and social, and I forgot everything else.”

“Were your parents displeased because you staid so late? it was near eleven when you went away.”

“My aunt was displeased with me.”

“Oh, well, Mrs. Bird said we kept up rather too long, but we ought not to be unhappy because sometimes we do wrong and are scolded for it. I know it ain't pleasant, but we can only try to do better another time. I suppose, though, it is harder for boys to bear scolding, than for girls.”

“I don't mind being reproved for my faults, that is — that alone would not make me unhappy. I could, as you say, try to do better, and avoid such trouble; but that is not all.”

There was a pause here; the young girl did not like to urge him any further, and James hesitated to enter into the particulars of his case; so they sat a while, assorting and arranging the different colored flowers, but neither speaking.

At length James, heaving a sigh, said, —

“It is a terrible thing to be dependent!”

His companion looked at him with some astonishment.

“What! you do not mean it is hard to be dependent on parents! what should we do? I don't know what I should do. I am sure I should have to beg, I guess.” And a smile played around her pretty mouth.

“No; it would not be hard to depend on such — but I have no parents!”

“Oh, dear! excuse me; I did not know that.”

“And supposing yourself thus left, and without any property, and thrown upon the charity of relatives, and obliged to hear the fact brought up, and to have it kept in your mind continually by hints and sometimes told plainly of it.”

"Oh, dear! I don't know what I should do; I believe I should run away and try to do some kind of work for a living."

"That is what I intend to do. I shall not need to run away, but I shall go away. I don't know, indeed, what I can find to do; if I knew anything about farm work, I might get some place to do chores. But I don't know how to milk, and I don't know how to do anything that is done on a farm — nor anywhere else."

"Oh, that is dreadful kind of work, farming is; it's dirty work, and they have to work so hard, and they seem so rough and coarse! It seems to me, if I was a boy, I should go into a city and get a place in a store. Why, I have heard my pa tell us how he went to New York, a poor boy; he had only five dollars left when he got there; but he got a place somehow, and now he is rich — so people say; he never talks about it himself; anyhow he seems to have enough to get all we want. I know he lets me have all I want."

"That is what I wish to do; but they tell me I am not old enough yet; that I could not even get my board there; but I mean to do something. If I can't do anything else, I mean to go to sea."

"Oh, dear! that is a dreadful business! it is so dangerous, and they say sailors are so wicked!"

"I don't think it would be so bad as living with people I hate."

"We ought not to hate any one, ought we?" This was said after a short pause, the young girl being somewhat astounded at hearing this announcement with such a strong emphasis on the word.

He quickly replied: "How can I help it! my aunt dislikes me, and is continually snubbing me in some way, and my cousins will any time tell falsehoods and misrepresent my doings, and she believes all they say,—how can I help hating them! They are mean liars!"

James had worked himself up now into a passion, and had forgotten all the proprieties; the countenance of his companion fell, a sad expression was manifest, a flush suffused her cheeks, and she could make no reply. James was looking intently at her while he had been speaking, and could not help noticing the effect of his rude language. In a moment his consciousness returned, and he felt that he had done violence to her delicate feelings. In a voice completely changed, he said, —

"Do forgive me; I spoke rudely; I forgot whom I was speaking to. Will you pardon me?"

Her beautiful bright eyes were lifted up to him as she replied, and he could see they were dimmed with moisture.

"Oh, I don't mind about myself; but it must make one very unhappy to have such feelings, because the Bible says we must not hate our enemies; we must love them."

"I know it says so; but how can I love them that treat me so?"

It was a little time before any reply was made; at length she said, but with a hesitating manner, —

"I suppose it must be hard; but don't you think we might try? I am sure I don't know; but it must make one feel so bad to hate any one. I am so sorry for you!"

James leaned upon his knees, and covered his face with his hands; remorse and shame were at work, with a plentiful mixture of pride; the girl began gathering up the flowers that had been strewed upon the rock, preparatory to her departure. Having gathered them into her basket, she arose, and in a low and trembling voice, said, —

"I believe I must say good-morning."

James started up and seized her hand.

"Oh, please don't go yet; please don't leave me so!"

"I fear I shall only make you unhappy by staying any longer."

"Please don't go; forgive my rude speaking; I am so sorry I said what I did; please sit down again. I want so much to have some one like you to talk to, I promise not to make any more hard speeches."

Again they were seated on the rock; James was the first to speak.

"It is so long since I have had any one to correct me in a kind manner, and I have been of late so used to hardships, and rough speeches, that I am afraid if you had not shown me, by the effect my conduct had upon yourself, I should, in time, have become as rude as those I am finding fault with."

James now took advantage of a question she asked, to go into particulars as to his past life, and how he came to be living where he now was. After he had finished, she said, —

"I know it must be very hard, after the home you once had, to suffer such treatment; but maybe if you try hard to put up with things, and don't answer back, and try hard not to break any rules — and don't the Bible say it is better to suffer wrong than to resent it, or something like that?"

"Yes, it does."

"Well, maybe you will find, after a while, that things will change."

"Maybe so; at any rate I shall try to do as you say: and I thank you ever so much for your kindness in checking and showing me my faults."

"Oh, but I did not mean to do that; I have faults enough of my own; only, I thought, if you indulged such feelings, they would make you unhappy. But I must be going now."

They arose and walked together until they reached the lane from which she had come; it led immediately to the dwelling of the friends she was visiting: there they stopped.

"I suppose I shall not see you again, as I leave to-morrow morning."

"So soon!" said James; and the deep color that suffused his cheeks told not only his surprise, but how much he was affected. A moment's pause, and he added, "I am so sorry!"

"My vacation is nearly over; and I must spend a few days with a schoolmate, a few miles from here."

"Then, perhaps, I shall never see you again!"

She made no reply; indeed she could not have spoken without manifesting more feeling than she cared to exhibit.

"Can you not," said James, "give me some little token for remembrance; I don't mean anything of value — any trifle will answer."

Without the least show of prudery, and with a serious countenance, as if about to do the thing for a near relative, she at once drew from her pocket what seemed a needle-case, and unclasping it, took, from some nook within, a large cornelian bead; a deep red with a vein of white nearly circling it.

"This is the only article I have by me; will it answer?"

"Oh, thank you! thank you! it is beautiful! can you spare it?"

"Oh, yes; but have I not a right to ask for something in return?"

"You do me a great favor by making such a request. I wish I had something of value, but I fear not." And he drew forth his pocket-book.

"No matter," she said, "about the value; what I have given you is not worth much in money."

"That may be," said James, "but no money could buy it of me now. Here is something I have found, and whenever you look at it, you can think that the countenance you behold will

never fade from the mind of him who gives you this token." And he placed in her hand, a small tortoise-shell case, about the size of a twenty-five cent piece.

"I will show you how to open it," and he touched a little catch, and the lid sprang open sidewise; and within was set a mirror, very diminutive, but so cut as to present the whole face in miniature.

She looked at it a moment.

"I will not refuse it, although it is much more valuable than my bead. You must not be discouraged; my pa says, with *patience* and *perseverance* we can accomplish almost anything."

Their hands were clasped, and James, raising hers to his lips, as he saw the tears had started, said with much earnestness, —

"Shall I never see you again? may I not call upon you if ever I go to New York?"

"Oh, yes, *do!* and maybe my pa can help you to a situation. Our house is in Liberty Street, No. —"

And with another silent embrace of the hand they parted.

James retraced his way through the woods with a more elastic step than when he had crossed them an hour or two before. The scene through which he had just passed, had given new strength to every good resolution. His better feelings had been aroused; he felt as if he could bear anything from his aunt now; and he determined, if it was possible, that he would avoid everything that could give offence to her or to his cousins.

The manifestation of interest on the part of these two youths for each other, was at the time a reality. If they had been farther advanced in years, it might not have been so demonstrative; but they were at an age when the purer feelings alone are in play, and friendship need not act behind a mask. They were too young to be lovers; and yet, a gentle flame, somewhat akin to the more intense blaze, had kindled in their breasts. It may increase and swell into the higher, richer emotion, or flicker a little while, and then die out, as in general it does.

CHAPTER V.

SATURDAY being a holiday, James took the opportunity to call at a cobbler's, one of his shoes needing repair. Old Salter, as he was usually called, was a man much respected in the village; he was known as an honest, industrious, and thriving man. Besides his special handicraft, he owned a few acres of land, which he tilled in a profitable way, keeping several cows, and selling milk and butter to the employes of a manufacturing establishment. Mr. Salter was known likewise as a professing Christian, and one who was not only well acquainted with the Scriptures, but made them his rule of life. James was somewhat known to the old man from having seen him in the last visit he had made at his uncle's. He had gone there in company with his cousins; and Mr. Salter had noticed the boy, because of his quiet and gentlemanly deportment, in such marked contrast to that of his companions.

His pleasant salutation, as he now entered the little shop, caused the old man to turn from his work and look at his visitor; it was not his custom to do so, but he would in general reply to the rude address, which too often was made by the boys in the village, without turning his eyes from his work.

"Will you be able to do a little job for me, this morning, Mr. Salter?"

"I think it very likely I can, my son, if it is not too long a job." Still continuing to gaze at the boy, he continued,—

"It seems to me I've seen you before; but for the life of me, I can't just this minute recall your name."

James had not until now had any occasion for the services of the old man, since his home had been at Mr. Tyson's.

"My name is Bellfield — James Bellfield."

"Bellfield! you don't live in the village?"

"I have been living here this winter — I am at Uncle Tyson's."

"Oh! ah! now I remember. You have been in the shop before; yes, yes, I remember now; you came here once or twice with the Tyson boys — I remember now; sit down, sonny. Take a seat on that bench; I will finish the little job I am at now pretty soon, and will then attend to your want."

James took the seat assigned him, and for a few moments the old cobbler worked away at his stitching.

"Yes, I remember you now; and I see you have not forgotten the mannerly ways you had when you was here before; it is such a strange thing nowadays to have boys take off their hats, or speak even civilly, that when one does come along that has been brought up right, in that way, I am apt to notice it. Then you've come to live here?"

"Yes, sir; I have been here all winter."

"Where is your home?"

"My home was near Northbrook."

"Lost your pa?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is your ma living?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Salter perceived from the trembling tones of the reply that he had touched a sore spot, was silent a moment, and then said,—

"The Psalmist says: 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;' and again: 'a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his Holy Habitation. It is a sad thing to lose our parents in our young days. But if God takes us up, that helps the matter very much. He is a real helper when he undertakes. I hope you have learned to pray to Him?'"

"Yes, sir."

"That's clever; don't ever forget to do that; it's a blessed thing that we can commit our ways to the Lord, for we have the promise that they who seek Him early shall find Him, and they who trust in Him shall never be confounded."

Mr. Salter had completed the job before him, and James handed him the boot which he had taken off.

"Ah, I see! a rip in the sole; we will soon fix that. I guess these boots must have come from the city; they don't make such work short of that."

"Yes, sir; they came from New York."

"Have you relations there?"

"No, sir, no relations; we visited there sometimes."

Mr. Salter was soon through with the job, and was just unstrapping the boot, when the door was opened rudely, and two boys rushed in. They were Rudolph and his brother; they had been running, and in their haste had almost broken the latch. Mr. Salter looked at them with almost an angry scowl, but calming himself in a moment, he said,—

"Boys, boys, what's the haste?"

Without taking any notice of the proprietor of the shop, they called out, —

"Come, Jim! we want you; the fellows are going to have a game of ball, and we want you to make up the number."

"I thank you for the offer; I should like to play well enough, but I want to write two letters to-day to my brother and sister, and it will take me about all day."

"Oh, never mind about the letters! you can write them any day."

"I have no time on any other day; and besides I promised to write them a letter every month."

"Never mind about the promise; you can tell them you was too busy to write, or you didn't feel like it."

"Tell them you forgot it," said Joe.

"I could not truly tell them any of these things; but to oblige you, I will play one game in and out, and then after that I must leave;" and then turning to Mr. Salter, —

"How much shall I pay for this?"

"Ah, well, it was a small job — say six cents."

"There is six cents, sir; and I thank you very much."

"You are quite welcome, sonny; and when you want another job done in the mending way, give me a call. I take it there is a good deal saved by mending little cracks and tears; and see here" (the two boys had now left the shop): "once in a while, when you have a leisure hour, will you not just step in and see me?"

"I should like to, sir, very much."

The boys began shouting for him to come along, and James hastened after them.

The game of ball had gone on with great glee for an hour. James was a good player; he was active, and clever with the bat, and expert in dodging the ball. Each party was desirous of having him on its side. But his cousins succeeded in gaining him. The party opposed were good players, and having the first innings, had kept the others out for nearly an hour. James had forgotten all about his letters in his eagerness at play, when once fully engaged. At last, through his correct throwing, an adversary was hit, and he took the bat. Two rounds were run; again he struck the ball, but it was not a full, fair blow, and the ball received a shy, and fell short of the first run. One of the outers gained it, and threw quickly. James was near his goal — within a few feet. A loud shout was given by his party as the ball flew past him, and some pretty severe

words were said by some of the outers at the failure of the thrower, as he was so near the runner.

But in a moment the scene was changed, for James was returning leisurely towards his cousin Rudolph, who stood bat in hand, ready to send it as much askew as possible.

"What's the matter?" cried several voices on both sides.

"We are out," said James.

"How so? — the ball didn't hit you."

"It did, though," said James.

"That's a lie," said Rudolph. "I saw it pass you; it was half a rod off."

"I thought it came pretty near," said Sam Blauvelt, the boy who had just been undergoing the reproofs of his mates.

"I say it didn't go near him," said Joe Tyson; "I was looking all the time; it didn't come within a yard of him."

"There is no use in talking," said James; "the ball grazed the edge of my arm."

"Just as if you could feel it just grazing your coat!"

"I did feel it, though," said James.

"I believe it's all a lie you've made up — you want to get us out."

"Why should I want to lose the game, Cousin Rudolph?"

"I'll tell you why," said Joe, who was quicker than his brother in the matter of invention, especially of bad motives; "he wants to go home and write those letters, and he is just mean enough to say the ball hit him, when it didn't come near him, just for the purpose of breaking up the game."

"Yes, that's it," said Rudolph.

"You are very much mistaken, both of you. I do indeed intend to go and write those letters, but I would hardly descend so low as to endeavor to accomplish my purpose by a falsehood."

"You are just mean enough to do it," said Rudolph; "and you did it — you lied about it; the ball never touched you."

James had a high temper — it had never as yet been so severely tried. He had been trained to abhor falsehood, even in the form of prevarication; the abuse of his cousins was a little more than he could bear; he thought not of consequences, and as Rudolph reiterated the base charge, James rushed at him with all the impetuosity of a frenzied boy, and before Rudolph had time to strike a blow, he was on his back and crying for help. Joe at once sprang to his assistance, but the other boys kept him at bay.

"It's a fair fight," said one of the larger boys. "Rudolph is the biggest and the oldest, and he has abused the fellow shamefully; just as if he couldn't tell whether the ball struck him or not."

"Let me up, let me up!" cried Rudolph, struggling with all his might, and trying his best to strike James in the face.

"I will let you up just as soon as you take back that lie, and not before."

James had not struck his cousin; he knew nothing about giving blows; he had merely tripped him down, and meant to hold him there if he could. He had received some blows before he was able to secure his antagonist's arms, and one of them in the mouth, that was rather severe; but still he would not strike, though Rudolph had hurt his own face by a violent effort to free his arms.

"Let me up, I say!"

"I will let you up just as soon as you take back the lie."

"I do take it back."

James at once arose. But Rudolph had merely feigned a retraction—he only wanted to regain his legs; for the instant he was up, he ran with great fury at his cousin, and struck, with all his might, a blow at the face. James luckily parried it, and again clinched his antagonist, and soon had him under.

"Now give it to him!" cried the other boys. "Pummel him in the face—he has played false—give it to him, Jim!"

James, however, had no idea of doing any such thing, and proceeded, as before, to do what he could to prevent injury to himself. His anger had passed off; he felt more like crying than fighting; he wished the scene was over, but felt the necessity of maintaining the advantage he had over his antagonist, for his own security.

Just then a gentleman was seen approaching, and there was a general whisper among the boys.

"You had better let him up, Jim Bellfield, or you'll get it! Pa is coming," called out his cousin Joe.

But James held on; he thought he was not in the wrong, and therefore did not fear his uncle's presence. Mr. Tyson was on his way home, and crossing the green where the boys were at play, when, attracted by the squabble he saw going on, he turned his steps toward the group, intending, if possible, to stop the struggle; but as he came up and saw who were the contestants, and mortified, no doubt, at finding Rudolph thus prostrate, his temper rose at once. He caught James rudely by

the arm, raised him up, shook him violently, and was proceeding to strike him with a small cane he had in his hand, when several of the boys called out,—

"It wasn't his fault, sir."

"Yes, it was his fault," said Joe; "he threw Ru twice."

"He came at me like a wild cat," said Rudolph, whimpering out his words.

Mr. Tyson would, no doubt, at this representation, have vented his anger in a severe infliction upon James, for he was quite enraged; but at that moment, a young fellow of Rudolph's age stepped quickly up. He presented quite a different appearance from the other boys; for he was well dressed, and in his bearing showed plainly that he was not one of the town boys. Mr. Tyson remembered having seen him in company with a gentleman who resided about a mile from the village, a man of wealth who had removed lately from the city. The lad was a visitor there, and had stopped on his stroll through the place, to watch the game.

Said the youth: "That young gentleman was not to blame, sir. I will tell you how it was; for I was not engaged in the play, but was merely looking at them, and therefore have no prejudice either way, and if you will listen to me, sir, I can tell you just how the affray came on."

"Well, let me hear it."

The lad then went through with a recital of the whole affair, and ended with these words:

"You know, sir, any one would resent being called a liar, and that repeatedly."

"How do you know but he did lie?" said Mr. Tyson, still very angry, at finding his son so much in the wrong.

"I think," replied the youth, "it was not for his interest to tell the truth, for he lost the game by it; and besides, I felt sure myself, when the ball passed, that it must have grazed him, and was rejoiced to see how honorable he was to acknowledge it, when none of the boys supposed he had been hit."

Rudolph, enraged at the interference of the youth, rudely broke in:

"It's none of your business—you warn't playing."

"That is very true. I merely wished to let this gentleman know the truth."

"The truth!" replied Rudolph with a sneer.

"Yes, the truth!" retorted the youth; "and if this gentleman thinks I am mistaken, I appeal to all the boys here."

"Who cares who you appeal to? He lied — he knows he did; and there is no use in you or any one else a-lying for him."

Rudolph had scarcely uttered the words, when the youth flew at him, but in a very different manner from James, for there was such a shower of blows about his head, that Rudolph was fain to retreat, in order to get a chance for self-defence; but instead of endeavoring to use his lawful weapons for that purpose, he caught up a stone, and although his father called loudly to him, and even ran to prevent his throwing it, he was not quick enough: the stone was sent with what force the boy had, and it struck the youth on one side of his head, and he fell to the earth.

Mr. Tyson was now greatly alarmed. He flew to the boy, raised him a little, felt his head, and found a lump had already formed. At once he called out to the boys, —

"Run some of you, quick, and bring some cold water!"

The nearest house was that of the old shoemaker, and several started with all haste, and James among them, and he was the first to reach the shop. A kettle of water was soon procured, and its application not only seemed to stop the swelling, but relieved the pain; for when the boy got over the stun which the blow had occasioned, and was asked by Mr. Tyson, how he felt, he replied, —

"My head pains me rather severely, but the water feels good."

James manifested intense interest, sitting on the ground beside him, and holding one of his hands in his, as though he had been a near friend.

Mr. Tyson had been greatly alarmed, for when the boy fell, he did not know but he had received a fatal injury; and he therefore made no objection to the manifestation of interest on the part of James, while, in a stern voice, he had ordered his two boys to go immediately home.

"Had you not better let me help you to my house?" said Mr. Tyson.

"Thank you, sir. I think I had better go home."

"But you are not able to walk so far. Is your carriage in town?"

"No, sir, but I can walk it very well. That blow, somehow, made me feel a little sick; but I am much better now."

"May I not go along with him, uncle?" said James.

"Perhaps you had — part of the way at least."

The youth made no objections to this proposition, for he had, as youths are apt to do, taken a sudden fancy to James. He had noticed him during the play, and was pleased with his skill and energy at the game, and with his gentlemanly deportment and appearance, but especially with his regard to truth; and as he had met with no boys that appeared to him desirable as companions, he was anxious to form an acquaintance with one of whom he had received so favorable an impression.

Once over the shock, and with no other inconvenience than that of considerable soreness in the part injured, and the difficulty of wearing his cap with the handkerchief which was bound about his head, the two boys started off together.

Mr. Tyson stood a moment watching him, but soon perceived from his elastic step that his strength was not impaired. He would have recalled James; he feared, however, that it might have the appearance of incivility if he did so, and, therefore, turned his steps homeward, thankful that things had not resulted much more unfavorably.

Rudolph and Joe, on their return home had given their mother a version of the affair, in explanation of the injury to the former's clothes and face, which were quite apparent, that waked up her wrath against her nephew to such an uncomfortable degree, that if James had been present he would, no doubt, have experienced terrible treatment at her hands.

As Mr. Tyson entered his parlor, on his return home, the first words that met his ear were, —

"What has become of that little scamp?"

"Who do you mean — James?"

"Yes, I mean James. I hope you gave him a good trouncing."

"What for?"

"What for! I wonder you can ask such a question, Mr. Tyson, when you saw how he had been abusing Rudolph. Joe says he acted like a wild-cat, and Rudolph's face is all scratched up, and his clothes are a sight to be seen. Let me but get hold of him, he won't forget it the longest day he lives! I'll teach him to behave himself, I'll warrant him! To think that a poor little beggar, as he is — that he should maltreat one of my children as he has, is more than human nature can bear! But wait till he comes in!"

Mr. Tyson had now got over his anger, and having had time to reflect upon the whole affair, had come to the conclusion that James was not so much to blame after all, and felt disposed to

pass it over as a boys' scuffle, although a little mortified that his son had not shown a little more manliness; he therefore, in a moderate tone of voice, replied, —

"You know there are always two sides to a story, and one of them is good until the other is told. You have worked yourself into a passion against James, when he really was not to blame. No one likes to be called a liar, and will resent it if he has any spunk in him, and Jim has got that. I guess he takes after his father for that, and maybe his aunt too."

This answer did not by any means tend to mollify Mrs. Tyson.

"Did you see how the quarrel begun?"

"No, I did not."

"Then how do you know anything about it? I suppose that fellow has been telling his story to you, and has made it smooth enough; and you are just silly enough to believe all he says. He'll lie fast enough, I'll warrant, to throw blame on to others. But he won't get round me with his smooth tongue."

"James has not said a word to me about it, one way or another. A very gentlemanly young fellow, who was present, but had nothing to do with the game, saw the whole affair, and he gave me, I have no doubt, a true statement of the matter. Both of our boys were very much to blame, and we may thank our stars that things haven't turned out worse than they have. If that stone Rudolph sent had struck that boy in the temple, it would, like as not, have killed him, and then there would have been a pretty muss, for he is a visitor of Captain McIntosh, the gentleman who has lately moved into the Gage House."

Mrs. Tyson did not immediately reply. She was rather confounded; for being an ambitious woman, and hearing that this new family was supposed to be wealthy, she had intended to call on them and cultivate their acquaintance. This was on that account quite a mishap. But she was not one that could readily or gracefully slide from a stand she had taken; so, after a few moments' pause, she replied, —

"But how do you know that he didn't lie? You seem to think because he probably was well dressed and had a smooth tongue, that all he said was gospel. He was just as likely to lie as the rest of 'em."

"But, wife, do be reasonable. What object could the young fellow have in misrepresenting the matter? and, besides, all the other boys confirmed what he said."

"All the other boys! You know they have all got a spite against our children, merely because they are a little better dressed."

"I don't believe that, Margaret; and as I am more and more convinced that James was not to blame, I shall insist upon it that he must not be punished."

Mrs. Tyson knew that her husband was in earnest, and that it would not do absolutely to go against his express command. She, however, was in no degree appeased, and inwardly resolved to make her nephew as uncomfortable as she could.

She merely replied to Mr. Tyson's injunction, —

"If he doesn't feel ashamed of his conduct, and guilty, why does he not come home?"

"He has gone home with the young fellow that was hurt."

"Did you send him?"

"No: he asked if he might go with him; and I thought maybe under the circumstances that it might be as well."

"And let him tell his own story, and make the family feel angry at our children and at us. I shall never dare to put my foot into that house. It seems to me, Mr. Tyson, that you do act the strangest that ever was."

And here Mrs. Tyson resorted to her usual revenge when things went against her wishes — she gave way to tears, at the same time exclaiming, "that she was the most miserable creature in existence, and that when she was dead and gone he would be sorry for his treatment;" and adding, "that the sooner she was in her grave the better."

Mr. Tyson said not a word in confirmation of the latter idea, whatever he thought; for it must be said, he led rather an uncomfortable life of it; he merely replied, —

"I do wish, Margaret, that you would try to govern your temper, and not allow yourself to get into a passion whenever anything happens a little criss-cross."

He was very unfortunate, if he intended this thrust as a means of allaying the tempest, for it broke forth with redoubled vigor, until, quite dismayed at its violence, he rose and abruptly left the room.

We must for a while leave Mr. and Mrs. Tyson to settle their difficulties as they best can, and follow our two boys on their way to the home of the one who had received the injury. As the young man complained of being thirsty, James at once led him to the shop of the cobbler. Mr. Salter was busy on his bench, as usual. He stopped work, however, on the en-

trance of the boys, and in reply to the pleasant salutation, asked, —

“Is this the young gentleman that got hurt?”

“I am not so much hurt, sir, as I feared at first. It pains me some, but not quite so bad as it did.”

“Let me see it. Is the scalp torn any?”

“I really don't know, but I think not. I believe there is no blood on the handkerchief.”

Mr. Salter had risen, and was examining the wound.

“No, there is no blood; but it must have been a hard knock to have made such a swelling. What have you put on it — nothing but water?”

“No, sir.”

“Well, cold water is good, and, perhaps, the best thing you could have; but it needs to be renewed very frequently for some time. Ice would be better; but if you will wait a moment, I will get something that may possibly be better than either.”

So saying, Mr. Salter stepped into an adjoining room, and soon returned with a large phial in his hand.

“I always keep opodeldoc on hand; it is, to my notion, the best thing for wounds and bruises that I know of.”

After rubbing it for some time, the old man put the handkerchief on again, and having supplied them with a drink of fresh water, the youth expressed his gratitude in a very hearty manner.

“You are heartily welcome, I assure you; but if you both are not too much in a hurry, I wish you would sit down a moment. I want to know a little about this matter, for I can't quite understand how young gentlemen, as you seem to be, both in your looks and your behavior, should have happened to get into a squabble. I know it's common among boys as are rude brought up, to cuff and maltreat one another; but, as I take it, you two have had a different training. So, if you've no objections, I should like to hear the truth about the matter.”

James very readily gave a statement of the whole of the affray, and then left it to his companion to explain how it was that he became involved in the difficulty. The old man listened patiently to their stories, and when they had finished he looked at them fixedly a moment.

“Can you — either of you, tell me who it was, that ‘when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; He gave His cheek to the smiters, and to them that

plucked out the hair; and who prayed for those who were torturing Him unto death?’”

Both boys hung their heads. Mr. Salter was not given to much speaking. So when he saw what effect had been produced, he began very quietly to fix the strap over his knee, preparatory to the work of finishing the job he was busy at when they came in. James stepped up and offered his hand; he would have said good-by, but he dared not attempt it, for his heart was full. Mr. Salter gave him a kindly look, and a warm grasp. The other youth then stepped up, and as he put out his hand, said, —

“I thank you, sir, very much, indeed; my head feels much better for what you have done for it.”

“I am sorry,” said the cobbler, “for your hurt; but maybe it will fasten this upon your mind, *that so long as you keep truth and honor unsullied in your own heart, the upbraidings of others can't harm you.*”

The boys walked together in silence for some distance, after leaving the shop. At length, the stranger youth remarked, —

“He seems to be a very good sort of a man.”

“Yes, he is!” said James. “I am sorry I got into such a passion; his calling me a liar didn't make me one, and if I had not minded what he said, and had gone right on my way home, there would have been no difficulty, and then you would not have got hurt.”

“Oh! as to that, I don't mind the hurt; for otherwise, we should not likely have become acquainted. I have been so wanting some fellow of my own age to talk with; the boys around are so shy, one has no chance to get hold of them. The old man, in the shop, I suppose, was right; but it is rather tough work to stand still and hear a fellow give one the lie, and not pitch into him.”

“Is this your home?” said James, as he saw his companion about to enter an avenue leading to a large house a little distance off.

“Yes; and you will go in. I want to introduce you to my uncle and aunt, and the rest of them.”

“Thank you!” James replied. “At some other time I should be much pleased with an introduction; but I think I had better lose no time in returning home. I hope you will soon get over your bruise.”

“Oh! it don't hurt at all, now; it will soon be all right. But you will come soon, will you not?”

"I will try to, certainly."

James started off at a much more rapid gait than he and his new friend had maintained. They were so pleased with each other, as to seem willing to prolong the time. But James could not help feeling a little anxiety in reference to his own matters at home. He knew, from past experience, that his cousins would be likely to give a version of the affair to suit their own ends, and that his aunt would, no doubt, believe them, and would be very angry. But he had resolved, whatever were her feelings, to tell her how *he* really felt. He had been considering the whole matter, and had come to the conclusion, that he had not done right in resenting, in the manner he did, the insult offered him; and his intention now was, to acknowledge his fault as soon as he should see his uncle and aunt.

Mrs. Tyson had been wrought up to a very uncomfortable state of feeling by the remarks of her husband, and his apparent upholding of James. But that was not the whole of her trouble. The unfortunate conduct of Rudolph, had, as she thought, placed an obstacle in the way of her ever getting on visiting terms with the new family. Their boy, who had been injured, would tell his own story, and with James to confirm it, they of course would believe all the boys said; and judging others by herself, concluded, of course, that their minds would be prejudiced strongly against the parents as well as the children.

It was while in this state of feeling that James came in. He met his uncle in the parlor, and at once went up to him, acknowledging the wrong he had done in getting angry and attacking Rudolph as he did.

His uncle was somewhat confounded by this frank confession, and yet, pleased with the manly conduct of the boy, replied,—

"Oh, well, Jimmy, accidents will happen. I know you must have been provoked pretty bad. Rudolph has got a sharp tongue, I know—he gets it from his mother naturally; and then, I guess, he don't learn much good at the school."

James then asked,—

"Where is Aunt Margaret?"

Mr. Tyson hesitated a moment. It was in his mind to say, "You had better not see your aunt now; she is not in a very good humor;" but he did not say it. He answered,—

"She is in her room."

James went up immediately; his mind was much relieved by

the interview with his uncle. He was really sorry that he had got into a passion, and was ready to make the acknowledgment, and felt much happier for having done so; and was now on his way to complete his manly purpose.

As he entered his aunt's room, he was somewhat startled by the severe look which met his eye; but it did not hinder his progress. He walked up to her, and had only time to say,—"Aunt Margaret"—when she quickly interrupted him, speaking in a loud, angry tone.

"Don't call me aunt, you good-for-nothing little scoundrel! And how dare you poke your brazen face in upon me! Out of the room with you in an instant! and don't ever let me see the sight of you again!"

"But, aunt, I want to—"

"Didn't I tell you not to dare call me aunt, again?" And like a fury, she arose, and seizing a cowhide from behind her, which she had placed in readiness for the opportunity, flew at him, laying on the blows with all her strength.

James stood perfectly still, his proud spirit rising above the pain. Not a word did he utter, nor could the virago perceive that her violent blows had the least effect. This stubbornness, as she called it, irritated her the more; and losing all command of herself, she abused him in the vilest language she could master. At that moment, her husband entered the room; he had feared for the interview, and was somewhat on the watch; and hearing her loud voice, left the room below, and with all haste ran up the stairs.

As he entered, he rushed to his wife, and by main force wrested the instrument of torture from her hands, and forced her into a chair. He then turned and looked upon James. The little fellow stood perfectly still; his face was highly flushed, his eye sparkled, his fine mouth was closely shut, his lip curled, and every feature of his handsome face expressive of the indignity he had suffered.

James at length spoke:

"As my aunt will not allow me to address her, I now say to you, Uncle Tyson, what I attempted to say to her; and that is, that I am sorry I suffered myself to get into a passion at the rude and ungentlemanly treatment I received from my cousins. That is all I have to say about that. And now, Uncle Tyson, I thank you for all the kindness you have shown me, and will now bid you good-by."

With that, he turned and left the room. Mr. Tyson was so

astounded by the whole manner of the boy, that he allowed some time to elapse before he made the attempt to recall him, and when he did, it was too late. James had left the house, and forever.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN James left the house of his uncle, he really knew not where to go. He had a little money in his purse; not over twenty-five dollars. His first thought was to go to the tavern, and spend the Sabbath; but when he called to mind what an unlikely place it was to be in during the hours of that holy day, his mind revolted at the idea. He then thought of the families with whose sons he had formed an acquaintance; they would doubtless, any of them, receive him with a hearty welcome; but he could not bear the thought of asking for a lodging as a gratuity; he could not dare to offer a remuneration there. His aunt had, in her rage, called him a little beggar, and it had aroused a spirit of independence that made him resolve that never again, so long as he had a cent in his pocket, or strength to work, would he be under obligations to any human being. And then he thought of Mr. Salter, the shoemaker; he might be willing to receive compensation — he was probably poor. So he turned his steps in that direction.

Mr. Salter was in his shop, bending over his last. He received the boy kindly, and bade him take a seat.

"Thank you, sir! I came here, Mr. Salter, to ask you, if you would be willing to accommodate me with board and lodging until Monday morning. I should prefer being with you, to going to the tavern, and I wish to pay for the accommodation."

The old man looked at him a moment, and then asked, —

"What is the matter?"

"I have left my uncle's. I shall never spend another night under the same roof with my aunt, nor eat another meal of her providing; I will starve first."

"That is pretty strong language, sonny. Come! sit down, and calm yourself a little."

James was much excited. His voice trembled, his face was

flushed, the tears were filling his eyes, and just about to fall. He took a seat.

"You will be entirely welcome as to the matter of stopping here over Sabbath; as to the pay, that ain't of no consequence."

"But I wish to pay, Mr. Salter; my aunt has called me a poor, dependent beggar" — he stopped here. The idea was so hateful to his sensitive mind, so foreign to any thought that had ever crossed his mind in regard to his situation, that the mention of it overcame him.

Mr. Salter at once entered into his feelings.

"Well, sonny, you shall pay me, then; and I am glad you feel as you do. It will help you along amazingly, that feeling will. But let me ask you how the trouble was started."

James then related circumstantially, everything as it occurred, to the moment of his leaving the house.

After thinking a while, the old man replied, —

"Upon the whole, then, I think you have got the right on your side. Your handsome acknowledging of what in your conduct was wrong — the people in general would say, you wasn't wrong in making an attack upon your cousin. But I think it had better not been done; and yet, your acknowledging to your uncle and aunt that you regretted it, and asking their forgiveness, has set you in the right; and when you are in the right, sonny, you are on safe ground: you can say your prayers then with a clear conscience. And now make yourself easy; we'll have a talk by and by, and we will rest over the Sabbath; and when Monday morning comes, mebbly the way will be clearer what is best to be done."

It was just in the edge of evening, at the close of the Sabbath, that James received a call from his uncle. As he had done what appeared to him right, he met his uncle with a fearless heart.

"Why, James, what does this mean?"

"To what do you allude, uncle?"

"Why, that you should leave my house so strangely. I knew you was angry at the time, and didn't wonder at it; but to remain away all night, and all Sunday — why how does it look?"

"It looks all right to me, uncle; and all I regret, is, that I have stayed to be a trouble to my aunt so long."

"Pooh, pooh! you shouldn't mind everything she says. She is all over it now, and wants you to come home. So get your hat, now, and come along with me, and let it all pass."

"Thank you, uncle; I cannot do that. My aunt has talked to me in a way, that, if you knew, uncle, you would not ask me to stay. I suppose it is as you have told me, that my father has left nothing, and that I must either depend upon my friends for support for the present, or be cast upon the town. I prefer to do neither, but mean to take care of myself."

"But how can you do that?"

"I can do as other boys do who are situated as I am. There are several in this place, who do chores for their board, and have the privilege of going to school."

"But you cannot do chores."

"Why not, uncle?"

"Because you have never been used to doing work of any kind."

"But I can soon learn -- I know I can."

"Oh! it's all nonsense, James; you must do as I say now -- go home with me." This was said in rather a commanding tone.

James made no reply to him, but manifested no disposition to comply with the mandate.

"Come! get your hat."

"Thank you, sir -- I prefer not to."

"But I tell you you must and shall go. You are under my care, and must do as I say."

"I do not feel that I am under any one's care, uncle, but my own. I acknowledge your kind intentions in taking me under your roof. But I do not acknowledge your right to compel me to submit to abuse. My aunt dislikes me, and has never given me a kind word since I have been there; and unless I am carried by main force, I will never put myself under the same roof with her again. She has called me a beggar, and she shall never have a chance to do it to my face again, nor shall any one else, while I have strength to work."

Mr. Tyson did not wonder at the feeling the boy manifested. He knew well that his wife had a most unruly tongue, and would at times use hard language; but what would the world about him say, under the circumstances? Especially should James go around the town seeking the situation of a menial, and all knowing who were his relatives. He began to feel a little nervous about matters.

"I know, James, you have reason to feel bad; your aunt has been hard to you, but she is heartily sorry that she has gone so

far. Now, I promise you, things shall be different. Just go home with me, and let everything pass."

"Why, uncle, I have already said I would never again be under the same roof with Aunt Margaret, without I was carried there by main force; and I have been thinking of my situation a good deal since last evening. I see clearly that I must either depend upon the bounty of friends, or go to work of some kind for a living; as I had never known before my father's death what it was to feel dependent, I went to your house in ignorance. I have had a taste of it since then, and it will satisfy me for life; and so long as I live, and my health is spared, I will live *on no man's bounty*. If I cannot find work on land, I can find it on the sea, as my father did before me."

Mr. Tyson saw that it was useless to urge him further -- there was a calm, self-sustained determination in the manner of his address, that could not be mistaken. He therefore turned abruptly away, uttering an oath, accompanied with an imprecation against somebody or something, James did not hear distinctly who or what.

The plan which James had marked out for himself was a simple one. He had not yet acquired that knowledge of figures which he thought desirable, nor was he so well versed in the English branches as he wished, his attention having been turned almost entirely to the classics while at school. He therefore resolved to obtain a situation in some family for the season, where his services out of school hours might be an equivalent for his board. He did not wish to remain in --, for the reason that he did not like either the teacher or the scholars. The former was rough in his treatment of the boys, and they, in general, were of a class so different from that with which he had been in the habit of associating, that he preferred trying his fortune in some other town; and here he found the advantage of having by his civility gained the good-will of old Mr. Salter.

About thirty miles from --, a free school of a high class had been founded by private benevolence, for the benefit of the residents of the town. It had so good a reputation, that many families had become residents there, for the purpose of claiming the benefit of the school. Now, in this place lived a sister of Mr. Salter. She had married a farmer in good circumstances; they had no children, and they were in the habit of taking a young man to do chores for his board, and go to school. Whether his brother-in-law had engaged a person for

the coming season, of course Mr. Salter could not tell; but he would give James a letter of introduction which might be a benefit to him, even if he did not find a vacancy in that particular family.

James had sent for his trunk, and it was yielded up without any opposition, and he concluded to leave it at Mr. Salter's until he had procured a situation, taking with him a few light articles in a bundle.

Mr. Salter had become deeply interested in James during the time the latter had been with him; for he had drawn out pretty much the whole of his history, and the principles of the boy, too, so far as that could be done by question and answer.

As the stage drove up to the door of the small house, Mr. Salter came out with him, and as they parted, pressed his hand cordially.

"You will keep in mind the talk we have had together."

"I will try to, sir. I feel the better for it already. I have not been so happy for many a day."

"That's it — a trust *there* makes one strong and resolute. Now, good-by, and I mean all the word signifies." This conversation was held in undertones.

Mr. Salter had not, as many might have done under the circumstances, expressed his compassion for the boy thus left, at an early age, to take care for himself, without earthly friends or helpers; but plainly told him that it was probably the most fortunate event that could have befallen him — that more than half the difficulty in getting along in life is overcome when we are brought to feel that our own head and our own hands are, under God, our sole reliance. He had told him stories of men who had risen to eminence, and some of these were so exciting that James felt the stimulus which novelty gives to youth. He was even anxious to begin work; he felt more resolute and manly than ever before, and wondered he could ever have consented to accept the proposition to become a dependent on the bounty of his uncle.

His first business on reaching C—— was to call on the family to whom he had a letter. They were living on the outskirts of the village; but he soon found they were not only provided with help, but could give him little real assistance in getting such a situation as he required. All they could do was to direct him to a few families in the vicinity, where it might be possible such services as he could render might be needed. He also soon learned that it was the wrong time of

year for procuring a situation for doing chores merely. Almost the entire community lived by farming, and they must have such help as could endure the severer labors of the season.

His chance for schooling until early the next winter he saw was hopeless; and as he inquired from house to house he began to despair of obtaining any situation whatever. Most farmers were already provided with help, and one or two who wanted a laborer were deterred from endeavoring to make any engagement on account of his appearance.

"They didn't want," they said, "no sich help — his hands was too delicut!"

A few miles from the village, he stopped at a plain-looking establishment. A man was drawing a bucket of water with a well sweep. As James came up to him, and put the usual question, the farmer looked at him a moment, surveying him from head to foot. At length he asked, —

"How much wages are you expecting to get?"

"I am ignorant, sir, of what might be the wages of one of my age."

"Oh! well, as to your age, you are mebbly sixteen or thereabouts. Boys in ginerall of that age might airn from six to eight dollars a month; but I am pesky feered you couldn't more than airn your board. You ain't never done a mortal thing in the way of work, I don't believe, not since you was born."

"That may be true, sir," replied James; "but I have as much strength as most of my age, and should not fear, when I had learned a little the way of doing things, that I could accomplish as much as any one of my size."

"Now jist look here, mister, I want to know. Here, Sam, step here."

And Sam, a rough-looking chap, with bare feet and frowzy head of hair, stepped up, while the man placed him near enough to James to compare sizes.

"Now, mister, there's a chap a your age, and I swow I b'lieve he could throw you over his head. Couldn't you, Sam?"

"I guess I could throw him down faster 'an he could pick himself up. Ain't you a mind to try a wrastle?" So saying, he clapped his hand in a rough way on James' shoulder.

"I will thank you to remove your hand, sir. I have no wish for any trial of strength or skill in that way."

But the youth, paying no heed to this request, clapped another hand on his other shoulder, and was making motions to see

what he could do in the way of tripping, when he suddenly found himself lying on his back, and his head brought into contact with the ground, in a way that for a moment rather bewildered his ideas.

"I swow! who would have thought it?" exclaimed the man, as he looked at the discomfited Sam, who for the moment seemed to be in a maze as to the ways and means by which he got there, and altogether at a loss as to whether it was best to try and get up.

James, completely disgusted with the whole concern, was about to leave the premises, when the surprised man of the plough and hoe caught him by the arm.

"See here, mister! Hold on a bit. Mebby we may strike a bargain yet."

James stopped.

"I am ready to hear what you have to say, sir."

"Well, I'm a notion of tryin' how we can git along together, and if it turns out that you can handle a hoe and a pitchfork as easy as you did that lubber, why, I think I might afford to give you six dollars a month, for say six month, board and washin' thrown in."

"I accept of your offer, sir."

"Then come in; take a bite; it's nigh on to lunch time, so we might as well take a bite, now we are up here."

"I hope you didn't get hurt much by your fall," said James, as he saw the discomfited Sam scratching his head, as he stooped to pick up his cap.

"No, not much; but it was something of a jounce, I tell you."

"You cannot blame me for it."

"Oh no! It was all fair play; but you're stronger than you look to be.

The lunch was not a very inviting one to a youth who had hitherto been accustomed to delicate fare, but James had made up his mind to overlook all such matters. He had begun the tussle of life; he did not, indeed, realize the full extent of the struggle, but he had sense enough to know that it would involve mortification and self-denial, and perhaps at times severe trial; and if the present entertainment had been nothing better than hard brown bread, it would not in the least have damped the elasticity of his spirits. He had found a place for labor — he would be earning his daily bread — he would be free from

that humbling state of dependence that had begun to pierce his soul during the latter part of his stay at his uncle's.

The family in which he had now become a member was not a fair sample of Connecticut farmers. Mr. Stanley and his wife belonged to a class that laid great stress on manual labor and a plain style of living. Everything like taste in the adornment of their house or their persons was eschewed, and all improvement of the mind, beyond the simple rudiments, spelling, reading, and arithmetic, was considered useless, and as tending to give false notions, and as they said, "uppish ways." There are not many of this class to be found in the old State in this day, not even in its most barren spots; and well it is that the change has taken place, for such farmers have done much to give a bad repute to one of the noblest pursuits of man; the very name has become synonymous with contracted mind, rude manners, and ignominious toil.

Mr. Stanley had worked hard and lived on poor fare, and his family with him, for no ostensible purpose but to make the two ends meet, and if that was done he was satisfied.

His wife worked even harder than he did; for her work was never done, nor did she seem to care to have it done: it saved her the trouble of changing her dress through the day, and afforded material for grumbling at the miseries of life and the slavish condition of women.

Two sons had left the paternal abode to seek their fortunes in the Far West. One daughter had married, and was following in her mother's steps — working and complaining from day to day, and never getting things quite done up. A younger daughter was still at home. She was about sixteen years of age. She attended the district school in winter, and in summer had little to do but pick berries in the season of them, and carry them into the village for sale; with the proceeds hoping to get enough to purchase a new dress for Sunday.

One son, the Sam already introduced, was working on the farm, and longing for the time when he should be of age, and free to look out for himself.

There was apparently little of affection between the different members of the family. They did not quarrel or treat each other unkindly, but there was no pleasant linking of interest. The parents required the labor of their boys until they were twenty-one; then they would pay them wages as to any other hired help, and if at home any time without working, they would be charged as boarders. Or, if they wished to have their time

before reaching their majority, they must pay as compensation what their time might be estimated as worth to the parents. Brothers felt no sort of responsibility for their sisters, and under no more obligation to support them in case of need than they would those of perfect strangers. The romance of life had been completely ground out; and life with them but an aimless jog-trot round.

James had indeed taken the "bull by the horns" when he decided to enter into the service of Mr. Stanley. He would never, in all probability, be called to meet life under circumstances of more bare, naked reality.

The work to be done at present was not very hard or difficult. It was hoeing corn and potatoes. Sam and he worked side by side. James could handle the hoe well, for he had assisted at times in his father's garden, and especially in tending his sister's little bed of flowers. But there was a vast difference between the labor of an hour merely for the pleasure of it, and the steady pull for ten or twelve hours a day.

"I guess," said Sam, as he found his companion getting two or three hills ahead of him, "you will get sick of that afore long."

"Why so?" said James.

"Caze, you see, you'll get tired out afore night. And another thing, you take too tight a grip o' your hoe. I guess you ain't never hoed in a field; you oughter let it hang easy like, and jest draw it along like that. You see the way you work brings all the strain on your back; you should take it easy."

James watched the process and tried to practise it, but it took him some time to acquire the sleight-of-hand that his companion had; but as he learned it more and more, he perceived the value of it.

"I thank you very much," James said, "for your hints about handling my hoe; your way is much easier."

"Oh! that ain't anything; I seed as how you hadn't been used to long work very much. It's well to be quick in a wrastle" (and Sam turned a smiling look at James as he said this. Sam was a kind-tempered fellow, and never bore malice, and the pleasant way in which James conversed with him as they worked had quite won his good-will), "but in a day's work you've got to take it easy."

"I am glad you do not seem to lay your fall much to heart."

"Oh, no! that was my fault; 'twarn't no blame to you, but it made the sparks fly; I seed stars, I tell you."

The two boys worked alone through the day, as Mr. Stanley had some business that called him from home, and he did not return until near sunset. They had got along quite pleasantly together; Sam seeming much gratified that his companion was so sociable, and not at all manifesting any "uppish ways," as he told his mother in the evening. And James was constantly amused with the droll expressions of his mate, as well as pleased with the disposition he showed to be kind, and even courteous. It would have been but natural if one so conversant only with the ruder things of life had taken advantage of the knowledge practice had given him, to have laughed at the blunders of a novice, and taken pride in his own skill; but Sam exhibited no such trait.

"I guess," said Sam, "it's about time to git the cows up and be seeing about the chores."

James was quite willing to stop; for, to tell the truth, what with his efforts to do as much as his companion, and his awkward handling of the hoe, and the heat of the day, his arms and his back, and his legs too, were manifesting a degree of weariness to which he had hitherto been a stranger.

"If you will go and let down the bars yunder, I'll go and hunt up the cows; they are over in the bushes, I guess."

James looked over the large field towards the bushes which Sam had spoken of, and perceived that it was quite a distance, and judging his companion's feelings by his own, he felt that a spirit of benevolence must have prompted the former in making the arrangement, for the bars were close at hand. They were soon reached, and being let down, he took a seat, right glad to have a little rest.

It was some time before he perceived the cattle coming out into the open lot, and wending their way in a line one after the other. A short lane led from the pasture to the barn-yard; the gate was open, and as soon as the creatures entered, James closed the gate and walked back to meet Sam, who was not far behind them.

"I am thinking," he said, as they met, "that you went after the cows instead of letting me go, because you supposed I was tired. I thank you very much."

Sam smiled good-naturedly.

"You'll get used to it after a while; but I know it must come hard to you at first."

The milking was now to be done, and Sam picked up a stool and placed it by one of the cows.

"I guess you'd better try this cow; she milks proper easy; jist sit down here and I'll show you how to do it. You'd better hang your hat on the fence first; it will bother you if you don't."

James could not see how his hat was going to interfere with the process, but he did as Sam told him; and when he came up to the cow, Sam was sitting on the stool, his head leaning against the cow's flank, and both hands grasping the teats and the milk pouring in streams into the pail. James looked on, wondering how he would direct the two streams, so as to make them meet in the pail. But the work itself seemed the easiest thing in the world.

"Now," said Sam, "I've got it a-goin'; I guess you'll be able to get the most of it out, and when you've done, I'll try and see if she's clean."

James, though, soon found that milking could not be learned by merely looking on, and that it was harder work than it seemed to be; and while he was trying various ways of performing the operation, and endeavoring to learn the right one, Sam had finished the other two cows, and had come up to see how his companion got along.

"I cannot see," said James, "how it is that you made the milk come so easy."

"Oh! it will come natural to you after a while; you've done pretty well for the first time. I guess you've got the most of it. I'll jist strip her now, if you please."

James relinquished his seat, and again, to his astonishment, the milk came forth plentifully.

"It will be easier for you next time; I see you've got the right way of doin' it. This is a good cow to learn on, she milks so easy; you'll do first-rate after a while."

"I never thought," said James, "about my not knowing how to milk; I don't know what I should have done if I had gone to a place where they might have had no one else to do the milking."

"It would have been bad in that case, but it ain't much matter here; I can do it all jist as well as not, only mebbey you'd like to learn."

"I should, indeed; and I thank you very much for your patience in teaching me."

"Oh! that ain't nothin'."

No, Sam, it is not much, to be sure; but the generous disposition you manifest is a great thing. It is unfolding to your

companion, who has hitherto seen but one phase of life, that true politeness is not confined to gentle breeding and polished manners. Your companion has noticed how you gave up to him your stool, while you yourself flapped down upon your knees and threw your hat upon the ground, while advising him to hang his upon the fence; and how you slurred over his ignorance of such matters as are well known to you, and instead of trying to make him feel your superiority in work that he is obliged to resort to for a living, you are doing what you can to encourage him. No, Sam, it is not so little a matter as you think it is! A deal of prejudice is being removed, and kind feelings are kindling towards you, and preparing him to enter upon the new situation in which he is placed, with a light heart!

James enjoyed his supper of bread and milk that evening with a good relish, and after supper he and Sam sat on the stoop in pleasant converse, until the old clock in the entry reminded them that it was time for bed.

Their sleeping room was something of a novelty to James. It comprised the whole of the upper part of the house. From the outside, the house presented the appearance of a two-storied building; but within the first story alone had ever been finished: from the floor of the second story to the roof all was open. Ten glazed windows, without curtains or blinds, gave free admittance to the light. A stone chimney of immense size ran up through the centre, and the naked beams which constituted the frame of the building were all exposed. In one corner, indeed, a small room had been enclosed with rough boards, which James soon ascertained was set apart for females, and was now occupied by their daughter. It was close by the stairs, so that whoever slept there need not intrude upon the sleepers on the outside. Grain, some in bags, and some in heaps on the floor, together with scythes, cradles, saddles, and parts of harness on the beams, with a scattering of broken household furniture, helped to relieve the nakedness of the apartment; while bundles of herbs dangling from the large pegs in the timbers sent a peculiar odor through the spacious apartment.

Two beds were visible, one on the north and the other on the south side of the great chimney, which afforded sufficient screen to each. The one to which James was led was, he saw, prepared with much more care than the other, and was elevated considerably above the floor.

"This," said Sam, as he placed the candle on a small stand beside the bed, "is for you."

"Thank you," James replied; "but where do you sleep?"

"Oh! on t'other side, yonder."

James looked in the direction in which Sam pointed, and by the dim light in which that part of the large apartment was shrouded, perceived a small bunk but slightly elevated above the floor. It did not have a very inviting look, and he felt almost ashamed that there should be such a strong contrast in his own favor, and the more so as his companion evidently seemed pleased that the bed in which James was to sleep was so respectable in appearance.

"I am afraid now," said James, "that you have given me the best bed."

"Well, I guess the best ain't near as good as you've been used to."

"But," said James, "I am going to get used to anything, and I do not wish you to think I must have anything done for me better than is done for you. I am the poorest of the two."

Sam was evidently touched by this remark; with his rough exterior he had a very tender heart, for he at once said,—

"I don't like to hear you talk so."

"But it is the truth, and I may as well tell it as try to hide it. You have parents, and you have a home; and I have no one to depend on but myself, and no place that I can look to as a home, only as I am able to earn a temporary refuge by my labor."

"It must come pretty hard to you to work, as you've never been used to it."

"But I can get used to it, and that is what I mean to do. I mean, Sam, to earn my own living, and never to eat anything, or wear anything, but what I feel I have honestly earned by my own labor."

"Well, I s'pose it ain't pleasant to be too much beholden."

"Only for kindness, such as you have manifested in teaching me how to hoe, and trying to make everything as easy for me as you could. I am not ashamed to own my obligation to you, and if I can do anything to return it any time, I know I shall be glad to do it."

"Oh, pshaw! that wasn't anything."

"Yes, it was — a good deal. It shows me that you are kind-hearted, and it has made me feel a great deal happier and more at home than you can think."

"Well, good-night! I hope you'll like your bed. Shall I call you in the morning?"

"Oh, yes, please do. I want to try that milking again."

"Oh! you'll soon learn that; but I'll call you if you say so."

It was not a night for sleeping, for the moon was nearly full, and her beams had a clear play through the numerous windows; and the great space around and above his bed, with its curious garnishing, was a fair field for the imagination to work in. But James was too tired to think much beyond the act of worship, and the moment he laid his head upon his pillow, nature's sweet restorer gently stole away his sense of outward objects, and he was at rest.

The next thing that attracted his notice was the image of Sam standing by his bed, his hair terribly dishevelled — Sam eschewed night-caps — and his eyes hardly yet fully opened.

"You told me to call you."

James stared a thim a moment. He had not yet got back to the reality of things.

"Oh, yes! thank you! Is it morning already?"

"Yes, but you needn't mind; I'd just as lief do the milkin'; you're tired, I know."

"Oh, thank you! no. I want to help; I will be down in a minute. Are you dressed?"

"Pretty much; but you'll have time enough afore I git the kitchen fire a-goin'."

Sam's dressing did not amount to much — not in warm weather; it was only slipping on a pair of pants, and a vest that had lost all its buttons, but one somewhere in the middle, and he was busy feeling for that when James awoke. So he made his way at once to the work of morning chores.

James was down just as the fire had been kindled and the tea-kettle put on, and with their two pails the boys, in fine spirits, proceeded to the barn-yard. Dissimilar as they were as to dress and manners, and as to their advantages for cultivation, there was one particular in which they were alike: they had both kind hearts, and they were both influential in imparting to each other a degree of animation and pleasure. To James it was encouraging to find that where he had reason to expect rudeness and vulgarity, he met with all that consideration for his peculiar situation, and a delicacy of feeling, that he might have anticipated from one who had been accustomed to refined society. His heart at once was drawn towards his companion, not only feeling very kindly, but sincerely respect-

ing him. Sam stood very much higher in his estimation as a gentleman than did some others he knew, from whom much more might have been looked for. To Sam, the presence of James was like an inspiration. It was a new thing to him, to find one in the garb of his companion so affable, and ready to be pleased with little attentions, and so far from putting on airs of superiority. Sam, like most boys in his circumstances, had imbibed a jealousy of those who were in higher life: he thought they looked down upon rude clothes and hard work. He therefore felt shy of them, and if an opportunity had been afforded, would have been very willing to have put them to a disadvantage, or seen them humiliated; and it was with some such feelings that he so readily attacked James on their first introduction. The wholesome fall he got inspired respect for the strength and skill of his opponent, and that made the way more easy for the polite behavior and affability to have their true effect upon him.

James succeeded much better on his second trial at milking.

"Why, you've done first-rate," said the good-hearted fellow, as he was stripping the cow that James had just milked. "I swun, you've got about the whole on it. I guess you've milked a little afore now."

"No, never. I do not remember that I ever touched a cow's teats before last evening."

"Then you learn pretty easy; it took me all of three weeks afore I could milk a cow from beginning to end."

The breakfast was a plain affair — some fried pork, boiled potatoes with the skins on, rye bread, rather stale and stiff; but there was a liberal supply of butter, and a bowl of milk stood by each plate. Sam had seen pork so long, and eaten so much of it, that if there was anything to fill up with besides, he preferred passing it by; and so he made his meal partly of bread and butter, and partly of bread and milk. To James, pork was a rarity; he relished it well, and, upon the whole, made a hearty meal, much to the satisfaction of his employers. They formed quite a favorable opinion of him, from the readiness with which he partook of their fare; for if he liked the present meal, he would be likely to get along well enough. There was little variation in the materials that made up the breakfast at Mr. Stanley's; the dinner differed from the breakfast in having pork boiled instead of fried, potatoes and greens, with, occasionally, a boiled Indian pudding, with molasses.

But James had made up his mind to be satisfied with any fare; this, he knew, was not his life business; his eye was fixed far ahead; a goal was before him. He, might, indeed never reach it; but the vision of it which played before his imagination, lifted him above the petty inconveniences and hardships of the present. And another item added greatly to his resolution, and that was the fact that he was earning the food he ate. He felt under no obligation for it, and he would not for any consideration have exchanged his present situation for the luxurious table and the well-furnished dwelling of his uncle; and every day he labors, and finds his strength increasing, and his knowledge enlarging, he feels more and more thankful that he has been led to take his present step. Independence is a soul-satisfying feeling, whether in man or boy; it places one in a natural position, and gives freedom to action and thought.

It required but a few days of training to make James the better worker of the two. Sam noticed it, and his father remarked about it, and said to his wife:

"I tell you, mammy" (the usual title he gave her), "that's a 'nation smart boy. He will do more work in a day than Sam can do, try his best."

"Well, but I guess he slights it over, like."

"No, but he don't. I've watched him pretty close; he don't slight nothin'; his rows of corn look as chirp agin as Sam's; I've been clean tuk in by him. I thought, seein' I wanted help putty bad just then, I'd try and see what he could do; but he's bunkum, I tell you, and they get along fust-rate together; Sam seems to like him."

"Sam and Sue are both addled ever since he's been here. Sue must run and prink up every time before she comes to the table, and she will put on the best knives and forks and teacups and sacers, and her best shoes and stockings has to be on all the time, and she says she ain't a-goin' to go barefoot, no more; so you see your hiring young gentlemen to work for you is agoin' to cost you somethin'."

Mrs. Stanley was not, in general, apt to make the best of things; her mind had yielded, perhaps a little more than was necessary, to the rude circumstances in which she had so long lived. Everything with her had resolved itself into a bare-naked reality. Food was merely something that was necessary to sustain life, and enable her family and herself to perform their daily round of work; it was of no consequence how it was served up. Clothes were a necessity, too; but so long as

they answered their original design, the quality or the make was to her a matter of indifference. A house was a shelter from the weather, a place to eat and to sleep in; whether it was inviting to appearance, she cared not, so long as the roof shed the rain, and the doors and windows kept out the cold. There was nothing beautiful in life to her: no fancy scenes ever played before her mind; imagination was dead. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether it had ever lived for her; it may have brightened, in a feeble manner, her day of childhood, but soon faded away under the influence of her jog-trot, treadmill round. But she is not unjust: she can perceive that James behaves with propriety, that he is obliging, that he tries to give as little trouble as possible, that he takes no airs upon himself, and seems perfectly satisfied with his fare and his lodgings. It would have been, I am sorry to say, rather pleasing to her to have found our young hero putting on what she supposed the airs of a gentleman to be: it would have gratified her to have seen him leave his pork untouched upon his plate, and to have manifested a disposition to avoid them all, never entering into conversation, and keeping by himself; and to have heard from Sam that he had made fun of his large bed-room and his low bedstead. It would not only have confirmed her in the opinion she had hitherto indulged, of those who had been brought up in what she called high life; but it would have given her occasion for finding fault with her husband, or with things in general around her; but she has been "took in" as well as her husband; she feels it, although she does not say much; and to tell the truth, she allows Sue to put her best foot forward, and to make the best of things on the table, and in the house, with less opposition than could have been expected.

On one side of the dwelling, within the distance of a few rods, ran a small stream. After crossing the highway, it curved gracefully around the premises, giving a picturesque aspect to the north of their grounds, and affording not only convenient watering for the cattle at home, but, in its course through the farm, adding greatly to the value of the land, in its supply of water to different pasture-fields. So far as it added to the beauty of the place, no thought had entered the minds of any of the family—it was handy for watering the cattle, and that was all. But to the eye of James, it was something more than a mere convenience. He admired its green sloping turf, and the clear, sparkling water, as it ran over its

gravelly bed, and its graceful turns hither and thither, as it meandered through the fields; and he had spoken of its beauty more than once, but without receiving any answer that manifested a similar view. One evening, Sam missed him from the stoop which had been the usual rendezvous after the labors of the day, and calling aloud his name, heard a response from the direction of the brook. Immediately he bent his steps thither, and found his companion seated on the surface of a rock that cropped a little above the greensward, and beneath the foliage of a large chestnut-tree.

"You here, are you?" said Sam.

"Is not this a beautiful spot?"

"I guess you love to see water?"

"Don't you, Sam?"

"I don't know; I never thought about it."

"Well, come sit down here on this rock." Sam did so. "Now, see how prettily that water sparkles, as it runs over those stones that rise just above its surface, and what a sweet, lulling noise it makes! I could go to sleep any time, with that music in my ears. And are not those branches of that willow beautiful, as they droop so gracefully over the bank? And see those little waves formed by that stick that projects above the water: how they wash along the bank! This is a fine brook, Sam."

"It's real handy for the cows and horses. It runs through all three of the pasture lots."

"The sight of water is always pleasant. Don't you think so?"

"When it ain't too deep."

"Oh, but the deeper, the better; and the larger and broader, the more I like it."

"I guess you must have been used to it."

"Yes, I have. Our house was close by the water, and I could see from the hill back of it, the open Sound stretching away off, as far as you could look, and no land to be seen."

"Did you ever ride in a boat on it?"

"Oh, yes! my pa had a beautiful sail-boat. She was as stiff as a pilot-boat; and when there was a good breeze, he would take me, and would run down to the mouth of the harbor, and then out on the Sound for some miles."

James's voice began to droop before he finished the last sentence, and he fell into a reverie. His thoughts were far away from present scenes, and his young heart was aching. Sam

asked him a question, and receiving no answer, looked towards him: a tear was stealing down his cheek.

"I feel real sorry for you," said the good-hearted fellow.

At once, the words in the tone of true sympathy, went to the heart of the young sufferer, and he had to give full vent to his feelings. It was the outburst of homesickness, the first of his experience of that heart-malady. Hitherto, his mind had been so absorbed in an effort to obtain the means of supporting himself, independent of his relatives, that all the peculiarities of his situation were for the time almost forgotten; but for some cause which he could not have explained, he had through the day been dwelling upon the past, — his old home, so bright and peaceful; the love of parents, and brother and sister; the sudden change that had come over his prospects; his present lonely condition — all had at times come up to his mind through the day, and it required all his resolution to prevent an outburst of his feelings; and it was on, this account he had stolen away from Sam, after supper, as he wished to indulge his train of thought in solitude, and give vent to his feelings without restraint. Sam's presence, for the moment, checked the current, but as he began to relate some of the past scenes in his life, and especially when his lips pronounced his father's name, the rush of feeling was too strong to be resisted; and when the simple but honest expression of sympathy from his companion, fell upon his ear, he gave up all effort at restraint, and he wept freely.

Sam would have liked to have said something, but he knew not what to say; so he sat still, and picked the grass that was growing around the edges of the rock, not daring even to turn his face toward the sufferer. His heart was, however, deeply moved; and a sacred respect was kindling in his bosom towards James, which made him feel the distance there was between them, more than ever. He had no experience, indeed, of the power of the gentler emotions; they had never been exercised towards him, by either parents or brothers and sisters, nor had he been trained to the exercise of them towards those near kindred. He worked for his father, because he knew his father had a right to his service until he was of age; after that, he was to look out for himself; and instead of feeling that a separation from them would be a trial, he rather rejoiced in the idea of such an event, as an apprentice might, because the bond by which he was held to service was at an end. He did not comprehend the full idea of the cause of this outbreak; but he

knew it must be something more than common, for he knew James was no whining, girlish boy. Sam looked upon him more as a man than a boy, he had such a resolute bearing; apparently afraid of nothing; neither shrinking from toil or danger.

It was some time before the storm abated; but when it began to subside, it cleared away rapidly. James held up his head, wiped away his tears, and turning to his companion, —

"Sam, you are a good fellow! I thank you for your sympathy. I have had my cry out. I have felt bad all day; but if it had been one of my cousins that had been by me, I should have held in if I had suffered ever so much; but your saying you felt sorry for me, set me a-going, and then I couldn't stop. I shall always remember you for your kind expression; for I know you meant just what you said."

"I hate to see *you cry*," said Sam, "'cause you don't seem one of the cryin' sort; and so I thought it must be somethin' pretty tough."

"Yes, when it all came up to me — how things used to be, and only a few months ago. But I tell you, Sam, I am not going to look at the past any more; I am going to look ahead — right straight ahead. I mean to work early and late, but what I'll get ahead; and I shan't give up so long as my hands, and my feet, and my head will let me. In our country, Sam, any young man can get a living if he only buckles to it, and is honest; and he can get up in the world too, if he tries."

"Some can, I guess, better than others; but there wouldn't be no use in such as me a-tryin' to get any higher than I be."

"Why not, Sam?"

"'Cause there's no chance for no sich thing. I ain't got no larnin', nor nothin'. It's clean another thing with you. You know ever so much, and you take things quick, and pap. says you have got a deal of spunk in you."

"You have got spunk too, Sam. Didn't I see you the other day, hang to that steer, and let him drag you around the yard, rather than give up, and let him get away from you?"

"Well, you see, if he'd got the upper hand then, we couldn't have done nothin' with him; he'd a been for pullin' away, and runnin' off every time we went to put the yoke onto him."

"But all fellows would not have had the resolution you had. I don't think I should."

"That's 'cause you ain't been used to handlin' sich critters."

When you begin with 'em you've got to stick to 'em and make 'em see they've got to come under."

There was a pause now for a few moments. Sam was the first to speak.

"I believe it's larnin' makes the difference in folks."

"It does, no doubt, help a great deal; but every one here has a good chance for education. You have schools here all winter, do you not?"

"Yes, we have schools, such as they be."

"How far have you gone in arithmetic?"

"About as far as rule of three"

"Have you studied grammar?"

"No. Pap says it ain't of no use."

"You have studied geography, I suppose?"

"No. Pap says, readin', writin', and 'rithmetic, was all he larned at school, and he thinks that's enough."

"But he would have no objections, if you should wish to learn grammar and geography?"

"I don't know as he would."

"Do you mean to go to school next winter?"

"I don't know how it will be. I guess I shall have to help chop the wood and haul it in."

"But you might study in the evenings."

"Yes, if there was any one to teach me. Now, I want to know how it was you larned all about them places you was tellin' about the other evenin'—about Columbus, and the Indians, and so on."

"Why, I learned in geography about it mostly; and then I have read the 'Life of Columbus.'"

"Does geography tell about sich things?"

"Oh, yes. It tells about all the different countries—where they are, and how they are bounded, and what things they raise, and what people inhabit them, and how they are governed. Don't you, when you read in the papers, see the names of places that you don't know about?"

"I don't often read much in the paper, without it may be a story, or something of that sort."

"There is a good deal to be learned out of the papers; and if you were acquainted with geography, you would be more interested in reading."

"Maybe I should."

"Have you ever read 'Robinson Crusoe?'"

"No."

"Oh! then you must read it. I have got it in my trunk. I know you will like it. Then, I have got 'Cook's Voyage Round the World,' and 'Parry's Journal.' I know you'll like that."

"Who was he?"

"Parry!—why, he sailed up to the north pole, and got fastened in the ice, and it was so cold during the six months of night, it would most take the skin off, to expose their hands or faces to the air."

"Six months' night! who ever heard of such a thing as that!"

"Yes, they were so far north that they didn't see the sun for six months."

"Have you read all them books you speak about?"

"Oh, yes! some of them twice over."

"No wonder you know so much."

"Oh, I know but very little, Sam. But I like to read; and you will too, when you once get at it."

"I should like to try. I never thought about any sich thing till you came; and I couldn't make out how it was you knew so much more than I did; but I see now. I mean to try, though, if you've a mind to help me. I know I don't know nothin' but about pigs and cows, and sich things."

"I'll help you, Sam, with all my heart. You have helped me about things you was better acquainted with than I was; and if I can do you as good a turn, it will be a real pleasure to me."

And Sam did begin in earnest; and every leisure moment was occupied with reading; and when he and James were working together, Sam would begin talking about the story he was reading. He wanted many things explained; and James, in most cases, was able to give the information he needed. And it was a great satisfaction to James to find that a change was taking place in his companion, in reference to many things. He became manifestly more particular about his personal appearance. His hair, which had formerly looked like a great mop upon his head, was now carefully arranged, and soap and water was plentifully used, and his coat always put on at his meals, and his knife and fork handled with more propriety; for he watched the motions of James closely, even in little things. He had an idea that as the former knew so much about books, he must know about everything; and to be like him, was Sam's highest ambition. But the greatest change in Sam, and that which grat-

ified James the most, was that which was taking place in his use of language. Many improprieties in grammar, of which Sam was perfectly ignorant, were avoided. This was brought about by his reading, and by constant intercourse with one who in general spoke correctly. Sam, indeed, did not know why, but he liked the way in which James conversed, better than that of his parents or others of their standing; and although when talking for any length of time, or giving a recital of any event that had occurred, he would naturally fall into his old habit, yet in general his language was much more according to rule than formerly; in fact, one great end had been accomplished by his intercourse with one so much above him in regard to family education. His ambition had been aroused; he had seen that there was a higher, and, as he thought, a better plane than that in which he had lived, and he meant to rise to it if possible. All the prejudices he had indulged against those whom he had been taught to call "stuck up people," had been completely destroyed. James was one of that class, and he had found him not only willing to work, but able to endure, and quite as efficient as himself, and with manners and habits much more pleasing, and in consequence of his reading, living in a world which Sam had known nothing of, and which world, now that he was getting a little peep at it, looked much more inviting than the one in which he had been living.

The power of unconscious influence is very great; "no man or boy liveth to himself;" we act upon others, whether we design it or not, for good or for evil.

The summer had passed and the fall had commenced, and the time was approaching which would close his engagement with Mr. Stanley, and James was much in doubt as to what he should do for the coming winter. He had increased in size during the past season. Exercise had developed his frame so that clothes which he had been saving were now almost useless to him; and it would take a good slice out of the amount which would be due to him to furnish a suitable outfit for the winter. He could, no doubt, with his present ability to do chores, find a situation at C——, where he could earn his board. But still there would be some incidental expenses at the school, and otherwise, that would probably absorb the little remainder of his purse; and then how would he be able to bear his expenses to New York, and sustain himself there until he could find a place? Had he not better go at once to the city, and try what he could do? But if he should not succeed in getting a place,

and the winter coming on when not much business was doing there, what then? He knew but little about the city or about the world in general, but this much he knew — that money was necessary wherever he might be; and he had learned already, that even in the plainest way, it cost considerable to find even his own clothes. For until he had begun to purchase such articles as he stood in need of, he had no idea of their cost. His father's purse had always supplied his wants without his thought or care.

The more he thought, the darker things looked. The responsibility he had taken upon himself by leaving his uncle's home, and the provision he might have had there, began to manifest itself. Was he wrong in leaving as he did, especially after his uncle had entreated him to return, and the assurance given him that his aunt was sorry for her outbreak of passion? Right or wrong, he could not go back now. His whole nature arose against the suggestion. The indignity he had suffered was still too fresh in his mind, and the pleasure of earning his own bread too fascinating. It was so good to feel that he was under no obligations, that no one could say he was a dependant, living upon their bounty. The sweet taste of liberty, too, he had enjoyed. Could he again relinquish his independence? His heart said, "No, never, while I have strength to labor."

His engagement closed the first of November, and, of course, as soon as he should receive his pay, he would be again adrift.

Mr. Stanley was a rude farmer, and not a very thrifty one; yet could not be called a poor man, and he was not niggardly. A few weeks' board he did not mind, especially as his family had become so fond of James. So, on the day James's time expired, he said to him:

"You needn't be in no hurry about startin' away. My Sam tells me as how you ain't made up your mind yet as to what you are goin' to do the comin' winter — whether you'll be after goin' to C——, to the school there, or mebby to York; and more an' that, it will be some days afore I can muster the pay for you; so, if you ain't no objections, you can just stay a bit, and I shan't charge you no board."

"Thank you, sir," James replied; "I should be glad to stay a few days and look round a little. I want to see if I can find a place at C——, where I can do chores for my board this winter. But I will by all means pay for my board while I am here."

"Not a bit of it, not a bit; but if you feel like work, why

you may, on rainy days, when you can't be about — that is, if you're a mind, you can jist help Sammy a bit at the husking. The ears, you know, is all pulled and under kiver; so it will be dry work, if it does rain."

"Well, sir, I will stay on those conditions, and thank you besides."

Mr. Stanley had formed a high idea of James's proficiency as a scholar, and had talked a good deal about him to the neighbors; and one day, about a week after the above conversation, one of them met him as he was going to mill, and stopped him on the road.

"Neighbor Stanley, you know I've been made district committee for this winter. I wish I hadn't took it, but they all insisted so strong, that, like a fool, I gave in. But it's more than I want to do, with all my other business; and the plague of it is, I don't know where to go to find a teacher. Jim Parsons is gone: he's taught two winters past. But I don't think much of him — at any rate, I don't think the boys learned much, and there ain't no one else in the village I can think on. Don't you know some one that might do?"

"Me? no; how should I know? I don't know of none no-where."

"What is that young fellow going to do that's been with you this summer. You've said, you know, what a great education he had, and how smart he was."

"Yes, that's true; and gin he would do sich a thing, there ain't no one as I know on as can come up to him in the way of larnin', without it be the minister. Why, la! Bolton, he's set my boy and gal too so a-studying and reading of books, that they are at it airy and late; and Sam says he knows how to explain things and make 'em easy; and he says he's larned more at odd times a-talking with him this summer, than all he's larned at school two winters past."

"Well, don't you think he can be got?"

"I don't know. He's been a-thinkin' of goin' to the big school at C — this winter, and then he's thinkin' some of goin' to York to go in a store; and Sam tells me he's at a loss which of the two it's best for him to try. It mought be he would be willing to try it: you can ax him."

That very evening, two gentlemen entered the sitting-room of Mr. Stanley. One was Mr. Bolton, the district committee, and the other the parish minister. The former, not willing to trust his own judgment, had induced the latter to accompany

him, who was also the appointee for examining the teacher as to his qualifications.

The reverend gentleman was a young man, who had been settled there about two years; he had a pleasing countenance and an agreeable manner. And as James arose from the table at which he and Sam and his sister were seated, with their books before them, and gave his hand, the gentleman said, —

"I have not had the pleasure of an introduction before, but your countenance is quite familiar to me from seeing you in church; you have been quite a regular attendant."

"You may well say that," rejoined Mr. Stanley. "I don't b'lieve he's missed a Sabbath, rain or shine; have you, James?"

"Not that I remember, sir."

After some commonplace remarks, and the company was seated, Mr. Bolton turned to Mr. Stanley, and asked, —

"I suppose the young man knows what's the business we've come about? The reverend here being, you know, examining committee, I thought mebby he could tell about matters better than I could; so I just persuaded him to come along with me. You have no doubt told him about-it?"

"Me? no. I ain't said a word. I ain't much used to school business, and I thought as how it would be better to have you tell your own story; you can do it better 'an me."

"Oh, well, it ain't much of a story anyway; so I can as well let the young man know at once. You see we are looking for a teacher for our school this winter, and seeing that we've heard you had abilities, I thought maybe you would be willing to undertake it."

James was not exactly reading, but his book was before him on the table, and he was looking towards the fire. As he made no reply, Mr. Stanley spoke:

"You hear, Master James, what Mr. Bolton says?"

"Excuse me, sir," turning towards that gentleman; "I did not know you were addressing me."

"Yes, it seems Mr. Stanley hasn't told you; but we are in earnest about it. We are after a teacher for our school, and from what Mr. Stanley has told us about you, we've come to see you about it."

"About my being a teacher, sir?"

"Yes; that is it."

James looked at Mr. Stanley and then at the gentlemen, his countenance deeply flushed.

"I am very much obliged to Mr. Stanley for his good opin-

ion, and I thank you, sir, for the trouble you have taken to come and see me. But I could not think of such a thing."

"Well, I know the pay ain't much; but we give four dollars a week, and board the teacher. It makes a little lump when the four months is up. Maybe you are thinking to get higher pay?"

"I have had no thought about the pay, sir, for I am by no means qualified to teach."

"That's a point for other folks to decide."

"Yes, sir, but I ought to know something of my own deficiencies. I need schooling myself, sir, very much, and should feel it was great presumption in me to allow myself to take the place of a teacher of others. You must excuse me, sir, if I say I cannot for a moment think of taking such a step."

Mr. Bolton was now at the end of his arguments, and he turned towards his colleague, as much as to say, "I've done: you try your hand."

The reverend gentleman had been looking very intently at James, and listening to his replies, and had become quite interested in him. And when Mr. Bolton turned the matter over to him, he addressed himself to Mrs. Stanley.

"Have you any objections, Mrs. Stanley, to my asking this young gentleman to accompany me into your next room? I wish to see him alone a few moments."

"Sammy, take a light in; it's all dark there now."

James smiled, as he rose and followed the young minister; the whole thing seemed to him so like a farce.

When the two were seated together, James said, —

"I am very sorry, sir, you have been put to all this trouble; it is so foolish for any one to have suggested the idea."

"Not so out of the way, my young friend, as you imagine; but first let me ask you about your future plans, that I may be able to judge as to the propriety of urging the matter at all, — that is, if you feel free to do so."

James, with perfect willingness, unfolded all his plans, and even explained his peculiar situation; for he felt a confidence in his listener that he could not in many a one so much a stranger, and the effect of it was to give his questioner a deep interest in him, and a strong desire to gain his consent to accept the office.

"As to your qualification, my young friend, I have no doubt, from what you tell me of your progress in the English branches, that there need be no difficulty on that score. I

taught school myself when I was no older than you are, and did not think I knew as much."

He then went on to give his reasons why he thought it might be the very best thing for James himself to take the engagement as a means of improvement, and his reasoning had the effect of producing somewhat of a change in the views of the former.

"And now," he said, as he rose to return to the sitting-room, "you had better think the matter over, and if you are willing, call at my house to-morrow evening, and let me know your decision."

"I will do so, sir; and I thank you very much for the interest you take in the matter, and the advice you have given me. I will call upon you, sir, with pleasure."

"I cannot help feeling an interest in you, after what you have told me of your circumstances. I was left an orphan myself when very young, and have had to work my way as best I could; but I am also interested for the people, and I only wish I could see persons of your stamp in all the schools of my parish. You have reason to thank the Lord for a superior family education;" and then, in a low voice he said, "Do you not see what you have done for this family? Why formerly, if I should have come in as I did this evening, I should have found them huddled together in the kitchen, with their working-clothes on, and everything at sixes and sevens; the boy, maybe, skulking in a corner, or perhaps running out as I came in; and the girl sitting on a stool, and trying to hide her bare feet by pulling her frock down over them. You must notice the change, yourself."

"I know there is a change, sir, but I am sure it has been at no suggestion of mine."

"Doubtless not; your sense of propriety would have prevented your saying anything. The influence has proceeded from you, though, in your gentlemanly deportment; they respect you, and have been desirous of making a decent appearance before you; it has excited their ambition, and especially has it been the case with the younger ones. Why, the other day, as I passed that young man in the road, he raised his hat, and made a respectful bow — a mark of politeness I have not received from any other youth in the place since I have been here; and better things will come of it yet."

As they re-entered the room, the gentleman said, —

"Well, Mr. Bolton, our young friend will consider of this matter, and let me know to-morrow evening."

"Glad to hear it, sir; glad to hear it."

"And I guess there will be some others that'll be glad to hear it too," said Mr. Stanley, looking at Sam, whose pleasant face was lighted up with a smile. "And I tell you, Bolton, and the reverend too, gin you git this chap ahead of the school, there wont be no turnin' the master out of the school, and shuttin' the door on him. I swow, they'd find themselves a-goin' first; he's no chicken-hearted, he ain't, when it comes to tussle."

"Oh! I hope, Mr. Stanley, there will be no occasion for any exertion of physical strength on his part. I anticipate a very different state of things; boys know as well as we men when they are well treated, and in general they can tell when it is safe for them to impose upon a teacher. I do really anticipate a peaceful time, this winter."

"I hope it will be as the reverend says; but if there should be a row, there will be more 'an one a-sprawlin', I tell you."

Mr. Stanley had formed a high opinion of James's physical power as well as of his mental ability, and the former he seemed to think of as much consequence in the business of teaching as the latter.

The remarks which James had listened to from the reverend gentleman, although they had not convinced him of his duty to accept this office, yet they had the effect of causing him to look at things in a more practical light than he had been in the habit of doing.

Youth is naturally sanguine and hopeful, and to this fact can be attributed their many rash adventures. How rarely does the child in a state of dependence think of the care and labor on the part of his parents necessary in the daily supply of his varied wants; and how ready he is, in a moment of excitement, to throw himself beyond the parent's reach, and beyond his own power to retrace his steps, and has to learn the bitter experience which life has in store for those who, without that natural help which all need in beginning the battle of life, attempt the warfare alone. It is no disgrace for a new beginner to receive assistance; all that can be honorably demanded of him is, that he should so apply his energies, that the aid afforded shall enable him in due time to take his stand on the firm foundation of personal dependence.

We cannot blame James that he had cut himself loose from

his natural protectors; few boys of spirit but would have acted as he did. It was, nevertheless, a serious venture. He has not regretted that he took the step, but has of late been more and more aware of the responsibility that he has undertaken; he has learned that now, an equivalent must be given, for every want he has, and every comfort he enjoys, and that equivalent must in his case be the labor of his hands, and that he has found no mere play. Many a night, especially in his first efforts at work, has he retired to his bed, too lame and sore, from the toil of the long day, to be able, for many hours, to lose himself in sleep; and when the morning came, and he arose at the break of day, nothing but the necessity of performing the work assigned him enabled him to shake off his drowsiness, and urge his wearied limbs to their duties. Latterly the work had been lighter, and his frame had become stronger, and the fatigue less. And yet he had to realize that the real work of life, such by which a living could be obtained, was a serious matter.

When the next evening had come, that James was to give his final answer, he had not yet quite made up his mind; he was somewhat more inclined to accept the offer, and yet he was so anxious to begin what he designed to be his life business, that he could not bring himself to the point of assent. He would, however, see the clergyman, and have another talk with him.

"I am very happy to see you," was the salutation he received, as the gentleman met him at the door, and also a hearty grasp of the hand.

"Come up with me into my study, where we can have a good long talk, and no one to disturb us."

As soon as they were in the study, and even before James had taken the seat placed for him, the gentleman commenced.

"I have been thinking a great deal of your case since last evening, and the more I think of it the more I am persuaded that the very best thing you can do is to accept this offer, and I hope you have concluded to do so."

"I think more favorably than I did, sir; but I cannot say I have decided."

"Well, now, there is one thing you must make up your mind to; and that is, that money is a very necessary article. I know I have to preach against the love of it; but it is, for all that, *in itself a good* — an absolute necessity. I will not say to you, as it is said the Scotsman advised his son, 'Get

money, honestly if you can; but at any rate get it;’ but as the world now is, and especially the world in a large city, it is next to a good moral character, and without it there has been many a good character wrecked and lost forever. I wish, instead of preaching against riches, as many do, that there was more done and said to throw around money a sacredness that would place it in a right position; it is *a safeguard against temptations and a helper to manliness*, and youth ought to be educated to regard money as a help to true independence. Now, in your case, if I have understood you aright, you have no one upon whom you wish to depend.”

“That is true, sir.”

“And you have no friends in the city, with whom you could stay until you could find a situation.”

“That is so.”

“Then the moment you reach there you will begin to need means, to supply your wants. You may be so fortunate as to accomplish your wish in a few days — but you may not, and in all probability will not for some weeks; for unless you have friends there to whom you can refer, or who are willing to help you in your efforts, you will labor under disadvantages, and will find it perhaps very difficult to procure such a situation as would be desirable. Against such a contingency you will need to be provided. You ought to have at least fifty dollars in your pocket; a hundred would be safer, but less than fifty I should not dare to venture with.”

James was now looking very sober and downcast; he knew that more than half now due him would be absorbed in purchasing suitable apparel for the coming winter; and if he should spend the winter at school, he would, no doubt, by the spring have but a mere trifle left — not more than enough to pay his fare to the city.

The gentleman continued:

“Now, if you take the offer that is made you, you will receive at the close of the term about fifty dollars — perhaps a few dollars over. And that is not all: you will find that by teaching you will yourself be learning in many ways; and I should almost say you would find it full as profitable as to spend the winter at the school you have thought of attending.”

“I fear, sir, if I should accept the offer, I shall not, upon examination, be found qualified to teach.”

“That we can soon determine, if you are disposed to let me question you a little.”

“I should be very glad, sir, if not too much trouble to yourself.”

“No trouble to me, I assure you; and as I look upon reading as quite an important part of primary education, please read me a page in this book — the ‘Edinburgh Review.’”

James was a good reader; he had been taught that accomplishment by his mother. While he read, the eye of the gentleman was fixed upon him with much interest, and as he closed, asked,—

“Who taught you to read?”

“My mother taught me, sir.”

“I thought it must have been some one who was interested enough to take extra pains.”

“She did, sir, take a great deal of pains in teaching me to read.”

“It is a great pity that reading is not ranked higher as an accomplishment: it is really a more valuable accomplishment than music; the pleasure it gives is full as exciting. Many a young lady, who can play well on the piano, and sing well too, cannot read the simplest narrative with any propriety; whereas correct reading would raise her higher in the estimation of any gentleman, or lady either, than any ability she might display at the piano. Will you please parse a short sentence on the page you have read? it is rather a severe test, I know. Your scholars will not be very likely to need your help, except in simple examples; so if you should be puzzled by this test, you need not be discouraged.”

James was rather dubious as to his success, but he ventured upon the shortest sentence he could find, and that was longer than, he feared, he should be able to master; but he did get through it, not very rapidly, but to the satisfaction of his examiner. An arithmetic was then produced, and likewise a geography. His knowledge of the latter was fair; in arithmetic he had only been through simple fractions and the rule of three.

“You will not, very likely, be called to teach beyond the rule of three; but you will no doubt be anxious yourself to advance as far as possible in arithmetic, so that you can, at any rate, keep ahead of your scholars, and if you find any sums you cannot master, come to me.”

“I thank you, sir, very much.”

“It would be very desirable that we should have persons in our primary schools far in advance of such as are generally employed as teachers; but the remuneration offered will not

command the services of such as are properly qualified, so we must take the best we can get for the money. And now let me tell you, I think you better fitted for the office than any I have examined since I have been here. Now, then, let us to business. I may say to Mr. Bolton, then, that you accept his offer?"

"I don't know, sir. If you think I can fill the place; but I had better do so, taking all things into consideration."

"I am glad to hear you say so; and let me say a few things to you about the school. Your greatest difficulty will be in government. There is so little of the right kind of home discipline among us, that when a number of our boys and girls get together in school, there is apt to be more or less disorder and rudeness, and teachers at times resort to harsh measures, and that has led to outbreaks on the part of the scholars, which might all have been avoided by a little patience and gentlemanly deportment on the part of the teacher. You will have an advantage over some of our teachers in this, that there is a general impression that you know a good deal. I know you may smile at the idea, but although they may give you credit for more than the reality, it will do no harm; it will be quite a help in gaining their respect. Another advantage you will have, will be from your manners. It has become so easy for you to be polite, in consequence of your early training, that you will not be likely to lay aside your natural deportment; and there will not be anything assumed or put on, or as they call it here, "stuck up," about you; and boys are quick to notice such matters. What you will require most will be patience; and do not assume too hastily, that what to you may appear rudeness is designed as disrespect to you personally. You must make allowance for the want of proper home culture. You have seen what has been the effect of your influence in the family where you have been living. The same course carried out in the school will not fail, I think, to show itself there — not at once, perhaps, but gradually; and I cannot but hope with a permanent good result. It will not be so pleasant for you boarding round, as if you had a steady place of abode; but I am glad that it is so arranged, for while you will not be so much discommoded by the style of living, having learned to get along with pretty plain fare, and manners too, it will be good for most of the families you will stay with, to have you mingling socially with them. So, you see, I consider you have quite a mission to perform among us this winter."

"I fear, sir, you are making wrong calculations. I don't feel as if I could do much anyway; but I thank you very much for the hints you have given me."

What was the result of this engagement to James or others, must be left for another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

JAMES spent the intervening fortnight in revising his English studies, and endeavoring to prepare himself for the task he had undertaken. Sam and all his family were much pleased at the decision he had made.

Only Sam said, —

"There was one bad thing about it — he wouldn't be with them in the evenings any more."

"Well, I've been a-thinkin', Sammy," his mother replied, "gin pap is willin', that we might just ax him to make this kind of a home, like, to stay Sundays and odd times. Why, he's got to have some place where he can keep his trunk. He can't be a-luggin' that round wherever he goes; and more 'an that, I mean to do his washin' for him, anyhow."

"I most know pap would be willin'," Sam replied.

And when Mr. Stanley came in, the question was put to him.

"Me willin'! sartain of that. I've been a-thinkin' of the same thing. I kind a like the fellow, and mostly hate to have him cuttin' loose on us. But he'll want to be payin' you, wife. He's no sponger, I tell you. He wants to pay his way, he does; and I likes him all the better for it."

"I don't want no pay, for my part, nor for the washin' nuther."

"Well, I'm agreed, wife, if you be; and you and he can settle it atween you as you like. And that makes me think — Bolton is busy as a bee, a-mendin' up things, and fixin' up the old place. He's had Joe Parsons there all day a-whitewashin', and Jemime is to go to-morrow and scrub her out, and he's bought a new pail. I tell you, Bolton is quite stirred up. I never see him so in earnest about anything afore. But where is he gone to-night?"

"He's gone to the minister's. They axed him to come to tea there."

"Well, I'm glad on it. The reverend seems to be, arter all, a pretty likely kind of a man. I'm glad he's takin' a notion to him."

On the evening previous to the commencement of the school, there was an unexpected call from Mr. Bolton, the district committee.

"I've come in," said Mr. Bolton, "to talk a little about the boarding. You see, my young friend," addressing himself to James, "our people are most on 'em plain folks, and they feel shy of having a stranger come in upon them unawares; so they like to know a day or so aforehand when you're a coming. So it will be better jist to say to the boys or girls, that you will be at their house to-morrow or next day. You see there ain't a large number, and you will stay at each house four days for a scholar, and maybe where there are maybe three scholars from one family, it might be better to divide the time, and stay, maybe, three days at a time; maybe better for them, and better for you too. But you can judge as to that. Well, then, there's some of them that ain't in no ways situated as to board you at all. There's the Rileys — you know, Stanley?"

"Do, la! sure enough. They ain't no place for him to sleep," Mr. Stanley replied.

"And not much for him to eat, I guess, either. And there's the Simmonses; they ain't much better off."

"That's so. It ain't no place for a decent chap to stay, no how."

"Well, in such case, we must have some place provided, and I thought, maybe, when their turn came, you could accommodate him here; and I will see it is made right with you at the end of the term, if this would suit both parties."

"It will suit me right well," said Mr. Stanley.

"I am sure it will suit me," said James.

"Well, then, that is fixed. And now as to the first place you're to go to: that will be the Widow Lansing's."

"What!" said Mr. Stanley, in some surprise; "she ain't a-goin' to send her darters?"

"No. But she's got two that she's took — a boy and a girl. You see I called on some of the folks; and I found they warn't quite ready. Some hadn't got their sauce made yet; and some made one excuse, and some another. You see they feel a little shy, like. They didn't mind Jim Parsons; they all knew him. But they've got an idea that seeing the present

teacher is a stranger, like, that they must be more particular; and they want to put the best foot foremost."

"Well, I can tell 'em," interposed Mr. Stanley, "they needn't be afeerd; he ain't half as likely to turn up his nose at their livin' as Jim Parsons was; and we all know that afore he come here, he'd been used to a rather guess stile of livin' than among us farmers, I'll bet. La! he'll go into pork and potatoes just as hearty as our Sam, here. Can't you?" turning to James.

"Yes, sir, when they're cooked as nicely as Mrs. Stanley cooks them."

This set Mrs. Stanley into quite a fidgety state. Her knitting-needles flew faster; she moved round in her chair, smiled, and almost blushed; but mightily pleased was she. Stanley laughed out loud, and turning to his wife, —

"There, mam, you hear that. By the hokeys! you'll be prouder than ever."

When the laugh had subsided a little, Mr. Bolton continued:

"Well, as I was saying, as our folks made objections, I thought I would call at the widow's. I knew it couldn't make much odds with them; only maybe they might have company, and their beds may be all full. But it happened she had only one young girl there a-visiting her daughters. You see they've been to the school at C——, and I suppose, as it's vacation there, they have brought home a schoolmate to visit with them. Indeed, she told me so; and I think she said she lived in New York; but that, she said, would make no difference, as they had plenty of spare rooms, and the gentleman could come whenever most convenient to him: so that is all clear. You know, of course, where she lives?" turning to James, — "the large house opposite Meeting-house Square."

"Yes, sir, I believe I know the place."

"And I guess they know who you be, so you wont have any trouble about an introduction."

"I cannot think they know me," said James. "I do not remember ever having seen any of the family."

"Well, all I know is, the lady seemed pleased when I spoke to her about your coming; and she asked me was your name Bellfield, and I said yes; and then she said, "I heard that was the name;" and she looked at one of the girls and smiled, and the young folks smiled; and one of them, I thought, seemed rather 'bashed, for she turned as red as a rose. I guess, though, you'll find civil treatment there, anyhow. Well, I must be going."

James was very much puzzled by what the gentleman said about his being known, and for some time sat thinking how such a thing could be possible. He had kept himself secluded entirely from company while at Mr. Stanley's, not even making any acquaintance among the farmer boys, as his leisure moments were always spent with a book or talking with Sam. He might, however, have been noticed by them at church; so, after a while, he asked, —

"Does Mrs. Lansing's family attend at your church, Mrs. Stanley?"

"La, no! they don't attend meetin': they goes to the Church. They are Episcopal."

"I guess you're a little dumfounded about what Bolton telled you," interposed Mr. Stanley, "about their a-knowin' on you; but it's my guess it's come from the reverend. You see he's quite to home there. He and their priest is quite cheek by jowl together, and it rather pleases me to see it. Our minister and him, I've heerd, was in college together; and somehow they hitch horses together better than the ones that were here some years ago, and I've often seen the reverend a-goin' into the widow's, and it's my notion he's said somethin' about you, and as he's took a likin' to you, he'd be like, you know, to say a good word. That's my guess as how it's come."

James made no reply, but resumed his book. He could not, however, be quite satisfied that the scene which Mr. Bolton had described could be accounted for by the explanation of things Mr. Stanley had made; but as no better solution of the matter presented itself to his mind, he had to let it go, or at least try to.

The eventful morning at length arrived, and James, arrayed in his best suit, started for the school in company with Sam and his sister. Sam, indeed, hung back a little, as though it would be more proper for the teacher to go alone. Sam already began to feel the power of office. James working with him in the field was one thing; but James his *teacher*, dressed, too, as he might have been going into company, was, in Sam's estimation, quite a different matter. And Sam lingered, and whispered to his sister, —

"Let him go ahead."

But James had no such feelings troubling him; so he waited, and Sam had to give in, and they all went together.

"Mr. Bolton was there, ready to see that all things were right, and to introduce the teacher to the school, and make a

few remarks suitable to the occasion. The school was not a large one, numbering but about thirty. It was a trying moment for James, when Mr. Bolton finished, and he was left alone with his charge, and every eye fixed upon him, as the one on whom all responsibility rested to direct the exercises. He had never himself attended a district school, and such schools as he had attended were those of a high grade and under strict discipline. The clergyman had indeed endeavored to unfold to him the difference, and to instruct him as to the various things he would have to do. Yet, when he found himself before a motley collection of boys and girls, varying from those of his own age, and one or two even older, down to those of four and five, and with evident signs of heedless independence, he was alarmed, and wished he had never undertaken the task. But it was too late now for regret; the task was upon him, and his native resolution was aroused to his help. He would not flinch in the face of duty, come what might.

After making a few pertinent remarks, he took up a Bible which lay on the table before him, and said, —

"As I shall commence the school every morning with a religious exercise, I hope you will all give attention while I read a few verses out of the Bible."

Most of those present at once stopped whispering; but he could not help noticing that a few of the older ones looked at each other and smiled, and he distinctly heard one of the larger boys say to his seat-mate, —

"I wonder if he is going to pray too."

He took no apparent notice of the rudeness, but commenced at once his reading. He was soon through with that, and laying the book again on the table, he said, —

"As you, no doubt, all know the Lord's prayer, it would please me to have you repeat it with me. Will you all rise?"

All the school stood up, except two of the older boys. He closed his eyes, and very deliberately repeated the prayer; a few faint voices were heard, but enough to satisfy him as a beginning, and he felt encouraged.

On arranging the school, he found not only a variety of books, but such a difference in attainments, that if the scholars were to learn anything, he must divide them into as many classes as would have sufficed for three times their number. But there was no help for it; he should have to work the harder — that was all; and he was willing they should have all his time. The forenoon soon slipped by, mostly occupied in

arrangements for business. The moment twelve o'clock had arrived, and he gave dismissal, it was indeed "Hurrah! boys," and who will be out first—a little bedlam. He was so surprised, that he could make no efforts to stop the confusion, and was only too glad that they got out without injury to some of the little ones.

His heart sank a little as he walked on his way to dinner, and he quite forgot about the circumstance of the self-introduction which he would be obliged to undertake, until he found himself walking up the path, and within the front yard of Mrs. Lansing's premises.

A pleasant-spoken young woman answered his summons.

"Is Mrs. Lansing at home?" he asked.

"No, sir. She and the young ladies have gone away to-day;" and seeing James look somewhat confused, she immediately asked,—

"Are you the young gentleman that is to teach the school in this district?"

"I am," James replied.

"Will you please walk in, sir?"

When conducted into the parlor, she said to him,—

"Mrs. Lansing desired me to apologize to you for her absence to-day, as she had to fulfil an engagement she had made before she knew you was coming; but it will make no difference—I suppose you would like to dine soon."

"If convenient: I suppose I must be back by one o'clock. But I hope you will not put yourself to any trouble on my account; a lunch of bread and butter will be all-sufficient."

"Oh! sir, it is no trouble at all. Mrs. Lansing would feel much hurt if we had not provided you a good dinner; it will be ready in a few minutes."

James would really have preferred the lunch he had proposed, and was almost ashamed when, seated alone at the table, he found such a bountiful provision spread before him, and a servant ready to wait on him. His mind, however, was too much agitated by the new business in which he had engaged to think about food. He was not hungry; and it was rather out of courtesy, than for any other reason, that he had come for his meal. Mr. Bolton had told him he would be expected, and therefore he went.

The real business of teaching commenced on his return at one o'clock, and by the close of the afternoon he was able to form some estimate of the labor devolving upon him. One thing

at least was satisfactory to him—and that was, the compensation he was to receive would be fully earned. He would not be eating his bread for naught, he felt sure of that; and he was pleased with that idea. Whether he would be able to beat instruction into some of their heads, was to him very doubtful; but the fault should not be his. And another fact suggested itself, in a way he could not misunderstand—and that was, he would need all the patience he could command. With some of the scholars he was much pleased: there was not only manifest ability, but a respectful attention to him, and an evident desire to do their best; so that, upon the whole, at the close of the day he was in a much more hopeful frame than in the earlier portion of it, and walked on his way to his new abode, somewhat congratulating himself that the worst was over.

Mrs. Lansing received him very cordially, and by her kind manner made him in a few moments feel quite at home. She was yet in the prime of life, good-looking, a lady in every respect. Her youngest daughter was with her in the room, a child of nine years.

After James had been for a little while answering the lady's questions as to his past life, family, etc., the little girl asked,—

"Mamma, shall I not go and call the girls?"

"They will be here soon, my dear; they know it is near our tea-time. They are coming now."

As the two young ladies entered the room, James arose, and Mrs. Lansing at once said.

"Mr. Bellfield, Mary—my daughter Mary."

The young lady approached, and gave him her hand.

"Miss Lucy Chauncy—Mr. Bellfield."

James started; he had not looked at her as she entered the room, being entirely taken up by the one to whom he was first introduced.

Miss Lucy gave her hand in silence, although a sweet smile of recognition illumined her face, which was suffused with a deep blush. Neither did James speak for a few moments; his confusion was also manifested by the high color that mantled his cheeks.

Mrs. Lansing came at once to their relief, for she saw that both seemed embarrassed.

"I suppose it is somewhat a surprise to you both; for although Lucy has suspected, from the account Mr. Gould (the name of the clergyman who had taken such an interest in James) gave us of you, that you were an acquaintance of hers,

yet she could not make out how it could be that you should be in this place, and a teacher too."

"It is a great surprise to me, ma'am, and a very happy one," said James. But the last sentence startled him; for he saw at once that Miss Lucy seemed more confused than ever: it had come out without proper thought. The ringing of the tea-bell however, came happily to his relief, and that of Lucy too, and the pleasant social converse at the table, which turned very much upon the experience James had gone through the past day, and which caused hearty laughter all round, broke up all stiffness, and set things in a more comfortable shape for the rest of the evening.

In order to understand the cause of embarrassment, on the part of these youths, we must look into matters a little during the time that has intervened since their separation.

Without hinting at any idea of their being seriously in love, yet there had been such a fancy for one another as is very apt to take place at their age, if in a moderate degree of susceptible dispositions. And James had a weakness that way, if it is right to call that a weakness which is often a token of pure feelings, and one of the more hopeful traits in the character of a youth. He *had* a susceptible heart; and their former intimacy, and more especially the scene which transpired at the time of taking leave of each other, had left a strong impression on his mind. A beautiful image, embodying in his imagination every pure and delicate and generous quality, had been set up. If he did not worship it, still he liked to look at it; it was before him in his day dreams, and, like a presence, had an influence in buoying up his spirits, and stimulating his energies, and aiding his self-respect. In fact, it threw a romantic halo around his present, but more especially his future. He hoped to meet her again, and suffered his imagination to frame all sorts of bright pictures, in which this beautiful image always made a conspicuous figure. He had never mentioned her name, nor spoken of her to any one; for there was no one with whom he had been associated since to whom he wished to communicate his feelings, or could have sympathized in them. Had his sister been with him, he would no doubt have made her a confidant. But he could not do it by writing; his letters might be seen by others, and the subject was to him too sacred to be the sport of indifference or ridicule.

All we can know of the feelings of Miss Lucy is, that his name and person were remembered; for she had expressed "a

wonder" to her companion, Miss Mary Lansing, after she had heard his name mentioned by Mr. Gould, and what he said about him, "whether he was not one she knew."

"Where did you see him, Lucy?"

"At my aunt's, in —; he was there quite often."

"But what makes you blush, Lucy?"

"Do I? Oh! I suppose it is because the girls teased me so about him."

But Lucy said nothing about the parting scene, nor about the keepsakes they had exchanged; hers being carefully concealed in her trunk and never exhibited, while other presents were freely shown.

But when Miss Mary saw James, she was not surprised that Lucy manifested some feeling. She herself was affected by his appearance. His countenance, naturally prepossessing, was now radiant with the healthful glow which labor and exposure to the sun had imparted; and his ease of manner, together with his fine form, threw a charm about him which ladies, young or old, are apt to feel.

"He is very handsome," said Mary, when the two girls were alone that evening. "Don't you think so?"

"I have never thought about it," Lucy replied — and Lucy spoke the truth. And that fact, perhaps, reveals to us more of Miss Lucy's true interest in James than anything she could have said; for when the heart is touched, such matters as fine looks, black hair or brown, black eyes or gray, are of no consequence. There is an ideal image, embodying to us an ideal character, which our minds have embraced and which we cling to until death, unless disabused by some terrible development that breaks the charm and dissolves the spell.

James had no opportunity for any private interview with Lucy that evening, nor did he wish it — nor are we to believe it would have been by any means agreeable to her; indeed, it would have been embarrassing to them. They were both six months older than when they parted; and six months at their ages, especially to a girl, makes quite a difference. But Lucy could not help noticing a little token that James wore upon the bosom of his shirt, that reminded her of the past; and whenever addressed by him, and her eye was directed towards him, it was almost impossible for her, do her best, not to get a glance at it. And then a flush would come, and she would put her handkerchief to her face lest others should notice it. This cause of her emotion was merely a plain gold pin, headed

with a cornelian stone. The stone she recognized as the one she had given him; and the fact that he had thus taken pains to make an ornament of it, and one that he wore daily, and of course turning it into a continual memento, how could she help feeling a little abashed. The idea that it would ever be put to such use had never for a moment occurred to her, and now her act in giving it appears more serious than ever before, and she was almost ready to regret it; and yet she was pleased, although hardly willing to acknowledge the fact, even to herself.

The evening passed off very pleasantly, and so did the several evenings of the week. Lucy was to leave early the next week for her home; she had closed her term at C—, and was to spend the coming winter at Troy, and the next year, indeed, at Miss Willard's school.

James had but one opportunity to be alone with Lucy; it was not sought by him, but was purely an accidental meeting on the part of both. He had risen early, and the morning was so very pleasant, and looked so inviting abroad, that he felt like taking a walk. At the end of Mrs. Lansing's garden was a wooded knoll. The trees were not large, but they were of thrifty growth, and being properly thinned out, formed a delightful grove. Over the knoll, a woods commenced of some extent. In the centre of the woods was a pond; the bushes around it had been cleared off, and the grass encouraged to grow; a small boat was kept there, which the children used occasionally, but it had already been taken away and housed.

James knew nothing of the pond or the boat. He walked through the garden up over the knoll, and struck a well-beaten path, not knowing whither it led, until he suddenly came upon the pretty sheet of water; it lay like a mirror reflecting the trees from its smooth surface and the blue sky above. Charmed with the sight, he seated himself beneath a rustic arbor, which he found a little distance from the spot where he had come upon the lake. How long he sat there, and upon what airy dreams his fancy rested, is of no consequence. The reader can give a good guess, though, as to the latter, when he is told that, while lost in thought, doubtless not at all conscious of what he was doing, he drew his breastpin from his bosom, looked at it intently for a while, and then deliberately put it to his lips; then replacing it, looked at his watch, and started quickly up. It wanted a little more than half an hour to breakfast time. As he walked back with a quick step, still, however, absorbed

in thought, looking rather at the gayly colored leaves that lay along his path than at surrounding objects, he was startled by hearing somebody say, "Good-morning."

He turned quickly, and saw Lucy just emerging from behind some alder bushes close at hand.

"Oh! good morning," he replied; "what have you been gathering?" seeing a bunch of greens in her hand.

"I am very fond of wintergreen, and I like to gather it in the morning while it is fresh; are you fond of it?" handing him a bunch with the red berries hanging to it.

"Thank you, I do like it; but let me gather more for you."

"Oh no, thank you! I have sufficient, and I suppose it is near breakfast time."

"It wants half an hour yet. Mrs. Lansing tells me you are to leave next week."

"Yes, I am going home, and from there to school again. I suppose I must go to Troy this time. I wish I had not to go."

"Do you not like going to school?"

"Yes, I like that well enough, but it is not pleasant going among strangers."

"If we do not go among strangers, we shall not have a chance to form new acquaintances."

"Yes, but old ones are better; do you not think so?"

"We need not give up old friends because we happen to meet with new ones."

"No, perhaps we need not; but you know, when friends are separated for a long time, they forget one another."

"Not where true friendships are formed."

Lucy hesitated a moment, and then said,—

"Perhaps not."

They had now reached the knoll, and as they passed over it saw Miss Mary coming through the garden towards them.

"Well done," she said, as she approached; "you two have been taking an early walk, hey?"

"I went out to look for wintergreen; will you have some?" said Lucy.

"And I suppose Mr. James" (he had so protested against their calling him Mr. Bellfield, that they yielded to his wish) "went along to keep off the bears and other wild beasts," said Mary, laughing.

"Indeed, Miss Mary," James replied, "I should have been but too happy to have been asked to escort Miss Lucy or any of you ladies, although I think I should not have had much

chance to exhibit my valor against the wild beasts; but I went out for a stroll alone, and had the good luck on my return to meet Miss Lucy among the bushes just beyond the grove here. But what a pretty pond you have in your woods! I sat in the arbor enjoying the scene so much, I had like to have forgotten the breakfast hour.

"It is a romantic spot; I like to go there myself in warm days — but that reminds me that mamma is going to give us a ride to-morrow, to witness some very romantic scenery a few miles from here; she wishes Lucy to see it before she goes, and she has requested me to ask you to accompany us — you do not keep school to-morrow, do you?"

"No, the school does not keep on Saturdays. I thank your mother for the invitation; but will there be room? I should be very sorry to intrude."

"Oh! there is plenty of room in our carriage. You will be no intruder, I assure you."

"It will give me great pleasure, then, to go."

It was a beautiful morning on which the party started for the ride. It consisted of Mrs. Lansing, her two daughters, Lucy, and James. The carriage was a double Rockaway, with three seats, open in front, with curtains at the sides and back; the curtains on each side in front were rolled up, those behind and in the rear were down; Mrs. Lansing, who, with Lucy, occupied the back seat, being somewhat afraid of the sharp air.

James sat beside the driver, a young fellow not much older than himself.

As James had a full view of the surrounding country, when the hill scenery was entered, he was continually pointing out to the ladies some fine view that caught his fancy.

"He has an appreciative taste for fine scenery," whispered Mrs. Lansing to Lucy.

"He likes still scenery mamma," replied Mary, in a low voice, "like our lakelet in the early morning, when he can lose himself in reverie;" and a roguish smile played round her lips as she looked at Lucy. As the latter blushed, Mary gave a significant shake of her head, as much as to say, "I won't tell."

"Peter," said Mrs. Lansing, addressing the driver, "I hope you will be very careful in descending the hill just before us, it has such an ugly turn in it."

"Never fear, madam; I will be careful."

"Have you ever driven this way before?"

"Yes, marm, twice before I came to live with you."

He had only been in Mrs. Lansing's employ a few weeks.

They were now at the top of the hill and about to descend. The danger in descending was caused by a sudden turn in the road, about half-way down, at an acute angle — a deep gully of some fifteen feet running on one side without any protection except the wild shrubs growing on its border, and some small trees intermingled at intervals. As they reached the turn in the road, the horses refused to obey the reins, and kept straight on. The driver, greatly alarmed, and losing his self-possession, sprang from the carriage, leaving the reins behind him. James caught them at the instant, and exerted his strength to almost superhuman might to arrest their progress. His effort, however, would have availed but little had not the end of the neap caught in the crotch of a small tree, but that, he saw, could prevent the catastrophe only for a very short time; he called to the driver with great earnestness,—

"Cut the back curtains — get the ladies out quick!"

Mrs. Lansing, by a desperate effort, tore the curtain from its fastenings, and hurrying the girls out, immediately followed. She at once called to James,—

"Jump out! *do*, quick — let the horses go. Oh, *do* jump!" the girls uniting in the cry in most beseeching terms.

James, however, knew that to jump now was an impossibility, for the moment he should slacken his hold the whole concern must go down before he could extricate himself. The only hope for him was in arresting the carriage and letting the horses go down, so he called to the driver,—

"Cut the traces — quick — quick!" He felt his strength going.

The driver, trembling like a leaf, caught hold of one of the traces, but before he could accomplish the deed, the branch on which the neap rested gave way, the horses were plunged off, and the carriage followed, rolling over as it went down, and resting bottom upwards.

The scene that followed can be better imagined than described. Mrs. Lansing stood a moment as if transfixed with horror, and then rushed after the driver down the declivity.

The two girls clasped each other, as if for mutual support, Mary exclaiming, "Oh, he's killed! he's killed!" Lucy making no outcry, nor shedding a tear, but leaning heavily on her companion.

In a few moments more Mary again exclaimed, "Oh, he's

alive! there he is! they've got him out! Oh, dear Lucy, ain't you glad!"

But Lucy made no reply, except by a deep sigh, and a faint "Oh, dear!" and then Mary felt her slipping from her embrace. She would have fallen, had not her companion sustained her, and laid her gently on the ground.

"Mamma! mamma! Oh, come quick! Lucy is dying!"

Mrs. Lansing made all the haste she could, and James after her. He was very weak and sore from his bruises, and the excitement he had been under; but Mary's cry of alarm aroused him to exertion.

Lucy was not dying, but she had fainted so as to be insensible.

Mrs. Lansing understood the case too well to be alarmed, and at once began to do what was needful, and at the same time to quiet the apprehensions of Mary and James, the latter nearly as pale as the dear girl beside whom he was standing.

Water was soon procured, and, after a little, signs of returning vitality were manifest; and James, fearing his presence might be an obstruction to their operations, and perhaps trouble Lucy when full consciousness should return, retired to the edge of the ravine and there seated himself.

When Lucy opened her eyes she looked a moment at Mrs. Lansing. The look was intensely earnest. In almost a whisper, she asked,—

"Is he —" She seemed unable to say what she meant. Mrs. Lansing understood her.

"Yes, my dear, he is alive; he has escaped without serious injury. The noble fellow; he has saved, no doubt, all our lives."

Lucy closed her eyes, but tears were seen to drip from them, and her lips moved. Mrs. Lansing now raised her head upon her own lap, and then very soon Lucy was able to sit up, and Mary was busied rearranging her dress, which had been loosened; and soon Lucy was standing with Mary's arm around her, and holding private converse, no doubt concerning the scene which had just transpired.

Mrs. Lansing, as soon as released from the care of Lucy, came up to James. He seemed quite agitated; the strain upon his nerves by the physical energy he had exerted in holding the horses, and the shock he had received from the fall, added to his fears for Lucy, was a little more than he could bear up

under with perfect self-possession. Mrs. Lansing noticed his appearance.

"I fear, my dear boy, you are more hurt than you are willing to confess."

The deep and tender interest the lady manifested had like to have unmanned him entirely; but he made a desperate effort, and choked down the emotion. The tears, however, were ready to start as he replied,—

"I don't care for myself; I am so glad you all got out. Did Miss Lucy get hurt in getting out?"

"Oh, no! We all got out safely. But come, let us get our lunch-basket; we shall all feel the better for some refreshment. I know you will; and in the meantime Peter must go and try to procure a conveyance to carry us home, for our excursion to-day is at an end."

The basket was soon on hand. Things were rather in a mess inside of it, but that only excited merry feelings, and the lunch was enjoyed perhaps as much as if eaten under more favorable circumstances. Miss Mary had quite recovered her spirits.

"I am awful hungry," she said; "I've been so stirred up to think of Lucy's cutting up such a shine, and frightening one to death, and that, too, after it was all over."

"Yes, but, my dear," replied her mother, "how could she, or any of us, know but that our deliverer here was badly hurt, or even worse."

"Oh, but you see, mamma, I'll tell you just how it was. As soon as you ran down into the hollow, she started right after you; but I caught hold of her, and then, when I saw Mr. James coming through the curtain, and I cried out, 'He is alive,' in a minute, yes, and less than a minute, she sat right down. That's the thing of it! — to think, after she knew he was alive, that she should have gone off then; I felt awfully until I saw him."

"Please, Miss Mary," said James, "don't let us say any more about it—it's all over now. I am sorry, though, for the carriage. If Peter had only had his wits about him, and cut the traces, and choked the wheels with stones, I think it might have been saved."

James said this in order to save Lucy's feelings, and his own too.

"He has not much resolution, I see; but the poor fellow feels badly, and I think we had better say nothing to him about it," said Mrs. Lansing.

Peter had succeeded in hiring a team, and leaving him to

bring the horses, they all started for home, and right glad were they to reach it once more.

After supper that day, James commenced to take leave.

"Why," said Mrs. Lansing, "you are not going; you will surely spend Sunday with us."

"I thank you, ma'am; it would be very pleasant for me to do so, but Mr. Stanley's family will expect me, and as they kindly offered me a home there on Sunday, they might feel hurt should I not come."

"You will be back, though, on Monday!"

"If perfectly convenient to you, ma'am. I believe, according to the rules, you must be taxed with my company another day."

"No heavy tax, I assure you; and more than that, I think our experience to-day has brought you into a nearer relation than mere acquaintanceship. I shall expect you to visit us frequently as a friend. I shall never forget your brave and manly conduct."

"That young man," said Mrs. Lansing, after James had left the house, "is a true gentleman; he has such consideration for the feelings of others. Now he would, no doubt, much prefer to stay here with you girls, and spend the Sunday; but he knows that Mr. Stanley's family are poor, or comparatively so, and he thinks it might hurt their feelings should he seem willing to slight their invitation. I respect him more than ever for his manifestation of such just feelings."

All were delighted to have James once more seated among them at Mr. Stanley's. Mr. Stanley was not in when James came, and all were seated around the table with their books, as they had been accustomed to do before James left.

"What!" said he; "you here! right glad to see you, I swum — it looks like old times. Then they didn't ax you to spend Sunday with them? I mostly expected they would, though."

"Yes, pap, they did," replied Mrs. Stanley, quickly; "the lady did ax him, but he thought he'd come home, he says; and I'm real glad on it; it seems so natural to see him round."

"You don't say! Well, I thought, like as not the widow would ax him. She's a real clever woman, but we can't give you no sich fare as you git there; but you're welcome back, I tell you. But do tell: is it all true what Pete Johnson's been a-tellin' round, about the mishap to-day? He says you was all huve over into Smith's gully — horses, carriage, and all, and that you was fool enough to hang on, and so went down with them."

"It is true, sir."

"Why didn't you jump when Pete did? He said you could as well as not."

"If I had jumped when he did, the horses and carriage would have plunged down at once, and the ladies would have gone with it. My pulling as I did helped keep them up a few moments until the ladies got out. You wouldn't, Mr. Stanley, have had me try to save myself at the risk of their being very much injured, or killed, perhaps?"

Mr. Stanley scratched his head a minute.

"Well, I swum, — it was a tight place, that's sure. I rather guess, come to think on it, I do believe I should a hung on; by the hokeys, I believe I should, gin mam and Sue had been in there; I know I should. But I'm glad you warn't hurt; it's e'en a'most a wonder you warn't killed, or your bones broken at the least; Pete says the carriage rolled clean over and laid heels up."

"Yes, sir."

"I swum. Well, I'm glad it's no worse. But how comed it to happen; what made the horses act so. Peter says he couldn't make them turn, no how."

"The horses behaved well enough, sir; but one of them, the nigh horse, in tossing his head, got the rein somehow over the end of the neap, and of course that prevented their turning."

"Ay, ay, that was it, hey! Well, well, now I think on it, I got cotched so onst myself. I had drew down to a pond to let the critters drink, and when they'd done, I hawed 'em round; but the deuce a bit would they turn, but kept a-goin' right out into the water till they was up to their bellies, and more, afore I could see what the matter was. So I stopped 'em, and I swum, I had to git on to their back and reach over afore I could unloose 'em; and it's well I stopped 'em when I did. If I'd have gone a rod farther, it would have been a swim all round."

Lucy was to leave on Tuesday morning, and James would finish his term of boarding after dinner on Monday, but Mrs. Lansing would insist on his coming to tea, and spending the evening there.

James had not ventured in any way to allude to the little scene between him and Lucy at their parting in Bradford; he was almost certain she had recognized the token she had given him, and he thought, for some reason, that it was not quite pleasing to her that it should have been thus made use of. So, in the course of the evening, he took advantage of an opportunity of being alone a few minutes with her to refer to it.

"Do you recognize this?" he said, handing it to her.

"Oh, yes," she replied; "but why do you not wear it?" He had taken it from a small case which he then held in his hand.

James answered, with manifest confusion, —

"Please excuse me, but I feared it might not be agreeable to you."

"Why not? I am sure it is very prettily mounted."

"Not so prettily as I could have wished, but the best I could afford. Then I have your approval; you are still willing I should keep it?" He wished very much to be assured that there was no regret on her part that she had ever given it to him.

Lucy hesitated a moment, and a bright blush suffused her face.

"Yes," she said, "without you wish yours to be returned."

He was going to make some enthusiastic reply, when Miss Mary entered the room. Lucy handed him the pin, and he placed it away. It was now more sacred than ever — a renewed token of her kind feelings toward him; and, with all the ardor of youth, he took to himself the assurance that a tie had been formed between them that could never be loosened. And, very happily for him, no opportunity was afforded for any private interview before their separation; for he might, and probably would, have said something that might have alarmed Lucy, and caused a reply that would have dashed all his fine hopes into air, and destroyed all foundation for the bright vision which had a mighty influence in buoying up his resolution under the difficulties and dark scenes which his young life had yet to encounter.

He parted from her with no demonstration of feeling that was not accorded to others of the family; but his heart was very light. He regretted, indeed, that he should no longer meet her in that family circle where he was now expected to visit as a friend; but he carried with him a token that had been sanctified by a ratification of eternal friendship. So he considered it: such is youth!

CHAPTER VIII.

WE must go back again to the school, and see how the young teacher gets along there.

The greatest difficulty he met was, as Mr. Gould, the young minister, had told him it would be, with the discipline; and the very next evening after that on which he had left Mrs. Lansing's, he called upon the reverend gentleman, as he had been invited to do if at any time he needed advice.

"Well, sir, how do you get along?" said Mr. Gould, as they took their seats in his study.

"Thank you, sir — better than I feared on some accounts, but not so well as I could wish in other respects. The larger boys seem disposed to give trouble."

"In what way?"

"Well, sir, in several ways — they manifest such a disposition to disregard my requests. I commence my school every day with an act of worship. I read first a few verses of Scripture, and then I request the school to rise and repeat with me the Lord's Prayer."

"Good — that's good! Do many of them repeat it?"

"Quite a number — I should say the most of them. But some of the larger boys — two or three of them — have, from the first, paid no attention to my request to rise, and contrive in some way to manifest their disregard, not only to my request, but also for the solemnity of the act of worship."

"Have they thrown paper squibs at you, or kernels of corn, while you have been praying?"

"No, sir," said James, looking with astonishment at Mr. Gould, that he should have asked such a question.

"You have reason to be thankful, then. They did so to a teacher they had before the last; but he, to be sure, made pretty long prayers, which was unwise in him. The fact is, where children, especially boys, have no better family government than some of them have in this place, it is very difficult to bring them under any decent regulations in school. But is that all?"

"That is not all; but their example is affecting some of the boys of the next younger class. I notice that some of them that rose with the school at first now refuse to do so."

"Yes, that is likely to be the case. Have you said anything to them about it?"

"No, sir; not yet."

"That is just as well. I suppose you might possibly be authorized as a teacher to give positive orders in the case, and if they did not obey, punish them. But no good would result from such a course. If they should refuse to recite their lessons, or should make disturbance in the school so as to hinder other scholars, or do any act of insubordination that might interfere with good order, then you can rightly inflict punishment. And you must do it. But in regard to religious matters, that is a concern one side of what is required of you. You have adopted the plan of opening the school with an act of worship. I highly approve it, as calculated to make a good impression on the minds of children; but children as well as grown-up people are more likely in such matters to be benefited by persuasion than force. Your wish, if I mistake not, is to do them good. You must therefore use mild measures. Let patience have its perfect work. Notice as little as you can any annoyance, and in time, with God's blessing, there may be a change. Any other trouble?"

"I anticipate trouble to-morrow. The largest boy in the school has been from the first very negligent of his lessons, and for these two days past has scarcely answered a word of them. This afternoon I told him I could hear no further recitations from him until the last lesson I gave him was learned, and that he must spend the rest of the afternoon in studying it; and that he must do nothing else until that lesson was learned. As he took his seat he slammed his book down, and I heard him say, 'I shall cipher in spite of him.' And he very deliberately took up his slate and went to work. I took no notice of the matter, and pretended not to see him. Now what shall I do?"

"I am afraid you will have trouble with him. Could you master him in a tussle?"

"I do not know. I have never seen one yet of my own size I could not master: but would that do any good?"

"It might do good in this way. If he found you were the strongest, it would compel him to submit to your authority; and it would affect all the other boys so as to make them feel that you could not be trifled with safely. Sometimes such an influence is a mighty help to moral suasion."

"I should like to try moral suasion first."

"There can be no harm in that. You can try what you can

do in that way; but you must see to it that your orders are obeyed, or you will find the whole school getting into confusion. Now my advice to you is, that you procure a good hickory rod and place it where it can be seen, as an emblem of authority. Sometimes the sight of bayonets is sufficient to deter a mob from violence, and does wonders in aid of a mayor's proclamation, and prevents bloodshed."

"I should hate to use it!"

"Yes, no doubt; and many a sheriff hates to lock up a prisoner; and it must be always a very painful task, indeed, to put the rope round the neck of a fellow-creature and swing him off into eternity. But the safety of the community demands it. A school cannot be profitably conducted without order is maintained, and the authority of the teacher respected."

On his way to his lodging that evening, James thought over the advice he had received; and although he believed the argument of the gentleman might be correct, yet the idea of the rod was so hateful to him, he could not make up his mind to resort to the experiment until some milder measures he designed to make use of had utterly failed. One happy thought, however, occurred to him in his dilemma: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

James, on reaching his room that night, not only followed this injunction, but he examined his Bible, to gather, if possible, some light from that fountain of instruction. And in the Book of Proverbs he found so much to corroborate the advice the minister had given him, that he began to think, after all, he was right. He came across such passages as these:

"He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth his son chasteneth him betimes."

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

"Strike a scorner, and the simple will beware."

"Judgments are prepared for scorners, and straps for the back of fools."

"When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise."

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

"Withhold not correction from a child, for though thou beat him with a rod, he shall not die."

"Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and save his soul from hell."

"The rod and reproof give wisdom."

Although these instructions were addressed more directly to parents, yet James reasoned rightly when he concluded that he was for the time being responsible for the conduct of those under his care, especially during school hours, and in everything that related to the proper government of it; and that the good of the whole must be considered, and not his own feelings, or the feelings of one or two individuals in the school.

And as he thought of other parts of Scripture, he felt more and more convinced that mercy and judgment were alike prominent in God's government of the world, and of individuals also. God was wiser than he. Moral suasion was powerful, but the rod was necessary too. He had hoped that a mild, gentlemanly demeanor would be all-sufficient to keep order, and that persuasion would be a surer stimulus to improvement than severity. His conclusion would have been correct if all under his care had been of the same temperament with himself.

James had made himself somewhat acquainted with the character of this boy and the circumstances of his family. The boy had a character for rudeness and insubordination. He was intimate with some of his own age who belonged to an adjoining district, and had given great trouble to teachers, and were quite boastful of their exploits in that way; and he being the largest in this school, and a sort of leader, had no doubt thought it would be a pretty thing for him to maintain a certain independence of the teacher, and let him see that he was not to domineer over him. Another crooked idea had got into his mind in reference to James personally. Because James was polite in his manner, and always came to the school neatly dressed, "He was proud, and felt himself above them; and he meant to let him see that he felt himself as good as him any day."

The parents of the boy were respectable and well-to-do farmers, but had not been careful as to the companions they had allowed him to associate with, until, to their sorrow, they found he had acquired rude ways, and a turn for low tricks, and habits of carelessness in his general demeanor; regardless how he appeared, and too often what he did.

James could hardly credit all he had heard, because the countenance of the boy was quite agreeable. He could not but think there was good in him if it could be got at.

James followed the advice of Mr. Gould so far as to procure

the rod, and place it in a conspicuous position. The smaller boys looked at it with serious faces, and kept their eyes more steadily upon their books. And one or two of the larger ones rather smiled at first, but evidently were more sedate, and more busy with their lessons. Perhaps, also, the countenance of their teacher had something in it rather ominous. James had been thinking a great deal. He was rather pale; but there was a look of fixed purpose, not easily mistaken. It was a serious moment to him. He would conquer, or he would give up the school.

But he would do nothing rashly, nor would he do anything to provoke a contest.

The tones of his voice were low, and more mild than usual. He called the class for geography.

As soon as they were all before him he said, —

"Musgrave, have you learned the lesson of yesterday?"

There was no reply.

"Have you studied it?"

"Not much."

"Have you tried to get it?"

"No, I haven't."

"You can take your seat."

There was no movement. James laid his book on the table, and fixed his eyes steadily on the culprit.

"Musgrave, you hear me. Take your seat. It will oblige me, and the class also; for we cannot go on if you remain."

James spoke so mildly, and his manner was so far removed from anything like anger, and so much in the form of a request, rather than a command, the boy was probably ashamed, under the circumstances, to go any farther in his rebellion just then. He stepped from the class and went to his seat. James went on with the class, paying no attention to his recusant scholar, although he could not help noticing that he looked rather mortified and crestfallen. In fact, things had turned out differently from what the boy expected; when he came up with the class, he was prepared to make trouble. He anticipated severity on the part of James, and meant to resist; but the mild yet firm manner in which he was addressed, and that it would oblige him and the class too, and there being several girls in the class, all combined to touch what good feelings he had, and caused him to feel somewhat ashamed; and he was glad, rather than otherwise, to take his seat.

When the class was called in the afternoon, he did not come

up. No notice was taken of this act, nor was anything said to him until near the close of the school, when James stepped to where he was sitting, and said in a pleasant way, —

“Musgrave, if you are willing, I should be glad to have you remain a few minutes after school is dismissed.”

There was no reply. James waited a moment, and then added, —

“It will oblige me very much, if you will.”

There was still no reply. James returned to his desk, and very soon thereafter dismissed the school. He felt sad; he did not believe the boy would stay, and what step he should next take he could not think.

Musgrave took his hat with the rest and went out as far as the little lobby of the school-house; there he lingered a moment until the school had passed out, and then stood, hat in hand, near the door. James walked towards him.

“Come, will you sit down a moment?”

He walked back and took his usual seat.

“I thank you for complying with my request,” said James. “I want to have a little talk with you; there is some misunderstanding between us which ought to be cleared up. Now I want to ask you, what am I hired here for?”

“To teach the school, I s’pose.”

“Yes, and it was none of my seeking. Your committee called upon me and requested me to take the school. I at first utterly refused. I wished to go to school myself in order to be better prepared to make a living in the world; for I am poor. I have no father, as you have, to help me in the world, nor have I any kindred to whom I can look for help. I have only my own head and hands to depend on. So when Mr. Bolton told me what he would give me for teaching here four months, I at length told him, if the examiners should conclude I was fully qualified to teach, I would accept the place. I should need the money, I knew; and now I am here placed over this school, and it is expected of me not only to teach, but to maintain good order in the school. That is my part of the business; you came here to learn, did you not?”

“I s’pose so.”

“Have I said or done anything to you personally that should make you offended with me?”

“No, you haven’t.”

“You are one of the older scholars, and if you set an example of disrespect to me as teacher here, do you think I shall be

able to keep order? I know it will be impossible, and therefore I have made up my mind that you and I must have an understanding together. I do not intend to exact anything of you or of any other scholar that is unreasonable, but so long as I am teacher here the lessons must be learned. Now you do not certainly wish to have a contest with me before the school? You certainly would not feel any happier, and I should regret it most truly. I wish to have the good will of each scholar in the school, and to feel pleasantly when I meet you in your houses. Now in a few days I expect to be staying in your family, and how bad it will be for both of us if there should be difficulty between us!”

“I don’t want to have difficulty. I know I ain’t done right; I shan’t do so no more.”

“Then give me your hand; it is all settled between us.”

He gave his hand, and James saw that tears had started from his eyes.

“You don’t know, Musgrave, how happy you have made me. I shall now feel that I have a valuable assistant in keeping things as they should be, and all the aid I can render you at any time in your sums or other exercises I will afford it with pleasure.”

James had no further trouble with his school that winter; and if he had been alone in the world, and had no one dependent upon his exertions, he might have concluded to make it his business to work on a farm in summer, and teach in winter; it was an independent way of living, and a small sum could be laid by from his earnings every year. But a responsibility was resting upon him which affected him more and more as he advanced in age, and learned more of life. He liked the country. He was a lover of nature, and enjoyed the changing seasons; and his judgment admired the independence which country life afforded; but the social habits of the farmers as a class were repulsive to him. They were kind, they were hospitable, and some few among them intelligent; but their manners were uncultivated, their intercourse restrained, their knowledge confined to the common concerns of the life about them, or to the little they had learned at school. If he should cast his lot among them, his sister must of course be with him or remain where she was, and either alternative was abhorrent to his views as to her at least.

James had not yet seen Maggie since they had been separated, now eighteen months, for they were at a distance of nearly a hundred miles from each other, and he had no means at com-

mand until now that he could spare to make the journey. But they had corresponded; that is, he had written to her faithfully every month, and sometimes oftener, while he had received from her but three or four letters during all that time. The reason which she gave was that she had no time. He could not comprehend how that could be, and began to fear that their separation was weaning her from him; and yet her expressions of tender affection were apparently sincere.

As soon as his school closed and he had received his pay, he resolved to go at once and see her before he took any steps as to his future course.

"What be you going to do this summer?" Mr. Stanley had said to him the evening after his school had closed. "Do you feel like going to work agin?"

"Yes, sir, I feel like work of some kind."

"Mebby you've made up your mind to go to York; but gin you hadn't, and was willing to take hold with Sam another six months, I wouldn't mind giving you ten dollars a month this time. What do you say to that?"

"Thank you, sir," James replied, after thinking a few moments. "How soon would you wish for an answer. My reason for asking that is, I must go to Litchfield and see my sister; and I should not like to decide, before I have seen her, what it would be best for me to do."

"Oh, well, you know, we don't generally begin work afore the first April. Any time between this and that time will answer all the purpose."

"I shall probably be able to give you an answer in a fortnight, then."

"All right! that'll do; that'll bring it to, say, middle of March or thereabouts; that'll do."

James had formed no idea of the circumstances in which Maggie was living at his aunt's. Her letters were short, and very few particulars in them. Nor had he any knowledge of the pecuniary situation of his uncle; he had never visited there, and in fact had never seen his uncle.

Nor did he remember that his uncle had ever visited at his father's, although he knew that his father had once at least since his remembrance gone to see him. All he knew about him was, that he was a farmer; and from what he had seen of that life, it did not impress him favorably, so far as his little sister was concerned.

But he is on his way there now, and will soon be able to judge for himself.

"Do you know where Mr. Bellfield lives?" he asked of the driver, as they drew near the town.

"What! Joe Bellfield?"

The reply did not afford him much encouragement as to the social standing of his relative.

"Yes, Mr. Joseph Bellfield," James replied.

"Do you want to stop there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it's well you spoke. If you'd have got out at the tavern you'd have had a 'nation of a walk — e'ena'most two miles, and it would have been dark as pitch afore you got there. Wait till we get to the cross road just ahead, and I'll show you."

They were now ascending a hill, and on reaching the summit a road crossed their path, at one corner of which stood a post with a guide-board, "To Litchfield," painted on it, and a finger pointing north; James looked in that direction, and could see, quite at a distance, two steeples rising above the trees of a forest that intervened, and which completely obscured any view of other buildings of the town.

The stage stopped.

"You see," said the driver, pointing with his finger in a south-west direction, "a house there, away over that clump of trees there?"

"I see a chimney, I think," said James.

"Yes, and if it were lighter you might see the roof. But that's where Joe lives; you just go down this road about, say, half a mile, till you come across a lane, turn to the right, and that will bring you to it."

"Thank you; please reach my carpet-bag."

As the driver handed him the bag from the top of the stage, he said, —

"It's well it ain't any bigger. Look out for the stones, that you don't stub yourself agin 'em; the road there ain't first-rate. Good-night; you'll find it easy, I guess."

"Good-evening, sir, and thank you."

"That's a pleasant kind of a chap," the driver said to the other passenger, who, with James, had occupied a seat outside, the stage being quite full. "I wonder if he's akin to Joe; he's a'most too smart-looking, though, I'm thinkin', for that."

The road was not in very good condition, as the driver had intimated, for it was not only sprinkled with loose stones, but

was gullied by recent rains, and as the twilight was fast fading, the way was not so easily travelled.

The lane, however, was soon reached, and as James turned into it, the outlines of the house were plainly to be seen, and lights were visible in one end of it, which seemed to be a kitchen or L part. As he drew near he could not but notice that the fences, which were all of stone, were somewhat dilapidated; but he thought not much of that at the time, his feelings being absorbed by the thought of once more seeing his dear Maggie. He opened the front gate and looked up at the house. It was of stone, two stories in height, the upper windows, though, only one half the size of the lower ones. It had a bare appearance, as there was no front stoop, nor anything to break the monotony of its plain, rough face — not even a casing to the door.

He saw there was no path to the front door, the only one visible leading to the back part of the house. But as even at Mr. Stanley's strangers were almost always introduced by the front passage, he thought it best to try that way first. Three times he had to knock with his knuckles before any signs were manifest that his summons had been heard, and then there seemed so much difficulty in unfastening the lock, that he regretted not having gone round. This way of entrance, he felt assured, must be seldom used.

At length the bolt yielded, and the creaking door was opened. His aunt stood before him with a candle in her hand, which she held up over her head, that she might see the better whom it could be. Some stranger, she felt sure, it must be, or he would not have sought an entrance in that direction. She said nothing, but stood looking at James, who for a moment hesitated. He was not quite sure it was his aunt; he had never seen her but once, and then she was so differently dressed, and wearing a cap, that now, with her hair in no orderly condition, and the plainest of dresses on her person, and a soiled handkerchief hanging loosely round her neck, that his hesitation was quite reasonable. He was the first to speak, though.

"This is Aunt Bellfield, I believe?"

"My name is Bellfield; why! it ain't James, is it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Why, la me! how you've grown! I shouldn't never have known you if you hadn't have spoke and said Aunt Bellfield. But come in; we're all in the back kitchen. I couldn't make out who upon earth it could be, for all the folks round here know the way round so well, they never come to the front door;

and I thought I should after all have to call to you to go round, for the lock, I guess, is got rusty. I'd about give up trying to open it."

"Maggie is well, I hope, aunt?"

"La, yes, hearty as a buck."

These words passed between them as they were going through the rooms towards the rear of the house. Just before they entered the kitchen, however, a young girl, who, hearing their voices, was looking through the kitchen door, no sooner caught sight of them, than she sprang forward and threw her arms around James.

"Oh, brother James! My dear, dear brother!"

"My darling Maggie! is it you?"

For a minute they thus clung to each other, Maggie weeping aloud, and James letting his tears drop silently from his cheek. Like a flash of electricity the past had come back to him — their once happy home — their lost parents — all the fond endearments which they once enjoyed — the last fond embrace, when torn asunder at that sad parting scene — all was fresh now. He had hitherto manfully resisted all morbid feeling, never allowing himself to brood over the sad change in his lot, while nerving himself for the task before him; indeed, even as far as was possible, forgetting that he had ever been dandled in luxury, or possessed the rich love of dearest kindred. But her soft cheek closely pressed to his, her tears of joy, her warm embrace, all told him of what had been, and the freshness of domestic love is again a reality.

Their aunt placed the candle on the table and left them. "She didn't see the use of sich a fuss as they were making," she said, as she entered the kitchen. "But I s'pose it's the foolish way they've learned to home."

"Who is it, ma'am?" said a strapping boy about the age of James, but stouter. He was cracking nuts on the hearth.

"Why, it's your cousin Jim, and they're goin' on like two fools."

"What was Mag bellowing so for?"

"You must ask her. I'm sure I don't know."

And that was true; she did not know. No such feeling had ever moved her to tears. Life to her was a bare, naked reality; its work must be done; the family must be clothed and fed, the house must be attended to; and in sickness care must be taken that all necessary attention was paid to the doctor's directions. The machinery of the family must be kept going, but there the

matter ended. No fragrance from the warm affections was ever wafted upon the atmosphere of her home. Imagination had no place in any of its arrangements. She was a cold-hearted, calculating woman, prudent in managing, niggardly in expending, and ambitious only in hoarding the small gains which her careless husband could realize from a not very productive farm.

After Mrs. Bellfield left the room, they did not wholly relax their embrace. Maggie raised her head, and looking into his face, said, —

“Dear brother, how well you look! you are handsomer than ever.” Kissing him again.

“I am well, very well; and I feel strong enough to work for you and myself too.”

“Oh can't you take me with you somewhere? I don't care where it is — anywhere to be with you or near you.”

“Hush, dear, we will talk about that. Had we not better go and see uncle?”

“He is not at home yet. But let me dry my eyes first. I do not wish to let Alfred see I have been crying; he will be making fun of me.”

“You must not regard the ridicule of any one, dear Maggie, for such a cause as that.”

“I know he is not worth minding. But —”

“They treat you kindly, do they not?”

“Uncle is very kind to me.”

“Is not your aunt?”

As she made no reply, James asked, —

“Do you always dress in this way, Maggie?”

The contrast between her present appearance, and that which she had presented at their old home, was so great, James could not help noticing it. The frock was a plain calico, and very clumsily made; a coarse apron, such as he had seen house maids wear; and thick shoes and blue woollen stockings, formed her apparel. There was nothing but the clean, fair face, and sparkling eye, and the neat arrangement of her hair, the light brown curls still dangling on her shoulders, that reminded him of former days.

Maggie blushed a little at his question, as she looked down at her apron in front, and as if that was the offending article, she began to untie its strings.

“I was in such a hurry to see you that I did not think about how I looked. I was doing up the things when I heard your voice.”

The apron was removed, but to the critical eye of James the

change made no material difference; but he said nothing further on the subject.

“You do not like living here, Maggie?”

“I want to be with you; is it not possible?”

The look she gave him, as she laid her hand on his shoulder and fixed her eye, glistening with tears, upon his, at once decided James.

“Yes, dear Maggie, you shall; or at least you shall be nearer to me than you can be here.”

“Do not speak so loud they will hear you; and if they think you are going to take me away, it will make trouble for you. We must say nothing about it until you are ready to go. There will be such a fuss.”

Maggie spoke in a low voice, scarcely above a whisper.

“But why should they make objections?”

“Oh, well, you know aunt took me to be a help for her, and she says I was given to her.”

James was about to say something expressive of his indignation, when the door from the kitchen was opened, and Mrs. Bellfield entered.

“Why, Maggie, you shouldn't be keeping your brother here. I don't believe he has had any supper yet. You haven't, have you?” looking at James.

“I have not had supper, aunt, but I am not at all hungry; please do not put yourself to any trouble.”

“Oh, it ain't no trouble; and Bellfield, your uncle, I mean, will be home soon, I guess, though there's no tellin' when, for he is so irregular; so I have to keep the table a-waiting. You had better come in and take a bite. And the things are all stand-in', Maggie, just as you left 'em.”

Maggie started at once to her work, and James followed to “take his bite,” without further words.

“This is your cousin James, boys.”

James stepped up and gave each of them his hand, as they made no movement towards him.

“That is Alfred; he's the oldest. Which on you is the tallest? Alph, hold yourself up — straight up, why don't you? Well, I don't know but James has a little the advantage, though not much. Peter, put out your hand; why don't you?” Peter put out his hand, but hung his head down. “That's Sammy. He and Peter are twins.” Sammy gave his hand readily, and looked up with a bright smile on his face. “And that's Josy: he's the baby. That's your cousin James, Josy, Maggie's

brother. Josy thinks all the world of Maggie. Come here, and let me blow your nose. Here, Maggie, have you got your handkercher with you? I've laid mine down somewhere." Maggie came up and performed the duty required of her. "Your apron, child, where is that? you ain't washin' them kettles and things without any apron on? Never mind about your brother: he wont mind about that so long as he sees you lookin' so well and hearty. There! Bellfield's come. Alph, go help your pap with the horse."

"Mag, hand me the lantern; it wants a piece of candle in it too."

"You go get the lantern yourself," said his mother. "Don't you see she's got her hands in the suds?"

Alfred left his seat and went into the buttery, which ran out from the kitchen; and as he passed Maggie, who was standing there busy with her work, he stopped, and putting his hand on her shoulder whispered in her ear. She quickly turned away and released herself from his touch. He then caught one of her ringlets and gave it a pull. She resented this as well as she could, without apparently wishing to excite attention. But James saw she had turned quite red in the face, and seemed annoyed by the insult. He was himself very indignant, and almost tempted to speak, but was prudent enough to restrain any manifestation of feeling. The circumstance, however, affected him deeply, and he inwardly resolved that his little sister should never be left where she might be thus tried, and her sensibility exposed to insult. He could have shook the young boor, as he thought his cousin to be, with a right good will.

It was some time before Mr. Bellfield came in, but his salutation of James was very cordial.

"Ah, my boy, how are you? Well, I declare," giving James a hearty shake of the hand, "I'm real glad to see you. You was only a baby when I was to your house. Who'd have thought it? Why you're taller than Alph. Ain't he, ma'am?"

"No, he ain't no taller naturally — not if Alph would only hold his head up."

"Ain't much Bellfield in your looks. I'm a thinking you favor your mother more than your father. I can see her looks plain enough. If she wasn't a nice woman, it's no matter; a real lady every inch of her, and pretty as a posy."

"Come," interposed his wife, "sit down now and git your supper; for James has been a-waiting here ever so long."

"Ain't had no supper yet, boy? You shouldn't have let him wait for me, ma'am. You know I'm very uncertain."

"Yes, I know that; there's never no tellin' when you once git out, when you'll git home, and it keeps things in a muss all the time."

"Well, I'm here now, and hungry enough, too. This is a driving world, Master James, though I s'pose you don't know much about it yet; but when you come to be knocked about as I have been all my life, you'll find it's a pushing kind of a place. By the way, ma'am, I've made a grand bargain to-day."

"I hope it's better than the last one; you said that was a grand bargain, and you lost all of fifty dollars by it."

"Yes, I was awfully took in that time, no mistake. I saw that fellow to-day and if I didn't give him a piece of my mind, no matter. A man can't cheat me in a horse if it's anything a body can see. But how can any man know whether a horse has got the blind staggers or no, without they should happen to come on when he is trying him. But the one I've got now hain't no staggers about him nor nothing else. I've drove him fifteen miles on one stretch, and he's come in as fresh as a colt. Wasn't he, Alph?"

"Yes; he's puffed, though, some."

"Puffed! That ain't anything; he's a little too much flesh on, that's all. Been fed too high. We'll soon cure that."

Mr. Bellfield was not, in the common meaning of the phrase, a horse-jockey. But he was fond of horses, and liked to drive a good smart horse, and was always ready for a bargain when a proposal for a swap was made. Being an honest man himself, he was not unfrequently taken in. He was also fond of trading in general, and would ride off sometimes for miles, to the detriment of his work at home, to make a trade for a cow or yoke of oxen, and thought five dollars gained in this way compensation enough for a whole day's absence from home. He was a jovial, careless, free-and-easy person, hail fellow with every one; indifferent as to his appearance, so long as he drove a good horse, and not much respected, for the reason that his farming affairs, where his real business centred, were not properly attended to.

After he and James had finished their supper, he took his pipe, and seating himself in his corner, began talking to him.

"Well, my boy, I hear that you and Aunt Peggy couldn't hitch horses together; you've quit 'em?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I left nearly a year ago."

"Well, I can't blame you; she's a critter, I tell you. I don't see how Tyson stands it — got used to it, I guess. Darn it all! if it had been me, I should have cut stick and quit."

"Now, Bellfield," interposed his wife, "you oughtn't to speak so about Margaret; she is particler, maybe, about the house, but she keeps things nice and snug; and people that is particler, how can they help finding fault sometimes? Men and boys will be careless, and it's enough to drive a body crazy sometimes, when you want to have things reglar and snug like, to have the men folks a turning things topsy-turvy, and heels over head. Margaret has good things about her; and besides, bein' your sister, you hadn't ought to talk so agin' her."

"Well, ma'am, she's only half a one, make the most of it. I know there never warn't no love lost between us. But I tell you, it's true as the Bible. She was always a buster; and it's my guess she always will be. Don't you say so, Master James?"

"I do not wish to say anything against Aunt Tyson. I left my uncle's because I did not wish to be dependent, and I am glad I did so, for I find I can earn my own living; and it is a great pleasure to feel that you are under no obligations to any one for the food you eat and the clothes you wear."

"That's so."

Mr. Bellfield was silent for a few moments. Perhaps he was thinking how it was with himself; and whether he could really feel that in a true sense he was doing *that*. His farm had come, he knew, by his wife; and although he worked it after a fashion, yet he could not help knowing that it had not improved much under his management. But perhaps, like all light-hearted people, who are not very fond of close application, he estimated the little work he did, so highly, as to feel that upon the whole his labors were a full equivalent as an offset against what might have come to him under favor of his wife. His countenance, that had fallen a little as James was speaking, soon brightened again, and he asked, —

"Is it true you've been keeping school this winter?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you git along? You're pretty young for that business. Scholars mind you?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I had no trouble. Yes, I may truly say I had no trouble. I got along quite pleasantly."

"Make much?"

"I have cleared about sixty dollars."

"You don't say! for how long? — only for the winter?"

"Yes, sir; a little over four months."

"I want to know! well, that's doing well. And then, as I hear, you worked for wages last summer too."

"Yes, sir. My wages were small; but I saved some out of them."

"Well, well; I see you're a-goin' to do. You'll git along; no fear of that. A young fellow that can work in summer, and teach in the winter, I tell you, may snap his fingers in anybody's face. They can't starve him, no how. Do you mean to follow it up?"

"No, sir. My plan is to try for a place as clerk in the city. I may stay in the country another year, though. I am not yet decided. The man I worked for last summer wants me again, and offers me nearly double what he paid me before; but I feel anxious to get into the city. There will be a better chance for me there to get ahead, so that I can not only support myself, but Maggie too."

"Oh, la!" quickly responded his aunt. "You needn't feel no consarn about Maggie. She's doin' well enough; you needn't have no trouble for her. When I took her, I meant to do by her as by my own."

"Yes, I know it was very kind in you, aunt, and I thank you much. But I have made a resolve that I would not only, so long as my strength was spared, earn my own living, but take care of Maggie too."

"That's your sorts!" exclaimed his uncle. "I like your spunk, my boy. Not but what Sis is just as welcome here as one of our boys; and you nor she needn't feel beholden neither, for she's downright smart, and, I really think, even pays her way. You know that, ma'am," looking round at his wife, who was seated nearly behind him, her eyes bent upon her knitting, and the needles going as if impelled by machinery. Being thus appealed to, she turned her face towards James, and answered the question to him. The remarks her husband had been making had aroused her indignation towards him, so that if she dared, she would have said, "Bellfield, you're a fool!"

"As to Maggie, there ain't no use at all in bringin' her up." Maggie, as soon as James had brought up her name, had left the room. "She is doin' well enough, beholden or no beholden. That ain't nothin' to do with the question. I took her when there warn't no one else to take her. Aunt Margaret didn't want her. I took her, and all the friends was satisfied that she

should be gived to me, and there needn't be no more said about it; and it wont be no use for any one to be puttin' any new notions into her head — she's doin' well enough; she's well and hearty; she ain't never been sick a day since she's been here; and I don't want to hear a word more said about it, no ways; so there now, that's the end on it;" and turning quickly round, she set her needles going again, as fast as ever.

Bellfield kept his eye on James all the time his wife was speaking, and as soon as she had turned to her work again, winked at him with one eye, at the same time giving a significant nod with his head, as much as to say, "You see how the cat jumps."

James made no reply to his aunt. He did not wish to make any disturbance, especially on the first evening of his arrival; he had as yet no definite plan in his mind as to where he should place her if he should take her away.

He was convinced, however, that his aunt would not part with her, if she could help it; and he saw clearly that her temper was not so much milder than his Aunt Margaret's as he had hoped.

In a little while Maggie returned to the room, and, taking her seat beside him, laid her hand on his lap, which he seized with both of his; and at times she would lay her head on his shoulder; and then again look up in his face, especially if he was talking; his uncle keeping up a lively chat with him, although carefully avoiding the dangerous topic. She would, no doubt, have kissed him too, if no one but her uncle had been present. She evidently knew that such a token of affection would not be pleasing to her aunt. The latter, however, was restless, and occasionally glanced a look at her, and not a kindly one either. Maggie noticed it, but it only made her cling the closer to her brother's hand. She seemed to feel that he was her protector now, let what would come. At length her aunt said, —

"Maggie, have you seen to things in your brother's room to-night?"

"Yes, aunt; everything is ready."

"You had better take your knitting, then; the evenings is getting short, and there's a deal to do."

"Do, ma'am," said her husband, "let 'em alone; they ain't seen one another so long. You don't feel like doing anything, do you, Sis? Do, ma'am, let the everlasting work go for one night."

"Yes, and when you are calling for stockings, and there ain't

none on hand, what'll be to pay then? Men are just so; they're all alike. S'pose I should leave my work, and be hanging round you like them two fools, Ned Stanlon and his wife — how would you like that?"

"It would be real fun, I vow. But I should be awfully frightened."

"What would frighten you?"

"Why, I should think the Day of Judgment was come, sure, if such a thing as that should happen."

A loud laugh on the part of the two boys who were in the room, united with a smile from James, and a slight twitter from Maggie, and a good "ha, ha!" from her husband, started blood to the face of Mrs. Bellfield.

"Ralph, do you and Pete take your candle, and go right straight to bed. Do you hear me? I'll see if I can't be minded in my own house — right straight off."

Maggie had taken her knitting at her aunt's request, but resumed her seat close beside her brother, asking him questions in a low voice, and looking up at him with such confidence and love in her countenance, that her uncle, who was watching her, at last said, —

"You love him, Maggie, don't you?"

"I guess I do."

"That's right! stick together, I say; there's nothing like it. La, what is the world good for, if there warn't no love in it? And it's just because people don't stick together that so many turn out shiftless, and go to rack and ruin. Now you take a family of boys, say — yes, and girls too, and let them stick to one another, working into each other's hands, and doing their best to help one another — when one gets down in the world, and has hard tuggin', all take hold and help him out of the mire. There always will be one at the least, in a family, that hain't got as much gumption as t'others. Help him along, I say; try to get him on his legs; maybe he'll be able to go alone after a while. Now there's Tom Little in this place, a real fore-handed fellow. His father left him a fine farm and deal of money at interest, and he's been laying up ever since; and there's his brother Bill had a nice farm gi'n to him too, and he's made a mint of money — rich as a Jew. Well, one sister married Joe Thompson. Joe worked hard, but somehow didn't seem to get ahead. Some can't; luck seems to be agin' 'em. Well, Joe died, three years now, coming April; and all he left, after all was settled, was the house, and say six acres of

land; and his widow and two little boys have to scratch along as they can. Them fellows hain't never lifted a finger to help 'em, and that poor woman has to work day and night; do her own chores, milk her own cow, winter and summer, and even hoe in her garden; and she has to scrimp, and save, and live as she can, and two rich brothers a full and plenty of everything, and not even think of helping her, or doing for her, than if she warn't of the same flesh and blood. I swow, it goes agin' my grain every time I think on it. So I say, stick together."

"Do, Bellfield, sit down, and not get yourself worked up so." Mr. Bellfield had risen from his seat in his excitement, and was gesticulating violently.

"Well, I'll sit down; but it makes me mad every time I think on it. You wouldn't never do such a thing as that?" looking at James.

"I don't think I should."

"No, I guess not. Stick together I say."

"Well," said Mrs. Bellfield, "you've preached enough from that text, I guess, about people stickin' together; but I guess it wont make much odds. Folks will do pretty much as they like; you can't alter their natur's."

"No,—that's true, ma'am,—without you break their necks; but what I say is, stick together; that's the beauty."

"I think that James must be pretty well tired out with his ride to-day, and mebby he would like to go to bed." Mrs. Bellfield was tired of her husband's talk; the drift of it was not pleasing to her, and she was anxious to get both James and Maggie out of hearing.

"Thank you, aunt, I should like to retire if it is convenient." James was not sleepy; but he had much to think of, and he wished to be alone."

"Maggie, you just light the candle, and show your brother to his room; and then you can go to bed yourself."

No sooner had they left the room than Mr. Bellfield exclaimed, —

"I swow, I like that boy. He knows manners; and he's got real spunk in him."

"Yes, he's got spunk enough—no fear for that; and I guess you'll find trouble enough with him. It's a thousand pities he's come; it's a-goin' to set Mag all in a nettle, and make her discontented."

"I guess not, ma'am."

"I can see—they can't blind me; but you'll see how it'll be

He'll be for takin' her off; but I shan't have it—just as she's got to be of some service, and learned how to do things. I ain't a-goin' to have it, say what they will."

"Well, I must say, I should hate to have her go; and yet they take to each other so, it would be deuced hard to part 'em; they had ought to be together, gin he could manage it so."

"Yes, and I s'pose you'll be fool enough to give in, and let her go. Didn't you as much as say it, when you talked right afore 'em about folks stickin' together, and all that nonsense? But I've made up my mind, and go she shan't, let who will say the contrary."

"Well, I guess he wont be fur taking her off just yet; but gin he should be set on it, and she a-wanting to go too, I don't see how you can help it. You can't hold on to her agin' her will. You ain't got no writin' nor nothin'."

"She was gi'n to me."

"But the massys! who guve her to you? Aunt Peggy, nor Tyson, nor none of 'em, hadn't no power to do no such thing."

"Power or no power, it was agreed all round; and that's enough; and I don't want not a word more said about it. She ain't a-goin' and that's the end on it."

"There ain't no use in gittin' mad about it, ma'am. He ain't said he was going to take her yet; time enough to git worked up when the trouble comes. There ain't never no use in lookin' too fur ahead."

"Yes, I know that's your way—it ain't my way. I can see through 'em, if you can't. You mind my words; it'll be just as I say. He'll be after whisking her off, and he wont get her, that's all; only don't you go to uphold 'em, and be soft-hearted, and think, 'Oh! it's a pity to part 'em!' and all that. It'll only make it wusser for them and me too."

Leaving Mrs. Bellfield and her husband to settle the matter between themselves as they best can, we must follow the brother and sister to the room where James was to lodge for the night. As Maggie entered the room, James closed the door.

"Now, dear, come sit down and let us have a free talk. I want you to tell me all about things. How you like it here, and how you are treated. Is aunt kind to you?"

"She is not very kind to any one."

"I suppose you have to work?"

"Yes; but I don't mind that."

"What is it, then? you are not happy here."

"Not very; but I don't mind that. I don't expect to be happy until such time as we can be together."

"I know that, dear, and I mean we shall be together just as soon as possible. But tell me all how it is, and what particular annoyance you have."

"Well, you know, Brother James, it is all so different from what it was at home. There ain't any kind words. Aunt is always in a hurry, from morning to night, and she frets and scolds if everything is not done just as she says; and if I try to please her ever so much, it seems to make no difference; and then it seems so bad not to go to church."

"Do they not go to church?"

"No. I have not been inside of a church since I have been here. Two or three times I have been to a meeting in the neighborhood, of an evening; that is all."

"Why do they not go to church?"

"It is too far, they say, to walk; and then uncle does not like to let Alfred drive his horse. He does not care to go himself, I suppose; but there is another thing troubles me. Alfred keeps round me so all the time, and I don't like him. I suppose he don't think it's rude; but I cannot be alone any time when he is in the house, but he will get where I am; and if I don't do just as he says, he will get out of humor and do all he can to tease me; and then again he talks so foolish. I know I ought not to mind him, but it is provoking to have him call me his sweetheart — it is *hateful!* I can't bear him. I don't want him to talk so to me!"

James saw that Maggie was much excited; her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes were dimmed with tears.

He sat still, holding her hand, and thinking hard. It was a minute or so before he spoke.

"You would feel very bad, dear, to have me go away and leave you here?"

Maggie looked at him a moment, and then threw her arms about his neck, hiding her face in his bosom.

"Don't cry, dear; I won't leave you; I shall take you with me. God will take care of us. I will think of some place to take you to; you shall not stay here — it is not right you should be where you cannot go to church. There, hush now; I can earn enough to support us both."

"I can work, dear brother. I know, if I could only get into some nice family, I can do enough to pay my board any day."

"No, Maggie; not while I live and have my health. No, you

shall not do that. All I want you to do, is to study and improve yourself."

"Have you had any time to read since you have been here?"

"Not much, only Sundays. I wanted to go to the district school this winter, but aunt said she could not spare me. She said I could read and write now, better than she ever could, and there was no use in my going."

"Well, dear, it is high time we were away from all our relatives, and taking care of ourselves; and we *will* take care of ourselves. I feel sure I can get a place in New York, and then I shall send you to school; and you would not mind if I got some place near New York, where you could board for a few weeks until I got a-going there?"

"Oh no, indeed! that I would not."

"Then, dear, we will make the venture together; and after this we will *earn our own living* some way. It is no shame to be poor, and it is no shame to work. Let us keep up a good heart. You know the Bible says, 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' Let us cast ourselves upon Him."

And motioning to Maggie, they knelt down together, and solemnly commended themselves to the Father of the fatherless. As they arose, Maggie's face, though dripping with tears, had a cheerful light upon it; and taking another fond embrace, they parted for the night.

James was resolved to open the subject at once to his uncle; and seeing him go out after breakfast towards the barn, he followed him.

"I want to talk with you, uncle, a little, about Maggie," he said, as soon as he came up to him.

"Come in here, then, my boy, where we can be by ourselves." And he led James into the barn floor.

"Now, let's hear it."

"I have always determined, uncle, that as soon as I could support myself and Maggie, that I would have her near me. We are all alone, you know; and it seems right we should be together. You and aunt were very kind to take her as you did, and I thank you for it; but she will be very unhappy, should I go away and leave her behind; and I cannot bear the thought of doing it."

"I don't blame you. Maggie's a nice girl — a real good, sensible girl; good-tempered too. I don't believe she's given ma'am a saucy word since she's been here; and that's sayin' a

good deal; for ma'am is worritsome and plaguy cross if things don't go to suit. I swow, I have to hold in onto the tight rope myself, sometimes. You see, I like to have things go along smooth and easy like — where's the use of chafin'? It don't do no good. Things will go as they will; you can't stop 'em by rarin' and stormin', and tearin' things. Where's the use! S'posin' the world *is* crooked, and it is crooked as a ram's horn. But why not take it easy? Drat it, I say! Let 'em slide; who cares! I ain't agoin' to fret. It ain't but one life we have we've got to live, and short enough at that. Where's the use of keepin' up a tantrum all the time? Easy, easy, I say. Let 'em slide — don't worry. Drat the worry; it kills more 'an it cures.'

As soon as his uncle came to a breathing spot, James asked, —

"Do you think, uncle, that aunt will make any serious objections to my taking Maggie away? I thought, from some things she said last evening, that she did not seem to favor it."

"I'll tell you what, my boy, women is curious fish to handle, they flounder so; and they're set in their ways. They don't hear to reason; when they once git their spunk up, it's all fire and tow. A hurricane can't blow harder than they can, git 'em once a-goin'. Soft sodder's the best thing, gin you can git a chance to lay it on; but mostly you have to wait till the blow is over." Then, pausing a moment, he asked, —

"You don't mind a storm? — you've got used to it, I guess, at Aunt Peggy's. I've seen her in a hurricane many a time."

"I should be very sorry to do anything to make aunt feel unpleasantly towards me or Maggie either, but Maggie *must* go with me. I cannot go away and leave her behind me; it will break her heart."

Mr. Bellfield looked at James a moment; he saw that he was in earnest, and feeling deeply. Mr. Bellfield, with many failings, had a tender heart; he asked, —

"When do you want to go?"

"I should like to go as soon possible. I have a great deal to do, and must be back to give the man I have been working for, an answer as to my stay with him this summer; and the stage starts at nine o'clock this morning."

"Well, now, Jimmy, my boy; I'll tell you what to do. You go back to the house and jist begin easy-like — soft and easy, that's the best way, — smooth things along, you know, and come to it gently like, jist as you would gin you were goin' to put a bridle on a colt — pat 'im on the head and all that; mebby ma'am,

when she comes to hear your story, she'll soften down and make things all straight and as slick as a whistle; but gin it comes to the worst, why, man alive, you'll see! I don't blow for nothing, not I. By the jingos, I *can* rip, though, and they all knows it; and when it comes to that, they've got to stand round, I tell you. It ain't best in the general way to be snapping back at every growl; don't mind it in the general way. All I do is to let the reins go slack till there's gittin' a little too much headway, and then I pull up, and it's whoa, or the old cat's to pay; but mebby I'd better go in with you, and jist break the ice — like. Come, we'll jist try 'em."

But there was no need for Mr. Bellfield's breaking the ice; it was already broken. Unbeknown to the father, when he led James into the barn floor, Alfred was in the stable, and, as soon as he heard the purport of the interview, slipped out and came to his mother in great haste.

"Ma'am, ma'am, what do think! Jim is going to take Mag off with him; don't let her go, will you?"

"How do you know that?"

"'Cause I heard him tell pap so out in the barn."

"I'll see to that."

"You wont let her go, will you, ma'am?"

"Let her go? — no never! where is she?" and thus saying, she started for Maggie's room. She had a suspicion that probably Maggie was there, possibly packing her things. Alfred followed her. As she opened the door, she stood a moment looking at things; she saw Maggie's better dress laid on a chair, as if ready to put on, and the child on her knees over her trunk, arranging things in it.

"What are you doing?"

"Packing my trunk."

"Who told you to do that?"

"Brother James told me I had better get my things ready, as he wished if possible to get away to-day."

"And what right has he to say anything about your things? I am the only one to say about that."

"Aunt, James says *he* is going to take care of me after this."

"He'd better take care of hisself first!" exclaimed Alfred; "he'll have enough to do, to do *that*, I guess, let alone dragging you arter him."

"Now, miss, come right out a-here!" and saying this, her aunt caught her by the arm and forcibly took her from the room.

"Now go down-stairs and wash up the things, and don't never

let me hear a word more about anybody's takin' care on you; you've got to mind me, nobody else."

Maggie went as directed. She was trembling like a leaf, and the tears running down her cheeks, and almost convulsed with mortification and fear; the taunt against her brother from Alfred, and the angry grasp on her arm by her aunt, had wrought her up almost to hysterics. She tried to wash up the cups as directed, but could with difficulty hold them in her hands; while her aunt, as though wishing to deepen the impression of her authority, was going over, in a loud voice, with a long string of reasons why she, and she alone, had any right to her.

"What the dickens is to pay now?" said Mr. Bellfield, as he and James were about to enter the house, and the loud and angry tones of his wife's voice fell upon his ear. He hastened in, and James after him. James, seeing the condition his sister was in, rushed to her; she threw herself into his arms, sobbing too violently to be able to utter a word.

Mr. Bellfield looked wild, as he for a moment cast an eye over the scene.

"Confusion!" he spoke with a determined tone. "What the d—l is it! Wife, what is this? what have you been a-doin' to that child? I wont have it! Blood and thunder! I wont see that poor fatherless thing abused, no how!" and he brought down his fist with a thump on the table. "Not while there's breath in my body, she shan't be abused *no how!* and I'm goin' to settle this hash pretty quick. Now you Alph, you jist make a bee-line to the stable, and tackle Buster to the wagon, do you hear? Do it quick, too; do you *hear* me?" Alph for the moment seemed to hesitate, casting a look at his mother as though expecting some interposition on her part might turn the scale; but the last *do you hear me* came out with such a ring and a look, that he fairly jumped, and was at once on his way.

"They're my flesh and blood; and, by thunder, I'll stand between the mand harm, let be who it will!" Turning towards his wife,—

"What's made this rumpus, I want to know?"

"The rumpus is all of their making; he's gone and put it into her head that she's to go away with him, and she ain't a-goin' to do no sich a thing."

"She is a-goin' to do sich a thing, and right off too. Is your trunk ready, Maggie?"

"Yes, sir, almost ready."

"Then you go and git yourself ready, and we'll be off; and I

should like to see the one that'll stand in the way of my doin' the right thing to them two fatherless young critters—I should like to see 'em!" The last sentence was addressed to his wife, who, fairly cowed down by the determined look of her husband, forbore to reply. She had never but once before seen him so stirred up and she knew all resistance on her part would not only be useless, but merely tend to make things worse.

The horse and wagon were now at the door, and the trunk being placed in the wagon, when James, taking Maggie's hand, said,—

"We had better go in and bid aunt good-by."

As they entered the room, James spoke,—

"Aunt, we have come to say good-by."

"I don't want any of your good-byes; you've made trouble enough: I wish you'd never stepped a foot in this house, a-comin' here and settin' your sister up agin us all; but you'll pay for it yet. And she, poor thing, to be dragged off among strangers, and you no place to take her to! It's a sin and a shame on you, and you'll rue the day yet, mind my words: I don't wonder Aunt Margaret was glad to get rid of you."

"Come, Jimmy, come! it's time to be off: we'll be too late for the stage."

Hearing this call from his uncle, and seeing that his aunt was in no mood to give them any parting salutation, he merely said,—

"Good-by, aunt."

"Good-by, aunt," said Maggie, her voice trembling with emotion. The whole scene had quite unnerved the poor girl, and as she left the house she was weeping bitterly.

CHAPTER IX.

IT was a dark, lowery day in New York. Heavy clouds were rolling over the city, and gusts of wind were stirring up the fine dust from the streets, annoying the eyes of the bustling numbers as they hurried along, most of them towards their homes, for the day was drawing to its close.

A young man was walking down Dey Street, towards the

North River. He seemed quite weary; for his step was heavy, and very unlike the natural gait of one so young, and apparently of vigorous frame. There was a dejected look, too, upon his otherwise peculiarly fine countenance; he was either very tired, or very sad; and one or two persons, after passing him, turned and took a second look at him. What their conclusions were, we cannot tell; but may guess that some chord of sympathy was touched, whose vibrations brought back some scene in their own life, long ago; for they were men of mature years—probably, men who had a stormy time in their first venturing upon the ocean of business life. Near the foot of Dey Street he stopped; and, looking up at a sign over the door, apparently to ascertain that he had reached the right house, he at once ascended the two or three wooden steps, and, without knocking, entered the house. The building was of wood, and no doubt in its day had been the habitation of persons of respectability; but its best days had passed, and by the sign over the door, it was now used as a tavern. It was not, however, just such an establishment as that term generally indicates; but was simply a plain boarding-house, where farmers, and persons from the country could have plain but comfortable accommodations for a moderate charge.

The youth, on entering the house, went immediately upstairs; and, entering a small bed-room, closed the door, and throwing himself into a chair, exclaimed,—

“It’s of no use! I have tried, and tried, but I see there is no use in my trying any longer; it needs friends, I find, in this great city, even to get a berth where one can work!”

After sitting a while, looking listlessly out upon the street, he gave vent again to his feelings in words:

“Yes, all seem busy; they have something to do—at least, they have a *home* to go to! even that old cripple is whistling, as he stumps along on his crutches!”

Just then the supper-bell rang. The youth arose, washed his hands and face, arranged his toilet, brushed the dust from his clothes, and went down to supper. He had probably but little appetite for food, as his stay was very short. He was soon back to the little room; and on resuming his seat, pulled out his pocket-book, and very deliberately counted its contents.

“Ten dollars only left out of my twenty-five! and five of that will be due to-morrow evening, for my board, which will barely leave me enough to pay my way back to my home!” As he pronounced the word “home” he almost started. He

put his hand to his head a moment, as though a dart of pain had passed through it.

As his hand came down again upon the arm of his chair, he reiterated the word, while a smile of despair, or chagrin, feebly played about his finely cut lips.

“*Home! home!* I have no such place! I may indeed go back to C—, and go to work on a farm, and be content to drag through life as a clown, and have my dear little sister grow up amid rudeness and ignorance, a mere drudge!” As these words escaped him, he arose from his seat, and paced his little room. The evening was now set in, and the storm that had been gathering all day, burst angrily upon the city. The rain, driven by a fierce wind from the south-east, beat furiously against his window. The lights in the street flickered in their cases as if about to be extinguished. The wind howled through the streets, and the roar of its passage through forests of masts along the wharves, was like that from the sullen waves of Ocean rolling on a rocky shore.

James Bellfield—for it was he—had seen dark hours before, but never one so full of gloom as this. He had been now nearly three weeks in the city, looking for a situation as clerk. He had called upon all whose names he had read in the papers as wanting clerks; these, however, were but few. There had been a sudden check to business, and clerks were being discharged, rather than new ones engaged.

He had in some streets gone from store to store, but in vain. He did, indeed, find two places where an assistant was wanted; but one of them wished an experienced hand, and the other might possibly have engaged him, could he have referred them to some house in the city, as to character. This he could not do, as no one knew him here.

On this day he had been unsuccessful as hitherto, and, what was worse, he had become completely disheartened. It may have been that the weather had something to do with it, for to a stranger in a large city, clouds and wind and dust have a depressing influence. But his courage had left him; and as he retraced his steps towards his lodging-place, he had given up the struggle as a vain effort; and in a state of utter dependency he was now pacing his room, while the stormy elements that were raging without seemed a fit counterpart to the tossed and desolate state of his young mind.

As the darkness increased, he lighted his candle and threw himself again in his chair, and rested his head upon the table,

on which he had placed his light, and the big tears found vent.

When somewhat relieved — for tears are a relief to the overburdened spirit — he arose and opened his trunk; from thence he drew a small Bible, and proceeded to read it.

Alas! in our day of prosperity how apt we are to slight our Bible! We may indeed regard it with reverence, and perhaps read a portion of it daily as a matter of duty; “and as one who looketh in a glass and beholdeth himself, and goeth away and straightway forgetteth what manner of person he was,” so do its holy teachings slip from our minds amid the engagements of business or pleasure.

But when the dark hour comes, and we bow beneath the pressure of disappointed hopes — and worldly helpers are afar off, and the way before is shadowy and forbidding, and the heart sickens and faints — then this blessed word unfolds its richness — then light beams from its page, and we grasp its promises and shelter ourselves beneath the wing of Eternal Love.

James, as has already been said, had been religiously educated. He had been taught to pray, and he had continued the practice daily, and his prayers were offered in the name of his Saviour; and in many things he was exemplary, and had what is called a Christian hope; but the great idea of a filial relation to God, and that the great Jehovah was truly his Almighty Father, he had not, in its glorious meaning, fully comprehended.

The passage of Scripture to which James had turned, was the ninety-first Psalm. The leaf had been turned down, probably by his mother's hand, for the Bible had been given to him by her in her last sickness. He noticed also that several verses in the chapter had been marked with a pencil. He knew these passages must have had some special significance to her; and as he read them, he paused and meditated upon their meaning. “Had he ever read them before? He thought likely he had, but he did not know. They seemed perfectly new to him; and oh! what precious truths they unfolded!”

Over and over he read this Psalm, and then the book lay upon his lap, and he gave himself up to thought.

The writer of these words was once a man — a human being like himself; one who had given himself to God, and, it might be, was in trouble, and felt the need of an Almighty refuge, and was comforting himself by repeating the many circum-

stances in which he might be placed — in apparent danger, or in real trouble. But his God and Father would not forsake him. He was his refuge, his fortress, his shield, his buckler, his God. Angels were his messengers, and they would hover around the path of him who trusted in His fatherly care. What a blessed privilege was this! to have such a friend and protector — almighty, ever-present; ready to hear the cry of His children when bowed down under oppression or sorrow!

And as these thoughts were passing through his mind, like new lights from heaven, he fell upon his knees, and with a purpose of heart and an energy of faith to which he had hitherto never attained, threw himself upon the love and care of his Heavenly Father; and there, amid the howling of the tempest, and under the pressure of his untoward worldly circumstances, he felt the burden of life fall off. *He* was helpless, but his Father was strong; *he* could not see his way through the darkness, but his Father knew the way, and would lead him: he was no longer alone and friendless; he had grasped the hand of one who sticketh closer than a brother.

Wearied by the walk and excitement of the day, he retired early to rest; and when he awoke the next morning, the sun was shining brightly, and Nature, so far as she could be seen, appeared to be rejoicing that the cleaning-up and clearing-off process had been accomplished.

So far as he could see, it seemed to be his duty to return to the country; another week would find him with an exhausted purse, and no means whereby he could gain that part of the country where he was known, and likely to get employment.

His determination, therefore, was to visit Peck Slip, and ascertain at what time a boat would sail for Woodville, the place where he had left his sister.

One effort more he had made that day, but in vain; and was now on his way to Peck Slip. As he was walking along through Water Street, he was attracted by the rather severe remarks of a plainly dressed man, to two negroes who were lying in the sun, on a cellar door. From a few words the man dropped in his hearing, he understood that he was desirous of obtaining their assistance, but was unable to get them to move from their snug berth in the sun. Suddenly a new thought came into the mind of James, and he stepped up to the man.

“Are you in want of assistance, sir?”

The man looked at him a moment.

“I wanted to hire a man to help me hoist some barrels; but

divel a bit could I get either of them lazy niggers to stir an inch; though I offered them eighteenpence an hour; the lazy vagabonds."

"I should be glad of the job, if you think I can answer your turn."

"But you are no laboring man; though I don't know but you've pluck enough to make up for want of heft. But how comes it, my boy, that one of your appearance, that seems better fitted for a counting-house, or sich like, should be asking for work like a common laborer. Do you live in the city?"

"No, sir. I am from the country; and have been here for three weeks past, looking for a situation as clerk; but have not been able to find one."

"And so you've made up your mind to take up anything that comes along, to earn a penny?"

"Yes, sir, anything that is honest,"

"That's your sorts. Come along with me, then, my boy; it shan't be said that Tim O'Connor refused to give a chance to a body that was wanting to make his hands earn what his belly craved. Come along."

Tim O'Connor, as he called himself, now stepped briskly along, and James beside him. After passing a few rods, they reached a store, in front of which lay a quantity of barrels.

"Now, my boy, we'll soon see what you're made of. These barrels is to go in there," pointing to the first floor of a spacious store, at the front of which they were standing. And then, fixing a light pair of skids upon the steps, called out, "Now my hearty, bear a hand!"

As soon as James saw what was to be done, he threw off his coat and laid it inside the door, and sprang with a good will to the work. It was not straining work; and several times his good natured-employer had to tell him "to take it easy, and not try to do more than his part."

While thus at work, there were several passers in and out of the store; and among the latter, was a gentleman who, as he descended the steps, stood on the sidewalk a moment and looked at the youth who, too busy with his work to look at anything besides the skids on which the barrel was rolling, that he might carry his end straight, did not note his keen and scrutinizing gaze. The gentleman was neatly dressed, without any attempt at display. He was of middle age, and had a mild and rather pleasant countenance, which was relieved, from want of an expression of energy, by a dark, piercing eye.

As he fixed his look upon James, he commenced a peculiar process with his mouth, as if he were chewing a bit of tough steak. As he turned to go on his way, O'Connor remarked, as though speaking to himself, —

"I wonder what the boss is chawin' at now?"

"Did you speak to me, sir?" James asked.

"I was just sayin' to myself, that I wondered what our boss was a chawin' at now. He's got a way with him, when he's thinkin' hard, or may got a little riled about somethin' or another. Why you see he'll begin a movin' his jaws, and workin' them as if he had got hold of a bit of grissle, and was tryin' his best to git it into shape for swallerin'. He's a fine man for all that, and a generous too; but a feller must be up to the chalk, when *he's* round. He ain't no mealy-mouth, not he."

"Is that gentleman the owner of the store?"

"Well, there's two on 'em. But I guess he's pretty much the owner. The younger one has been took in, you see, about a year ago; so he can't have got no great deal ahead; though they've did a power of business the last year. And now my hearty, we've got them all in we'll go to the histing. And if you'll jist hitch these slings to the barrels, and haul away here below, I'll go up in the loft, and take them off, and stow them away. And you needn't go to strainin' at the rope, for you see I can do pretty much the haulin' myself."

James, however, was ambitious to let his employer see that he was able to do his share, without any favoring, and laid out his strength with a good will.

While thus laboring, activity and energy manifest in every motion, the gentleman above spoken of, re-entered the store, and passed leisurely by, merely pausing long enough to witness the elastic motions of the youth, as he rolled a barrel under the fall, attacked the slings, and then sprung to the rope. The gentleman had not been in his office long, before, if James had looked that way, he might have seen the same gentleman, with a much younger man by his side, peering through the glass window of the back office, and watching his motions; the elder one moving his jaws as before, and the younger with a pen behind his ear, and turning, with a smile upon his face, towards his companion.

Presently, the younger man leaves the office, and coming near to the fall where James is at work, speaks pleasantly to him, and is replied to by a gentlemanly salutation on the part of the boy, whose fine open countenance, flushed by his exercise,

at once interested the former so much, that, after calling Master Tim to step into the office, he remarked, —

“You will be glad of a rest for a few minutes?”

“Thank you, sir, I am not at all tired.”

As Tim had now come down, the young gentleman accompanied him into the office, while James, having rolled a barrel under the fall, and attached it in readiness for hoisting, seated himself upon it.

“Who is that young fellow you have got at work with you, Tim?” asked the elder gentleman.

“Upon my honor, Mr. Chauncey, I can't tell you. You see, sir, as I was givin' somethin' of a blessin' to a couple of lazy niggers as was layin' sprawlin' in the sun, down to the corner of the slip, — 'cause when I telled them I had a job on hand and wanted one on 'em, do you believe me, sir, the devil of a bit would either on 'em stir, though I offered eighteenpence the hour, which is fair wages for sich light work, — well, jist then, as I was givin' them a piece of my mind, this young gentleman happened along. And as I was about to go on my way, he steps up to me, and says in his pleasant way, ‘Are you wishing help?’ — Says I, ‘I was wanting to hire a man for a few hours.’ — ‘Can't I serve your turn?’ says he. So I looks at him a bit, and says I, ‘But you ain't no laborin' man; you looks more fitted to be behind a counter, or at a desk. Do you live hereabouts?’ says I. — ‘No, sir,’ he says; ‘I am from the country, and have been for three weeks looking for a place, but can find none.’ — And so, says I, ‘you are goin' to put your hand to anything that turns up?’ — ‘Yes,’ says he; ‘anything that's honest.’

“Well, do you believe me, I felt my heart warm to the youngster, and I see by his eye that he had the spunk in him; and I thought mebby it might make up for lack of heft; and it's true as the Bible, sir, he has worked to full satisfaction for any man.”

“You are nearly through with the job, are you not, Tim?”

“Yes, sir; it may take a half-hour longer.”

“Well, when you are through, just let the young fellow come in here; I want to see him.”

“I will, sir.”

So the work of hoisting the barrels, continued; and every now and then, Mr. Chauncey could be seen looking through the window at the young worker, and chewing away on the lump of grizzle.

It took more than the half-hour, which Tim had calculated, to finish up the job, and when he came to reckon up the time, he found they had been occupied just three hours and a quarter.

“Well, it's no great sum you've airned, but sixty cents will help along — just come with me to the office, and I'll git you the change.” Tim did not tell him that he had been requested to bring him there; he had taken quite an interest in his fellow-laborer; and knowing that he was anxious to get a situation, he did not care to excite any hope in the mind of the youth. He knew the boss, as he styled Mr. Chauncey, was a very particular man, and did not think he would be very likely to engage a person in his employ, of whom he had no knowledge; and was not likely to have any, seeing he did not belong to the city.

Nothing was said to James, until the sum he had earned was placed in his hands; and this was done by Mr. Chauncey himself.

“And now, my young man, if you can spare me a little of your time, I should like to ask you a few questions.”

“Certainly, sir.”

“Sit down here by me in this chair.”

James seated himself, as requested.

“Our porter, with whom you have been working, tells me you are looking for a place. Is that so?”

“I have been looking for a place, sir, the last three weeks; but not being able to find one, had concluded last night that I had better go back into the country again. But the thought came into my mind this afternoon, that since I was here, I might better stay, and try to support myself by working with my hands in some way, until the times should be better. They say the times are very hard now, and there is no business doing.”

“But you found something to do as soon as you made up your mind to do something, did you not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Yes, and if many of these fellows that are spending their time and money, and idling at hotels, and pretending they can't find employment, would just strip off their coats and go to work, they would soon find employment enough. You needn't laugh, Sammy,” — looking at his partner, who was busy at the desk, and who, knowing the peculiarities of his senior, could not help being amused at the earnestness of his manner, for he was gesticulating quite violently. “I say it is so. If people

would only go to work, they'd find work enough to do. When I first came to the city, I carried bundles, trunks, anything I could get hold of, to earn a shilling."

After a few moments' pause, the gentleman commenced again.

"You say you are from the country?"

"Yes, sir.

"Where is your home?"

"I cannot say that I have any home, sir?"

"No parents?"

"No, sir."

"Well, now, if you have no particular objections, I should like to hear about you — how you are situated, and how you have got along, and what induced you to come to the city. Let me hear the whole story — that is, if you have no objections."

"I have no objections, sir." And James gave him an account of the last two years of his life, omitting but few items, and these such as he supposed of no consequence.

Mr. Chauncey was silent a few moments.

"Do you not suppose you could get a living in the country, by working on a farm. You have done something at that — you cannot get a living here without hard work — not only work with your hands and feet, but your head must work too, I can assure you, for I know all about it. Our merchants work harder than any farmer you can name."

"I don't mind work, sir, whether it be in the country or the city; but it has seemed to me, as I have no father to give me land to work on, and no means of my own to purchase land, that if I could get a place in some good house, and could by faithful conduct, after some years, establish a good character, it would be worth more to me in the city than it could possibly be in the country."

"A good character is of great value in either the city or the country; but you are right in thinking it would be of more value here. Then that is your plan, in the first place, to establish a good character?"

"That is what I have thought, sir."

"And you think it would be better for you to get into some good house where you could learn business, and whose word as to character and efficiency would be of value to you, than to be going from pillar to post because you might get larger pay. You think the character would be better to you than the money?"

"Don't you think it would, sir?"

"Yes, my boy, I do think so."

Mr. Chauncey now arose and walked to his desk, and after writing a few moments, he returned, holding a letter in his hand.

"I don't like to be taking your time without compensation; so, if you will take this letter to this address — you see, No. — John Street. Do you know where the street is?"

"I can find it, sir. I can inquire."

"That is right; learn to use your wits. Well, take this letter, and ask for the lady of the house. Give it to her, and she will send an answer back by you; and here is twenty-five cents for your trouble."

"Oh, thank you, sir; I will do your errand with pleasure. I don't wish any pay."

"Oh, yes. Your time is of consequence to you, and I have kept you now longer than I ought, talking to you. Take all the money you can get honestly."

"Well, Sammy," said Mr. Chauncey, turning towards his partner as soon as James had left the office, and after watching his spry, elastic step until he had disappeared at the outer door, "what do you think of him?"

"I must say, sir, that I feel very favorably impressed towards him. I like his countenance, too — it expresses energy and honesty. I guess the poor fellow has seen some hard times. There were some parts of his story that he seemed to gloss over; but I noticed that his countenance flushed, and his eye sparkled as though he remembered, though he didn't care to speak of them. Don't you think there is a good deal in his looks and ways that reminds one of Henry?"

"It was that very thing that first attracted my notice" (two years ago Mr. Chauncey had lost a promising son of about the age of James). "That boy has had a good early training, depend upon it. There is truth in his very look. You know my plan has always been to have the boy that I take live in the house with me."

"Yes, sir."

"And therefore I think it right that Mrs. Chauncey should be consulted before I make any engagement of that sort. She was so tried by Tom's clownish ways" (the Tom referred to here was their present book-keeper — we shall introduce the gentleman in good time); "so I have sent that line to her, that she may have a chance to talk with him, and say how she likes him."

You feel satisfied, then, that I should make a bargain with him?"

"I do, sir, perfectly."

"The fact is, Sammy, Tom is not just such a person as I like. I know he is a good accountant; and that is all you can say about him. But there is nothing congenial about him. He seems to have no heart. I don't believe, for all my wife and myself have done for him, that he cares one straw about us, and I believe he would leave us any day if he thought he could get a little more salary than we give him."

The idea conveyed in the sentiment, "that he has no heart," gives a clue to the character of Mr. Chauncey. He was a prosperous merchant, and rigid in all that pertained to business matters. Those who served him must do their work faithfully; and they all knew this. But that was not all he wanted: he wanted their good will; he wanted to be interested in them, and have them interested for him. It was his happiness to contribute to the happiness of those about him; and his clerks, as well as those who served him in a lower capacity, were objects of his solicitude, and he sought opportunities for their advancement without regard to his individual interest. His present partner had been brought up with him, and advanced from one position to another, until he found one day upon his desk a note enclosing an advertisement which he was to carry to the *Evening Post*, provided the purport of it met his own views. The advertisement was a notice that James Chauncey had that day taken Samuel Tinkham into copartnership, under the firm of Jas. Chauncey & Co.

Other clerks had been assisted to connection with other firms, or into business on their own account; he, feeling that one who had reached a safe standing himself, was bound by every principle of justice and right feeling to give a helping hand to those especially who have been under his own care.

Mr. Chauncey never had a partner before he gave that position to young Tinkham. Of that young man he had become very fond. He had been with Mr. Chauncey since he was fourteen years of age, and had made himself so agreeable in the family, and was so faithful and efficient in the store, and withal seemed to have such a warm, generous, loving disposition, that he was loved by Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey almost as a son. He therefore, soon after the death of his only son, made up his mind to take one into close alliance with himself, who

might share duties and responsibilities, which, as he was advancing in life, were becoming somewhat onerous."

"I rather guess, Mrs. Chauncey is having a long talk with our boy. It is time he was back. Ay, here he comes."

James had walked fast, for, as he entered the office, his face was quite flushed, and he seemed short of breath.

"The lady requested me to say to you, sir, that she had no time to write, but that I might say 'that she was perfectly satisfied.'"

"All right. Now sit down, and we will finish our talk. You say you are looking for a situation. Have you any choice of business?"

"I do not know that I have, sir; only, if I could have a choice, I should prefer being in a situation where I could have an opportunity to learn general business, than where I could only learn the prices of goods, as in a retail store; but I am not particular. I suppose I can learn in any place if I try."

"Well, now, to cut the matter short, how would you like being here?"

"I should like it very much, sir."

"You think you would? Well, your disposition to work, and to make yourself useful, induces us to give you a trial at least. So I make you this offer. You are to live with me. By the way, how did you fancy the lady to whom you took that note?"

"Very much, sir."

"Well, we shall not either of us know how we shall like one another, until we have a trial together. My proposition to you is, as I have just said, that you live in my family — that, of course, provides you with board free of cost to you. In addition to that, we shall allow you one hundred dollars for the first year. That sum ought to provide you with clothes and spending money. This arrangement we propose for the first year; what shall be done after that, must depend upon your conduct and efficiency. Now, what do you say about it?"

"I can only thank you, sir, for your offer; and hope I may be able to please you."

"I might now say some things to you by way of advice; but as you have anticipated the need for that by your acknowledgment of the necessity of a character for honesty and efficiency to a young man, I will spare myself, and you too, all that trouble. Mr. Tinkham here, my partner, will take you more especially under his charge, and put you in the traces. His

will here is law as much as mine. When will you be ready to come?"

"I am ready now, sir."

"But you have a trunk, I suppose; you will need to have that removed to my house."

"I have a small trunk, sir, that I can carry there whenever you think proper I should do so."

"Perhaps you may as well go and attend to that now. Have you anything special, Mr. Tinkham, that you wish done?" addressing himself to that gentleman.

"There are a couple of letters to be copied, but there will probably be time to do that in the morning."

"Could I not get my trunk in the evening, sir?"

"Yes, yes, if you feel anxious to get to your work."

So James mounted to the station assigned him at a side desk, and commenced the great work of a tussle for character and independence.

CHAPTER X.

MR. CHAUNCEY'S family was not large. It consisted merely of his wife, himself, a niece, the sister of him whom we have named Tom the book-keeper, and her mother. The lady was a half-sister of Mrs. Chauncey. She was now a widow. It had been a source of trial to her that young Mr. Tinkham had been taken into the concern. She had hoped, as her son Tom had been brought up by his uncle, that of course at proper age the place would have been kept for him. Tinkham was indeed two years older; but she thought, as her son was so near a relative, his uncle could have waited a little. But whatever heartburnings she had they were carefully concealed. Like many mothers, she was blinded towards the faults of her children. Mr. Chauncey, however, was not a person likely to be blind in a matter that concerned him so nearly, both as to interest and comfort, as the character of a partner in business, and therefore made his own arrangements independent of relationship.

The other member of the family was a daughter, now in her fifteenth year; she was at present, however, away from home at boarding school; so that the whole family consisted of five

persons besides the servants. A sixth member was now to be added, in the person of James Bellfield.

While James was busily employed copying his letters, he scarcely noticed the fact that some one had entered the office, so absorbed was he in his work; and that he did not turn his head to look was noticed by Mr. Chauncey, and a good mark scratched down to his account in Mr. Chauncey's mind. He liked to see man or boy give his whole mind to the business of the present moment.

The person who entered the office was a young man about twenty years of age, dressed in a style rather showy than genteel. He wore his hair long so as to cover his ears, and even the collar of his coat; it curled a little at the ends, and seemed to be an object of much care to its owner, for the curls at the sides, which dangled over the ears, had evident signs of being assisted by artificial means; the color was light, and the gloss upon it proceeded from a lavish use of bear oil. The features were well enough; there was not any one of them that marred the beauty of the others, as will sometimes be the case; and yet the combination was not peculiarly attractive. In fine, he would certainly not have been called handsome, while there was nothing decidedly uncomely.

Mr. Chauncey addressed him as he came in and put his hat upon the peg.

"Well, Tom, when did you get back?"

"About an hour ago." The voice was not clear and cheery, nor did its low tones manifest the respect due to the head of the house. It appeared as if it was a matter of little consequence whether he was heard or not.

"How did you find matters?"

"About as you expected."

"Well, I should like to know some particulars, if not too much trouble." Mr. Chauncey now spoke in a more decided manner, and the young man evidently felt reproved, for a slight flush suffused his cheek, and he replied in a more clear and distinct tone.

"The house has not failed. They had a muss with a man about a disputed claim. The man attached their store; but they gave security until the thing is settled by law."

"Will our note be paid?"

"So they say."

There was a moment's pause, when Mr. Chauncey, perceiving that the eye of the young man was turned rather inquiringly

towards the desk where James was busily engaged in writing, remarked,—

"That is Master James Bellfield, our new hand. James, this is my nephew, Mr. Thomas Hendricks."

James, at the first mention of his name, had turned round and bowed to the young man, who took no further notice of the new hand than by an unmeaning stare. But when Mr. Chauncey formally introduced his nephew, James quickly left his desk and advanced to the former, bowing, and cordially giving his hand. All the notice he received in turn was the projecting of two fingers, which James might grasp or not. No other motion was made, and not a word said; and as quickly as he had left his desk, James returned to it.

This little affair did not escape the quick eye of Mr. Chauncey, and it did not increase his favorable view of Mr. Tom.

After James had finished the work assigned him, as the day was drawing to its close, Mr. Chauncey said to him,—

"Now, James, you may go and see about your trunk, and I will be at the house to introduce you to Mrs. Chauncey. Try to be there by half-past six o'clock, for that is our tea-time."

"Thank you, sir; I will be there in time."

As James left the store, he met on the sidewalk his friend Tim. Tim had taken a wonderful liking to the youth, and had been all along indulging a hope that he would either be employed there, or that the interest of the boss would be exerted to procure a situation for him elsewhere. So the first question Tim asked him, as he laid his hand upon the youth's shoulder, was,—

"Have they took ye?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you're to be here in the store?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, I tell ye, my boy, thank God for that; it's a chance among a thousand ye've got; mind my word. But where are ye goin' to stop?"

"I am going now to my boarding place to get my trunk and carry it to Mr. Chauncey's."

"Are ye to live in the family?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well be praised! ye are in luck indeed. Well, now ye may think it not of much account, but I'm as glad as if it was my own brother. But thank the Lord, my boy; it's a rare chance you've got. But how are ye goin' to carry your trunk?"

Can't you jist wait till the store is closed, and I'll go wid you, and shoulder it for you free of cost?"

"Oh, thank you, sir. I would not trouble you to do that. I can easily carry it."

"Well, God bless you."

And James hastened on his way. What a new aspect every object presented from that of the previous day! Hope was now exerting her influence, quickening every nerve in his body, and shedding light on his whole path. Who of all he met and jostled in the crowded street was so happy as himself? He almost felt like telling to the passers-by his great success, and what bright prospects were before him. He almost thought they were acquainted already with his secret, for some bright faces that he met seemed to smile upon him as he passed.

It was drawing very near the hour for tea, and Mr. Chauncey, being a little peculiar on the subject of punctuality, both in his business and family arrangements, was standing by the window, looking out as he heard a cart coming, which, he supposed, might be the bearer of the trunk; but the cart passed rapidly on. In a moment more, a boy with a trunk on his shoulder, passing the window, quickly turned up the stoop.

"I declare!"

Mr. Chauncey said nothing more, but hurried from the room, and was just in time to meet the ring of the bell and open the door.

"What! could you not find some one to carry your trunk?"

"I did not need any one, sir; it is not heavy."

"I am afraid it took all your change to settle for your board. I ought to have spoken to you about that."

"Oh, thank you, sir, I had enough to pay my bill, and five dollars over. But I thought I might as well save a shilling as not."

Mr. Chauncey was well pleased with this explanation, but he made no reply to it. He had, in his day, done the same thing himself. It confirmed him, however, in the opinion he had formed of the boy, and that gratified him.

The girl now came whose business it was to answer the bell.

"Jane," said Mr. Chauncey, "please show this young gentleman to his room;" and then, turning to James, "Our supper-bell will ring, in a few moments."

"Although the girl offered to carry his trunk up the stairs, James would not allow her to do so. It was a small matter—too small, perhaps, the reader may think, to mention at all; but

it had its influence, and at once affected the mind of the servant favorably towards the new-comer, and the good-will of a menial is sometimes of serious consequence.

At the ring of the bell James entered the dining-room, and received a very gracious reception from Mrs. Chauncey.

"I suppose," she said, as she took his hand, "you did not anticipate, when we had our interview this afternoon, that you would be this evening a member of our family?"

"No, ma'am; I did not then imagine such a thing could be."

"Well, I hope the arrangement will be for our mutual comfort." Her sister, Mrs. Hendricks, just then entered the room, followed by her daughter. "My sister, Mrs. Hendricks — Master James Bellfield, sister, — my niece, Miss Louise Hendricks."

James made a polite obeisance to both ladies, but as their salutation to him was quite formal, and, as he imagined, rather cold, he did not venture to offer his hand. Mrs. Chauncey no doubt noticed the coldness of their reception, as she immediately said, —

"Master Bellfield is to be a member of our family, sister. Mr. Chauncey has taken him into his office."

The color now was very visible on the face of Mrs. Hendricks. She had taken her seat at the table; she and her daughter occupying one side, and James the opposite side.

"Indeed!" There was a moment's pause as though in doubt whether to give the rest of her thoughts; she then continued: "I had no idea that any more help was needed; at least, so I understood from what was said the other day when young Sampson was talked about."

Mr. Chauncey now felt called upon to explain matters. He spoke in a calm, deliberate manner.

"Tim Sampson was not such an one as I thought would fill the place we need filled in the office, nor is he such an one as I think your sister would like in the family; therefore I answered to your application, Sister Hendricks, that we had no place for him."

"Oh, well," the lady replied quickly, "you know it's nothing to me; only Mrs. Sampson might think strange of it, seeing so soon after you had taken some one else."

James began to feel quite unpleasantly, and Mrs. Chauncey, herself possessed of keen sensibility, entered at once into his situation.

"You know, sister, that gentlemen in business have their own notions of what they want in a clerk, and I fear Master

James here may feel unpleasantly if he should be made to feel that he had interfered with any one else; and I can assure you he did not even apply for it."

"That is true," immediately responded Mr. Chauncey; "the place rather sought him. So he stands on strong ground, and I hope he will retain the good opinion we have all formed of him."

The conversation was now turned upon other subjects by the ingenuity of the lady of the house.

Mrs. Hendricks and her daughter did not retire immediately after supper, but remained with the family most of the evening; and perhaps feeling that her reception of James had not been as cordial as politeness demanded, she seemed desirous of atoning for it, and was quite social with him, much to the surprise and gratification of both Mrs. Chauncey and her husband; for although the latter was in business matters straightforward and self-reliant, yet it always annoyed him to feel obliged to carry out his own views in opposition to those connected with him, especially if they were in any measure dependent upon his good-will. He was therefore much pleased to find that the new member of the family was like to prove an acceptable inmate.

The self-possessed, easy, and pleasant way in which James answered all questions, and related so much of his history as was called for by inquiry, was highly gratifying; and when he was retiring for the night, the unaffected politeness of his "good-night" assured Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey that they had met with one after their own heart.

The room assigned to James was the front chamber of the third story, of good size, and neatly furnished; and the various little comforts it contained reminded him most forcibly of his childhood's home. Placing his candle on the stand where lay a neatly bound Bible, he opened to the passage that had afforded such comfort in his dark hour the night before. He read it now with increased interest, he felt that he had been taken by the hand and led to that room. It had not been his own skill that directed, nor his own unaided effort that had accomplished his success. And yet he could not but see that his resolution to do whatever his hand could find to do that was honest had met with a reward. "He had been in the way of duty, and in that way God had interposed for his help." Here was a lesson for him to remember, — a life-lesson he meant it should be, — "to do what seems present duty, — to attend to it earnestly, with the whole energy of body and will;" then he could leave

the result to Him who has all hearts in His hand, and all events at His disposal.

James had been in the habit of rising early; it was no hardship for him, therefore, to be up with the dawn and get ready for his day's labor. It had been the business of the porter to call at the house of Mr. Chauncey in the morning and get the key of the store, and to sweep the store and office, and put things in order for the business of the day. But as it was giving Tim an extra walk night and morning to bring the key and get it again, the duty of locking up and opening the store was assigned to James, as well as that of sweeping the office; Tim to be there as usual to attend to things outside. But this morning he found everything already done to his hand, and the office especially in the most perfect order.

"I'm a-thinkin'," said Tim, as he looked round at things, "ye're an old hand at the business, — ye've been in an office afore now?"

"No, never."

"Then ye larn easier than most folks. Now there's Mr. Tom, for all the years he was boy here, never could larn to do things up to please the boss. But between you and me, it's my guess he didn't put his mind intil it. But I tell ye, ye're on the right track, and there ain't a man in this town as looks closer into things as the boss. When man or boy is up to the chalk, he knows it, and he remembers it. And if they go at their work in a devil-may-care kind of a way, he can see it, and what's more, he can remember it too. Ye'll git credit for the looks of things here this mornin'."

"I am glad if you think it looks as it ought."

"Ah, it's as nice as nice can be! But how did ye manage to keep yoursel' from the dust? Ye're clothes is as free from any foul as if they'd jist come out of a box?"

"I took the liberty of making use of an old pair of overalls I found under the stairs. I believe you wore them yesterday."

"Well, I'm right glad if they served your turn."

"I can get me a pair, I suppose, at the slop shops?"

"That ye can, and if ye'll step in, as ye're goin' or comin' from the house, to the store of Jerry Lackland, — it's at the corner of John street and William, — ye'll be suited to a T, and chape too. And now, I'm a-thinkin', it must be breakfast time; be on your way, and I'll be here to see to things till Mr. Tom comes, he's no that regular; though, like as not, Mr. Tinkham

will be the first on hand. Tom, I'm a-thinkin' — well, it don't matter now, and mebby ye'll be late to the breakfast."

As James left the store, Tim went on talking to himself, according to a habit he had when his mind was exercised. "A clever young chap, that; but if my guess is right, he'll see trouble jist for his cleverness. I could see Tom don't fancy him: Tom ain't no fool, heavy and dull as he seems; the more the boss shows any likin' to the youngster, the more Tom's back will be up; he'll sarcumvent some mischief — see if he don't; he's jist devil enough to do it." This monologue was cut short by the entrance of Mr. Tom.

"Good-mornin'!" says Tim, in a pleasant, cheery voice. "Ye're airy this mornin'."

"Are you here alone? — the youngster not come down yet?"

"Bless you! he must a been here by daybreak; for when I came, he had everything to rights as nice as a new pin. It's my opinion, ye'll have rare help in the office, when he gets larned to the ways of business."

"Where is he from?"

"The country, away somewhere."

"Who introduced him?"

"Jist his own self. The boss took a notion to him for seeing him as he helped me git in the barrels of sugar."

"Don't he know anything about him?"

"Only what his own eyes seed. No; he's took, hit or miss; but I guess he's made a right hit this time."

"What do you know about him? how can you tell how he's goin' to turn out? I suppose he's wheedled Uncle Chauncey by a parcel of lies."

"Niver a bit of a lie iver comes out of his mouth. No, no! he's none o' that sort, Mr. Tom: mind me for that; he's a raal bred and born gintleman."

Without further speech with Tim, the young man walked into the office, and taking up the morning paper, sat down as if to read; but he merely opened and laid it on his lap; he was thinking.

There are few of the human race, especially among those who have had a chance for early training in the moral code of the Scriptures, who can indulge either bad passions or vicious practices, and enjoy an easy mind. The fountain within is polluted, and its emanations are apt to make the individual an unpleasant companion to others, because the source of feeling is corrupt. Tom Hendricks was not congenial with the spirit of

those he associated with through the day, because he was unhappy: he was civil, because he was obliged to be; he attended to his work, because he knew strict and careful attention was a necessity, if he meant to retain his place; and he also knew that his salary was larger than he could obtain elsewhere. He was unhappy, because he was not pursuing an open, pure, and upright course; he was conscious of wearing a mask. His uncle had been a good friend to him, but it would not have answered for that friend to have looked behind the mask; nor would it have answered for that friend to have followed him to his evening engagements; and Tom was conscious of this. His disposition, naturally, was unsympathizing. When a boy in the family of his uncle, he seemed to keep aloof from all family interests; he never positively refused to do an errand when called upon by his aunt — *that* would not have answered, and he knew it; but he did not reply to her request with complaisance, nor did he take any pains to make himself agreeable in general. If possible, he would avoid being present when there was company; he seemed to despise all forms of politeness. He was especially unwilling to be in the society of young ladies, and when his cousin Leonora and his sister Louise had visitors of their age, he would, if possible, secrete himself with the servants in the kitchen; he felt more at ease and at home with them.

In the office, he performed the task assigned him in a mechanical way, doing pretty well what he attempted, but without manifesting any desire to comprehend anything further about business than to make correct calculation of figures and write a good hand. He was, as Mr. Chauncey said, a good book-keeper, and that was all, and all he was ever likely to be.

When the books were committed to his charge, his salary was raised to its maximum, and being more than sufficient for his maintenance, he of course sought a new boarding place, much to his own relief, as well as that of his uncle's family.

Mrs. Hendricks had great faith in her son Tom; the very peculiarities which made him unpopular with the rest of his family, she construed as signs in his favor.

"Tom," she would say, "is no lady's man; he has no palaver about him, and I'm glad of it."

"But, sister," replied Mrs. Chauncey, "it surely would be better for him and pleasanter for others if he were to be a little more complaisant. I know his uncle has regretted it very much."

"It is better to be honest than polite; and Tom is honest — I know that," replied Mrs. Hendricks, with a little more spirit than seemed called for.

"The two are not of necessity disjoined, sister. No one that I know doubts his honesty; neither, I think, does any one doubt the honesty of Samuel Tinkham, and yet he is courteous to every one."

"Oh, yes!" it's all very well to bring up Tinkham — he has played his cards very well. Poor Tom, I suppose, if he had have cringed, and bowed, and been soft-spoken and mealy-mouthed; might have been something more than a mere book-keeper."

"There is no doubt, sister, that Tom has lost a fine chance, and all through his own wilfulness; often and often have I begged him to take more pains to suit his uncle."

"He never could suit him; I saw that plain enough, years ago. Mr. Chauncey was prejudiced against him from the first — but it's no matter; people that are dependent upon friends, even if it's near relations, have to feel it."

When Mrs. Hendricks began to talk in this strain, her sister would either retire, or forbear to reply. She knew how little reason the former had to justify her in such an expression; how really unkind and perfectly unjust the idea conveyed, so far as she or her children were concerned. No own brother could have done more to make her feel at home than Mr. Chauncey had done; and had Tom manifested even moderate business talents, and an accommodating, genial spirit, he would not have wanted for encouragement and aid.

Mr. Chauncey, although a shrewd man as to business matters, was not of that class who are on the watch for evil. He preferred thinking well of those about him until their delinquencies should be forced upon his notice. When Tom Hendricks left his house to procure board elsewhere, Mr. Chauncey did not feel called upon to watch over him beyond the precincts of his office. Tom had been brought up in the city; he was not ignorant of its ways; he had a mother and sister who appeared to be deeply interested in his welfare, and who had selected a boarding-place for him; and as the family was respectable, and one with which Mrs. Hendricks was intimate, of course it would have been thought a work of supererogation for Mr. Chauncey to be peering into the whereabouts of the young man who was his book-keeper, after the close of the day, under these circumstances.

At the time of which we are now writing, Tom had been his own master for about six months — two months of the time of age, and, according to his own idea, responsible to no one. He seldom visited his uncle and aunt, nor did his mother and sister see much of him. He would call upon them occasionally, but rather to get some assistance in the way of clothes mending, than out of respect or affection. At least, so it appeared to his sister.

"I don't believe, mamma," said Louise, one day, after one of those short business calls, "that Tom cares much about us."

"Why do you speak so, Louisa? you are very unjust."

"I do not wish to be unjust, mamma; but does he ever come and sit down with us, and allow us to have a little social chat? He half the time does not even take his hat off, he is in such a hurry; and I don't think I ever heard him thank you for anything you did for him."

"You talk very strange, Louise; I wonder what has set you up so against Tom. Your Aunt Sarah don't like him, I know, — she never did, nor your uncle, either; but you ought not to let their speeches prejudice you against your brother."

"Why, mamma, I never heard Aunt Sarah speak a word unkindly towards Tom in my life, nor uncle neither. Sometimes of course, Aunt Sarah was tried, because Tom behaved rudely when we had company; and you know, mamma, how you scolded him yourself on that account."

Mrs. Hendricks knew well enough the truth of all this, but she could not bear to acknowledge the faults of her son, and tried to hide his delinquencies by charging his want of success in gaining the favor of friends to their unjust prejudice.

The family where Tom boarded lived in Franklin Street, and consisted of a widowed mother and two children — a son and daughter. The mother had been left with a small income, besides the house which she owned. As her income was not quite sufficient to enable her to educate her children as she wished, she had generally a couple of boarders — young men, who, for a reasonable board, were willing to occupy one room. The room was on the ground floor in a back building, and as a small alley-way led from the street into the back yard, access could be obtained to the back building as well in that way as through the house. Mrs. Granger, the lady just spoken of, was highly respected, and very careful in her watch over her own children, and of course particular as to the character of those she admitted to her family as boarders. The young man who was associated

as a room-mate with Tom was from the country. He had been recommended to her by a commission merchant in the domestic goods line, and with whom the young man was a clerk. Tom she knew, and had always known, as she was well acquainted with his mother — in fact, an old friend. She was also a visitor at the house of Mrs. Chauncey, and although not on such intimate terms with the latter as with her sister, yet the fact that Tom had been so long in her family, and that he was in the employ of Mr. Chauncey, gave her assurance that all was right with him.

It was about a month after James had been taken into the family of Mr. Chauncey, that Mrs. Hendricks received a call from her friend Mrs. Granger. Louise was not at home, so that the two ladies had an opportunity for private conference, which was what Mrs. Granger wanted. She had come for that specific object. She had come to talk about Tom, but as the communication she wished to make tended towards a suspicion that all was not right with him, she found it more unpleasant than she had anticipated to open the conference. Her feeling as a mother shrunk from saying to one in her own situation what her own heart would be grieved to learn. She was, however, somewhat relieved from her embarrassment in opening the subject by a direct question from Mrs. Hendricks.

"Well, Susan," — they were nearly of an age, and still, as formerly, called each other by their first name, — "how do you get along with Tom? I declare I have not seen him for a month past. I expect he finds it so pleasant at your house of an evening, that he can't break away to visit his mother; but I'm glad of it — poor fellow! he never felt at home here. I am glad he has a place that he likes, though I wish he would just run in once in a while, if it is only to satisfy Louise. She scolds about it sometimes — but I tell her she needn't fret, for she has got a beau now."

"What, Louise! surely not — so young, too, as she is?" replied Mrs. Granger in surprise.

"Oh, I didn't mean anything serious, so don't be frightened; it is only the boy Mr. Chauncey has taken in his office. He lives here, and as he seems to be quite ready to wait on ladies, whenever Louise wants to go out of an evening, why he is very willing to wait upon her. Tom was never a lady's man."

"Well, I did not know how that was when he was younger."

"No, he never was." And as the reply of Mrs. Granger seemed to suggest a change in that respect, Mrs. Hendricks

caught at it, and asked in continuation, "Does he seem to be more particular in attention to ladies now?"

"I should think, perhaps, he may be not so shy of them as you say he once was."

"I am glad to hear that. I noticed, when I last saw him, that he was prinked up, and looked quite stylish-like. I suppose he feels more free at your house than he did here."

"I don't know as to that; we very seldom have company. Susie is very young, and Alfred and she have such long lessons to study of an evening, that I do not encourage their having company much on that account. No: it is not from anything I have noticed at our house. But I know that he and young Tyson are fond of the theatre; they go pretty often, and they speak sometimes of the girls that accompanied them. I have refrained from asking any questions on the subject, and in general divert the conversation, as I do not care to have the subject of theatres, and actors and actresses, dwelt too much upon before the children."

Mrs. Hendricks was silent a moment; she was somewhat disturbed. She had sense enough, and knowledge enough of theatres in New York, to know that circumstances alter cases, as much in regard to that amusement as others of a kindred nature; it might be a harmless recreation, or the most direct road to ruin. In rather an agitated tone, she asked,—

"Do you know what ladies accompanied him there?"

"I do not. All I know about it is this: I have a woman to wash for me once a week. As I keep but one servant, as you know, Janette, and as she is such an excellent girl, I do not like to put too much upon her, for she is not very strong; so I hire for washing. Well, last week, Janette asked me one day, when she was dusting the parlor, if I knew anything about Mrs. Pallis's family? I told her I did not; but I had heard that her husband was a cartman, and that he was a dissipated character, and did very little towards the support of his family. She then asked if I knew anything about her daughters? I answered, no: I knew nothing of them. I then said, Why do you ask, Janette? She replied that Mrs. Pallis had told her the last day she washed for us, that our young gentlemen visited at her house very often, and that they had taken her girls to the theatre, and that they often took them to ice-cream gardens. I told Janette that I thought there must be some mistake; I could not believe the young gentlemen who had been used to such different society would visit among persons of that class.

Janette said, she could hardly believe it either; but Mrs. Pallis had insisted upon it that it was so."

Mrs. Hendricks was much excited, and replied quite tartly,—

"I don't believe a word of it, and I don't want to hear stories about my children that come through servants, and I almost wonder that you should listen to such a story a minute."

"Perhaps I have done wrong to say anything to you about it, but I thought it might be better you should know what was told me."

"I shall see Tom, and ask him; he will tell me the truth: he always does. It seems so strange that people are always picking at my children; and now, I suppose, you will go down-stairs, and tell all this to Sister Chauncey, and she will believe anything that is said against Tom, for she hates him."

"I don't believe that it is in the power of your sister to hate anybody. But you need not fear that I shall mention the matter I have told you; because you asked me, and, as a mother, you had a right to know if there was anything wrong in the conduct of your son."

"I don't believe there is anything wrong. In the first place, I have no faith in servants' stories; and in the second place, even if it was true, it was no doubt a mere frolic on the part of the young men. You don't suppose either of them would be serious in their attentions to girls of their standing?"

"I do not pretend to express any opinion; the matter concerns yourself personally, and it affects me only as I feel interested for you."

"My friends seem to manifest their interest for me in a queer way. Chauncey pretends to be very friendly; but what does he do? Instead of taking Tom into business with him, as everybody expected he would when he was of age, he goes and takes young Tinkham, that smooth-faced hypocrite, I call him, and makes him master over my son. I wish I hadn't a friend in the world."

"I fear you will not have long, if you receive their attempts to befriend you as you have mine."

"I don't call it an act of friendship to listen to servants' tattle about my children."

"Well, I must bid you good-morning, but there is one more question I must ask you. Do you suppose Messrs. Chauncey & Co. are so straitened for money that they cannot pay Tom his salary?"

"No: what makes you ask such a question as that?"

"Because the arrangement with my boarders has always been to receive the board once a month; now Tom has not paid one cent of his board for the last three months."

Mrs. Hendricks was now evidently much alarmed; she turned very pale, and for a few moments was silent. At length she asked, —

"Will you tell Tom I want to see him? Ask him to call here to-morrow, either morning or evening."

And thus the interview closed.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE morning, after James had finished clearing up things in the office, Tim entered, and took a seat, an act he seldom ventured upon, except when alone.

"Mr. James," he said, "if you have a spare minute or two, I wish you would just sit down a minute. I want to have a word with you."

James at once complied with the request.

"What is it, Mr. O'Connor? You look as if you had some bad news to communicate?"

"Well, Mr. James, to tell the truth, it ain't a matter that is very agreeable; but it's been on my mind off and on now for some days, and I've been in a kind of worriment about, thinkin', mebbe, I might be wrong in my suspicions; and then agin thinkin' whether or no I hadn't by rights to speak about it to the boss; and then agin I feared to do that, lest I should be after makin' a great disturbance, and gettin' my head in a hornet's nest. But I have it in my mind, that if so be, I should just let the thing out to you: it might mebbe save you from gettin' into trouble; and it's the livin' truth, as I sit here, that I wouldn't see a harm come to you, my boy, than if you was my own brother."

"Thank, you, Mr. O'Connor; but what is it you fear on my account?"

"Well, ye'll think queer, mebbe, at me asking you the question; but how do ye get along with Tom?"

"Very well."

"You fancy him, I'm thinkin'?"

"He seems rather clever; he was rather unsocial at first, and I took the idea that he didn't like me; but he is quite friendly now."

"Ay, ay, jist so, — that's jist what I've been a-thinkin'."

Tim was silent after this, as if in doubt whether to say anything further. At length he asked, —

"Does he never ask you to lend him any money?"

"James hesitated a moment, and then replied, —

"What makes you ask me that?"

"Oh, well, I merely wanted to know; but if you are loath to answer, ye'll pardon the question."

"I have no objections on my own account to answer the question, but I hope you will say nothing about it; it's but a small matter, and if he should hear it, he would think it ungenerous in me to have said anything to any one about it: I did lend him five dollars."

"You needn't fear of my tellin': I give ye my honor fur that. And has he paid you agin?"

"No: I haven't asked him for it."

"Well, now, do you know how he stands on the books?"

"No: I never look into the books, only when ordered to make out an account, or to call off when he writes them up."

"Well, now, Master James, I am no ill-minded towards Tom; he ain't, indeed, so civil-spoken as a body would like — not as yourself, or the two bosses; but I cares little for that. But I caution you, be on your guard; he ain't a young man as is goin' the right road, and he ain't one that a young fellow like you, as knows but little about our city ways, can safely follow. Things ain't right with Tom; I'm afeard he is goin' to the bad. You jist heed what I say, and don't give him a chance to git yourself into a snare?"

"I don't see how he can do that?"

"The devil helps them as sarve him; there's no tellin', but if you will take my advice, ye will no be too intimate with Tom. Mind your own business, and keep a sharp watch agin harm."

At times it was necessary for James to go down to the store in the evening in order to call off the books for the month; and a few evenings after the conversation with O'Connor, as above related, he was thus engaged, when, the work having been accomplished, Tom says, —

"There, Bellfield, that's done with. Now let's have a smoke; take one?" — handing his box to James.

"I think I had better not. No, thank you."

"Why not? I want to smoke, and it's unsocial to smoke alone. Take one, man; I've plenty of them. Don't you ever smoke?"

"I have not since I have been in the city. I knew when I came here that I should have to screw pretty tight in order to live at all, and so I concluded I would do without everything that was not absolutely necessary."

"As to screwing, my dear fellow, that's true enough. A man has got to put the screws on himself, or some one else will put them on for him. But a segar now and then don't cost much. You had better take one. I want to have a good talk with you. Come, don't be so set."

"I thank you; but please excuse me. I should feel unhappy after it, for I should lose confidence in my ability to keep my resolution. And we can have a talk without the segar."

Tom made no further attempt to urge compliance, and lighting his own segar, took a seat, and after a few puffs turned to James.

"Now, do you make out a string of resolutions to govern yourself by?"

"Not much of a string," replied James, laughing.

"How many?"

"Only two or three."

"Not to smoke is one of them. Give us the others."

"Oh, they are little private affairs of my own, not worth repeating."

"I suppose, then, not to drink anything stronger than water is one, at any rate?"

"No: I never thought that necessary, as I like water better than anything else. But don't you think one ought to have some few principles to go by and to stick to under all circumstances, especially when you have no one to depend upon, and have got your own living to make and a character to establish, and that, too, among strangers?"

"I'll tell you what my principle is," says Tom, turning towards James, as he brushed the ashes from his segar. "The world owes me a living, and I mean to have it. What do you say to that?"

James did not answer. He was thinking to reply, "I hope you mean to get it honestly." But he hesitated to say it, as it might imply a suspicion that such a qualification had not been included. He was anticipated, however, for Tom very soon added, —

"I mean an honest living, though."

"Of course you do," said James.

"An honest living, of course. I don't mean to cheat nor to steal. What I mean is, the world owes me a living, and I mean to have a *good* one. I ain't a-goin' to scrimp things. A good living is all the world has got to give a fellow. Who will ever thank you for wearing mean clothes or denying yourself pleasures. I can get my ten or twelve hundred a year and thank nobody. But, of course, I've got to work for it. But is a fellow got to dig over a set of books all day in a dumb old office, and then go into his room and shut himself up till bedtime; and then up in the morning, and at it again, the same old round? A fellow might as well be dead and buried at once."

"Yes, but," replied James, "one need not always be a clerk. Would it not be better to save all we can for a few years, and then, perhaps, by having a small capital, there might be a chance to get into business."

"D——h small chance. Not such a business as this. Ding it all—you wont let me swear, but I must use some sort of out-of-the-way words to express my feelings. But I tell you, Bellfield, I have been cheated out of a good berth here. I ought to be something more than book-keeper here; and I should if it hadn't been for an oily tongue and a smooth face."

"Perhaps you did not take pains enough to please your uncle. And you must not feel hard to me if I say to you now, that I don't think you are as respectful to him as you ought to be. It is not my place to mention it, I know."

"Have you heard him speak about it?"

"No; I have not. But I thought sometimes he felt it. He seems a very kind-hearted man."

"Yes, he is. You are right there; he is a kind-hearted man. He has been kind to me. But I tell you, Bellfield, when I hear so much soft-soaping going on, I know how it is that I've been jostled out of my place by a smooth — but no matter: I wont say what I was going to. But I tell you, I get so stirred up sometimes, I don't care much what I say or what I do. I tell you, Bellfield, that Tinkham is a —"

"Stop, please, stop;" and James laid his hand on Tom's arm. "I must not stay and listen to any hard names you may call Mr. Tinkham. It would not be right. I would not sit still and hear any one speak ill of one with whom I am living, either in the house or the store."

"Well, I suppose that is all right. But wait, my boy, and see."

Tom sat silent for a while, puffing away upon his segar, evidently a good deal excited. The subject he had been upon was a sore one to Tom. By degrees, however, his mind seemed to calm down, and when he resumed conversation the tone of his voice was quite altered. He asked, —

"What do you do with yourself every evening?"

"When Mrs. Chauncey has no errand for me to do, or your sister does not wish to go out, I generally go to my room and read or study."

"What do you study?"

"Principally French. I read a little in Virgil every evening, just to keep up my knowledge of Latin."

"Can you read French?"

"I can read it better than I can speak it. It is so much like the Latin that it comes quite easy to me to translate; the great trouble is to get the true pronunciation. But I mean, as soon as I can save money enough, to take a quarter's lessons from some good teacher."

"And that's the reason you wout buy segars, eh?"

"That is one reason. But another is, I have a little sister to support."

"Heavens and earth! A sister to support? Where is she? in town?"

"Oh, no. I could not support her here. She is up in the country."

"But how can you do it on one hundred dollars?"

"I could not do it long on one hundred dollars, to be sure. But you see, before I came here, I worked six months for a farmer; that gave me thirty-six dollars. Then, in the winter, I earned about sixty dollars more teaching a district school. So, when I took my sister away from my relatives, with whom she had been staying, I got her boarded at a cheap place, — a decent place, but very plain, for two dollars a week. Then I paid her board ahead for three months, and left her besides twenty dollars, so that I can, by saving my salary, by the time her money is out, have some more to send her, so as to keep things a-going through this year at any rate."

"How do you do about clothes?"

"I have to be very careful about them. To be sure, I have a pretty good stock on hand; I guess they will last me for six months yet. It will be tight squeezing, I know; but if I cannot do any better, I have a gold watch in my trunk and a diamond

ring. The watch was my father's, and the ring was my mother's. I should hate awfully to part with them; but I know they would wish me to do so, rather than we should be dependent on relations."

"You have got relations, then. Are they rich?"

"One of them is."

"Ain't they willing to help?"

"I don't want their help."

"Spunky, ha!

"I feel spunky enough to work for my own living, and for my little sister too. I would live on bread and water, Mr. Hendricks, before I would let my little sister be dependent on our relations, or live anywhere where we could be twitted for it." James was much excited, and spoke with a force Tom did not think him capable of."

"I tell you what it is, my boy; do you stop calling me Mister. Call me Tom. That's the name I go by, and a poor devil of a Tom at that. You are more of a man than I am this very minute." And jumping from his seat and throwing the stump of his segar away, he began upbraiding himself as the greatest fool that ever went on two legs, and letting off a string of oaths that made James exclaim at last, —

"Don't, for goodness' sake, use such words."

"How can I help it? Ain't I the — You don't know, Bell-field. I feel like such a fool that I would thank any one to kick me. Only just think of it — what a fool I've been! Here, for a year past, I have been receiving a salary of one thousand dollars a year; and I don't believe now, if my board bill was paid, I have enough money due me to pay it."

"I suppose it costs you considerable to support your mother and sister."

Tom walked up and down the office two or three times without speaking. At length he resumed his seat, and looking full at James, —

"How has it come about that you can go to work, and skimp and keep steady digging at work and study just like a grown-up man, that had a prospect ahead of making a fortune by it: say nothing about the store — that's all well enough. You get a small salary now, but will get more, no doubt, another year. But I mean, how can you sit down in an evening, hammering over French and Latin? What good will they do you?"

"French may do me some good; at any rate it is a living language, and so is the Spanish. I mean to learn that, too."

"Yes, but what I mean is, who trained you to keep so steady — to knuckle down to work, where other fellows of your age would want to be out somewhere, having a good time?"

"Nobody trained me to it; but when one is situated as I am, with no human being to look to but himself, it makes one feel rather sober. I don't care much about amusement, and as I said before, I must save every cent I have. And besides, I want to improve myself; I had to leave school when my father died, and if I don't read or study now, I shall never know anything."

Again Tom was silent. Conscious of his own ignorance, beyond the mere routine of his daily work, he could not help feeling a momentary compunction on account of the time he had squandered in idle gossip with his companions, to say nothing of the money he had wasted at theatres and bar-rooms. He knew James was right, and that he was wrong. He would justify himself, when censured by those in advanced life, by the plea, that they had forgotten the feelings of youth. But this simple exposition of the better way, by one much younger than himself, making no charges, but merely narrating his own course and the motives which influenced him, threw a flush of shame upon his heart. Tom had some reflections, that, if followed up and acted upon, might yet be of great benefit.

After quite a pause in the conversation, he again turned to James.

"Don't you sometimes git down-hearted when you think what a row you've got to hoe?"

"You mean the work I have to do?"

"I mean the whole tug of life. It's a hard row to hoe, anyhow; and then, at your age, to have to trust to your knuckles to provide for two of you! I should give up, quit, and let things go as they might."

"Oh, I don't know! I don't feel discouraged. I have got along so far. It was pretty tough, to be sure, when I first took hold of work on a farm; but I soon got used to it, and then it was so good to feel I was earning my own bread and butter, and dependent upon no one. I tell you, Mr. Hendricks —"

"There you are again!"

James smiled, but went on. "I tell you after the first week, and I began to get used to the work, and felt sure that I could

maintain myself by my own hands, I felt as if I had got into a new life. I was happy, I tell you."

"Plain fare, I guess."

"I did not mind the fare; working makes a fellow hungry—it makes everything taste good."

Tom again relapsed into silence, and in the meantime lighted another segar; he puffed away for a while, and then in a sort of musing way began to let out his feelings.

"Yes, I suppose it would have been better for me to have been tossed upon the world as you have been, and had to scratch and dig as I best could. I don't know as it would have made much difference. I believe some folks take to the devil naturally. Don't you never feel?" turning towards James with an earnest look — "like having a spree once in a while — that is, going it jolly with a parcel of fellows?"

"I never tried; I never had a chance to."

"I 'most wish I had never had the chance. Now tell me, honestly, are you happy?"

"I feel pretty happy; why should I not? I am sure I ought to be; I have a comfortable home, and so far I am not faulted. I try to do the best I can, and your uncle has told me that when he saw anything wrong in me he would tell me of it, and that until he did I might keep my mind at rest. The only thing that troubles me is the thought that my little sister has not as snug quarters as I have; I feel bad about that, and when I go to bed in my nice room, or sit down to a good rich meal at your uncle's table, I cannot help feeling bad, because I know how different she is living. I had rather live on bread and cheese myself, and sleep on straw in a garret, if by that means she could be living as comfortably as I am."

"Why not let her learn a trade or something, so that she need not always be hanging on to you?"

James colored deeply as he replied, —

"I don't know what she might be obliged to do if I should die, but while I live she shall never be forced to work for a living in that way."

"But you will want to get married one of these days, and a fellow wouldn't care to have a sister tagging after him then."

"I never think so far ahead as that. My little sister is in my charge now, and so long as she is dependent she shall lean on me, and I believe God will help me to take care of her and that I mean to do, if I have to do it by laboring as a porter or rolling a wheelbarrow."

"Well, there is no use in getting spunky about it."

James spoke earnestly, for he was greatly excited. His sister seemed to him such a sacred charge, that the idea of turning her off to seek a living for herself was like casting from his heart all that was entrancing in the memories of parents and home and childhood's joys. The suggestion had given him a lower opinion of Tom than he had hitherto indulged. The more earnest, too, James appeared to be, the more did Tom's conscience stir up accusations against himself. If the views and feelings of James were right, then his must be wrong.

"Well, I suppose you think I am a mean scamp because I let uncle support my mother and sister."

"Why, Mr. Hendricks!"—James spoke quickly,—"such a thought never came into my head."

"Well, maybe it didn't, but I can tell you it came into mine. Darn it, Bellfield! let's shut up and go home; I'm getting spooney."

"I guess it is getting about time; your uncle likes to have us all in by nine."

"He didn't always get me in at that hour. His nice elder clerk, though, wouldn't have run the risk of staying out until five minutes after nine o'clock, if he had to pass a poor fellow who was dying in the gutter for want of a little help."

Tom wished to prolong the conversation with James, and as they left the store, he insisted that James should go round with him up through Beekman Street. As they drew near to Nassau Street, they noticed a young man come out of a porter-house in Nassau Street, and as he attempted to cross the street, he stumbled and fell. As he laid still without making any effort to rise, they both ran up to him, thinking he had injured himself.

Tom was the first to take hold of him; he lay with his face on his arm, which concealed his features.

"Are you much hurt?" Tom asked, as he was raising him up.

"Hurt? no; let me alone. Who asked your help? Let me alone: I s'pose you think I'm drunk, do you?"

These words were interspersed with language not worth while repeating. Tom, however, had recognized him as his fellow-boarder, and seemed really distressed. He was still supporting him, for he was utterly unable to stand, and really did not know what to do with him. To try and get him home in his present condition on foot would be a difficult task, and he did not feel

like being seen walking up Broadway with a drunken man on his arm. At length he said,—

"Bellfield, wont you run to the Park and get a hack?"

James started off on the run, while the young man kept swearing at Tom, and doing his best to throw him off.

"Who is that fellow?—Bellfield! Bellfield! Is that Jim Bellfield? Don't let him come near me; the mean scamp, I'll wring his neck for him. Let me go, Tom Hendricks: I'll let you know." With that he struck Tom a blow in the face, which, landing on the nose, stirred up Tom's wrath.

"You dirty vagabond, if you don't be quiet, I'll call a watchman and have him take you to the watch-house and lock you up. Be still, I tell you." And Tom, seizing both his arms, shook him until the fellow, feeling his helplessness in the grasp of his companion, vented his spite in swearing roundly until he began to whine and cry.

"The carriage was soon there, and after much difficulty Tom contrived to get him in, and then jumped in himself.

"Shall I go with you, Mr. Hendricks?" James asked.

"No; I'll manage him well enough now." But he had to grasp him again, for he began to make a desperate effort to get out and attack James, at whom he had been swearing vengeance ever since his return with the carriage. Whether he really recognized James either by his voice or his countenance, was very uncertain; but he had got hold of the name, and that, even in his almost unconscious condition, was enough, it seems, to wake up revengeful feelings.

James, however, fully recognized in the unhappy youth his cousin Rudolph! There were no feelings of hostility working in the breast of the former; he was filled with sadness, and as he walked with rapid steps towards home, his thoughts were on his uncle and aunt. He sorrowed for them, he pitied them, all his kind feelings were worked up towards them; and he only thought how it would be possible for him to exert his influence in order to prevent the utter ruin of the son he knew they loved so much.

The next evening, just as they were about to close the store, Tom asked James if he was not willing to come down after supper; he wanted to have a talk with him.

"Certainly," was James's reply.

Tom had appeared peculiarly sober that day, and there was nothing of his usual brusque, short manner of speaking nor of acting; but he seemed absorbed in thought. His replies to his

uncle were also much more in what James thought a right strain.

When James came in, Tom was seated with the paper on his lap, and enjoying his segar.

"I say, Bellfield, I'm glad you've come. I was afraid you might find that you was wanted to go somewhere. I suppose it's no use to ask you to take a segar?"

"No, thank you."

"Well, I wont urge you, for I don't know but I may give up smoking myself yet; there's no telling. Darn it all! why is it that it's so easy to learn bad habits, and it goes so against the grain to practice right habits?"

"Is it, you think?"

"Darned if it ain't. Now I know swearing is wrong just as well as you do, but it's just as natural to me to let off an oath as it is to eat, and I have to watch like a cat after a mouse to keep 'em from coming out. How did you manage to leave it off?"

"I never learned the habit."

"Never! Didn't you never, when the boys made you mad, rip out at them?"

"Yes, I would be mad, to be sure, and give them as good as they sent; but I never swore at them."

"You've got spunk; did you never fight?"

"I don't remember ever striking any one with my fist; we used to take it out in wrestling. When I went to school, that was the way we settled our quarrels — get a fellow down and hold him there until he cried enough. I've done that many a time. I never saw one of my size I could not master, and some even larger than I was. I am strong in a grip."

"You say you never swore?"

"No, never."

"Didn't other boys swear — those you played with?"

"Some did — not many of them."

"Well, didn't you want to — say, when you was mad?"

"I can't say I did."

Tom was silent a moment, puffing hard on his segar.

"That shows me, Bellfield, that the devil gets hold of some easier than he does of others. He's had pretty easy work with me, anyhow. He's never got me to lie yet: not much. I may have beat about the bush sometimes; but a straight up and down lie, that he ain't got me to do yet; and he ain't got me to cheat nor steal, nor to get drunk — not quite, by George, though I've

come near it. What do you suppose the devil was ever made for?"

"I am sure I don't know; but if we resist him, he will fly from us."

"How do you know that? ever try it?"

"I don't know that I ever thought about resisting him particularly. I never think about him any way; but the Bible says, 'Resist the devil and he will fly from you.'"

"Well, then, he and I have got to have a fight, for you see I am going to quit — turn over a new leaf, as they say. But it will be a hard tussle, anyhow. Darn it, Bellfield, if I could only had some one to have just taken hold of me when I was a young chap, and started me right, just as you was."

"I don't pretend to be right."

"I know you don't pretend; but you do the right, and it's just that makes me respect you, and makes me ashamed of myself. Do you know you are the only fellow I've ever come across yet that I could really respect. I can see you are no soft, spooney, milk-and-water chap. You've got spunk and vim enough to make a very devil of, but you go right straight ahead on a bee-line to do right. I've watched you closer than you think for, since you've been here. I felt shy of you at first, for I thought you was one of the 'Tink — one of the sort of fellows that had two sides to 'em; but I soon got rid of that notion."

"I am sure I am very glad to have your good opinion."

"Well, my opinion ain't worth much to anybody. I've been such a poor fool. But I tell you now, Bellfield, I want to turn about. I *must* do it, or by George it will be a gone case with me. I see it; can't you help me?"

And as he said this, Tom threw away his segar, and leaning over, covered his face with his hands.

James was deeply affected; he felt that his companion was in earnest, for his whole manner was so different from what he had ever witnessed in him; but how could he help him? They were both silent for a few moments. At length James said,

"I am sure anything I can do, I would do with all my heart. Do you think of any way that I could be of any service to you?"

"Well," said Tom, again raising his head, "I am going to tell you all. You may think it strange that I should ask your help: you are at least three years younger than I am, and if all was

as it should be, why I ought to be able to help you; but as it is, there is no one I can look to but you. You see I have lost the good-will of my uncle, and my aunt too, no doubt. Then I have got a set of acquaintances that are no better than I am and many of them, if anything, a good deal worse. I can't go to any of them; I don't want to go to them; I want to get rid of them; they are only a curse to me. Now see how it was last night. That fellow boards where I do. I had to go home with him; the lady who keeps the house sent him off this morning—wouldn't have her family disgraced by keeping such a fellow a single day. And then she told me that she wished I would look out for another boarding place for myself when my month was up. You see how that looks!—ain't fit to be in a decent house: that's the meaning of it. So here I am—not one friend in the world; only a set of fellows keeping round me who are going to the devil themselves, and I along with them."

After a few moments' thought, James replied, —

"Now, I think you are mistaken about the feelings of your uncle and aunt; I will tell you what I believe to be true about it, if you will let me."

"Bellfield, I want you to do it; tell me just what you please, as if I was your brother. If I only had such a brother!—no, I won't say that, for it would disgrace you."

"Please don't talk so: it makes me feel bad; you think worse of yourself than there is any need for. But as to your uncle, I know, and I have told you so before,—I hate to say it to your face,—but you are not respectful enough to him. And shall I tell you, he thinks you do not care anything for him, and that you do not manifest any interest in the business. I heard him say the other night, 'I do wish Tom was different; how glad I would be to have him in the place of Benson in Antigua. He might make a fortune for himself.'"

"Did he say so?"

"He certainly did. And now I believe that if you would only change your course towards him—be free with him, ask his advice, and take an interest in his concerns—why, Hendricks, you don't know what he might do for you yet. I'll bet you would be a partner here in less than two years from now."

"No, no, Bellfield, that will never be, never while that—. But no matter, you won't let me call folks names in your hearing; but though I've been a fool in most things, I've got sense enough in a certain way. I am not such a fool that I cannot

tell what a fellow is made of. I know some people better than some older folks do. You'll see some day, when the rub comes; you are not in anybody's way—not just yet. If Uncle Chauncey should manifest as much interest for me as you think he might under certain circumstances, this place would soon be too hot to hold me. But no matter for that: I believe you are right about my treatment of uncle; but the d—l is in it—you must let me rip a little—how can you expect me to feel any interest in the business here, when that fellow Tinkham has a share in it. It's asking too much of human nature; you may believe it or not, Bellfield, that man has been the ruin of me."

"Well, then, laying aside all about your interest, is it not right that you should be kind and attentive to your uncle? If only as a just return for his kindness to your mother and sister?"

"Yes, you are right there; no doubt of that."

"I'll tell you what I would do if in your place. I should have a free private talk with your uncle, and I would tell him just what you've told me."

"What! make a clean breast of it?"

"Yes; tell him just how you feel."

Tom was silent a few moments.

"That's a strong dose you want me to take. I don't know as I can swallow it."

"You'll feel happier after it is done."

"Maybe so—I believe I should, after it was over; but I tell you, my boy, that is bringing one down on the marrow bones a little too much. I must chaw on that awhile. I've never knuckled to any one yet—I don't know how I should feel; whew!" And he arose and moved about the office.

"I tell you what, Bellfield, I can't stomach it to-night;"—he kept still walking about. "You must give a fellow time to think; but I tell you what I am going to do—I am going to burrow."

"How is that; not get underground?"

"Not yet, I hope; but I am going to quit the fellows—keep out of their way. Would you mind coming down here, or having me spend some of my evenings in your room?"

"I should like it much."

"Well, you see, I want to cover my tracks, for a while, at any rate; by the hokeys, I must get out of the slum some way. They're a mean set any way. But I want to tell you one thing

— I don't want you to think worse of me than I really am — that's bad enough; but I never gambled. I have been with the fellows to the shops, and sometimes played a game or two of cards or billiards, but never for any stake. No, as there is any truth in me, I never did *that*, and I never will, so help me —

I saw too well how it would end. I have lent them money, though; but if I can only get well rid of them, they are welcome to it. Blame it all, Bellfield, when I come to look back through the past year, and see how my money's gone and how they've spunged me, I feel like asking some one just to take a cowhide and lay it on my back till they're tired. You may laugh, my boy; I like to hear you, there is such a good hearty ring to it. I haven't laughed a good hearty laugh, that came from a light heart, in a good while. A fellow must have a clear conscience, I'm thinking, to laugh as you do. But now I think of it, did you ever know that fellow we picked up last night?"

"Yes, he is my cousin, and I intended to ask you about him, but you brought up this other subject. It seems he remembered me."

"I don't think he recognized you, but he heard me call your name, and the name set him a-going like a wild cat."

"Did he speak of me this morning?"

"Not a word, and I don't believe he remembers anything that happened last night; but he seems to have an awful grudge against you. Why is it?"

"You remember I told you of the circumstances which caused me to leave my uncle's, and that led me first to take care of myself?"

"Yes, I remember. That is it, ha! Well, he is not good for much, and Coats & Co. don't like him; but they sell the goods his father manufactures, and I suppose that's the way he got the place. But he's going to suppose the dogs; he is a mean fellow, anyhow — asking your pardon."

"I am sorry for my uncle's sake as well as for his own. They think a great deal of him at home"

"Well, they ought to have kept him there, then. Why, Bellfield, to send such a fellow, with the turn of mind he has, to this city, with no one to keep special watch over him, it is like sending to — to the bad place at once. But I am going to quit the whole gang. And now as to what you say about uncle, you must let me think about it a little. It's a big pill to swallow, but maybe I'll get it down."

We must now leave James a while to work his way, and take a look at Maggie in the situation he had procured for her. He has found for himself a desirable place, and apparently his future is safe; but there are elements in the situation which may in time develop trials of no ordinary kind. He is quite unconscious now of any danger, and the only burden upon his mind is the feeling that his darling sister cannot enjoy the comforts which meet him at his pleasant home.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE comes that Ned Bascom on his pony. I should like to get a lick at him."

"What for?"

"Why, because."

"Has he ever hurt you?"

"No, he hasn't ever hurt me; but he's proud."

"Edward Bascom proud! Oh, Bill Sanders, you don't know him, or you wouldn't say so; why, he is just as clever as can be."

"Why doesn't he, then, speak to a fellow when he meets him?"

"Do you speak to him?"

"Speak to him! no; catch me at that till he speaks to me."

By this time the pony and his rider had reached the place where the two boys were sitting, — one on the top of a stone fence, and the other on a bare rock that abutted against the fence, and nearly on a level with it. They were plainly dressed, — the one addressed as Bill Sanders a little better clad than the other, who, from the variegated patches which adorned both his upper and nether garments, showed plainly that those who provided for him had to be contriving, in order to make things answer the purpose.

The pony was a pretty, spirited creature, not much under common size, a roan, with a light-colored mane and tail; his rider, a bright-looking boy of about fifteen years of age, well dressed, and apparently a good horseman, for he seemed quite at ease during the friskiness of his horse, who, being unwilling to be checked in his career, was prancing from side to side of

the road. He had stopped opposite the boys, and rather suddenly brought his horse down from a free canter.

"Sam, how are you?" he called out. "Come here, please."

Without hesitation, the boy with the patched garments sprang from his seat, and with his good-looking face aglow with smiles, came up to the rider.

"Do, Jupe, Jupe, stand still a moment;" — this to his restless horse. "Oh, Sam, I am so glad to have met you. I was going to your house to see you. What are you busy at?"

"I ain't doing nothing just now—only baiting granny's cow. You see Mr. Golding keeps his gate open, and if I don't watch her, she makes right for his yard, because the feed is good there and it's pretty close nibbling in the highway."

"Why, have you no pasture but the highway?"

"Not just now. Our little home lot is most ready to mow, and if we turn her in there, we shan't have no hay to winter her on; but, if you want me for anything, I can drive her down to the common and I guess she will stay there rest of the afternoon."

A new thought seemed to have arisen in the mind of young Bascom, which so occupied him that he did not, for the moment, make any reply to Sam's proposition; it was, indeed, a new thought that had sprung into the mind of this favored child of fortune. It was like an electric flash, but not like that to pass as quickly off. He looked at his companion a moment.

"I suppose, Sam, your cow is of great service to you?"

"She gives a power of milk when the feed is good, and the butter buys 'most all we want to the store. Granny 'lots everything on the cow; only I tell her sometimes, I 'most think my earnings would be worth more than the butter, this time of the year too."

"How so?"

"Why, you see, I could be getting all of forty cents a day, and when haying time comes, any of them would be glad to give me fifty cents a day, and dinner into the bargain. Squire Jones asked me yesterday if I wouldn't engage myself to him for the month of July, but granny thinks the cow will suffer if I don't see to her and drive her round where she can get the best picking; and then you see, too, the pig fats pretty much on the skim milk and a little corn in the fall; and then, you know, bread and milk and spawn and milk makes good breakfast and supper." And a bright smile illumined Sam's face as he thus alluded to his individual interest in Brindle's good feed-

ing. "But shall I drive Brindle on the common? it wont take me long."

"Thank you, Sam. No, I wont have you do that now. I will be over pretty early to-morrow morning to see you. There—I see your cow is edging up to Mr. Golding's gate! Good-by, Sam: I will see you, I guess, in the morning;" and, turning his horse round, the sprightly beast carried his rider off on the way he had come, at a lively gait for some little distance, and then his pace slackened to a walk. Ned was thinking. He was in no haste now — business of more real importance occupying his mind than that which had brought him in search of Sam.

"Well!" said Bill Sanders, as Sam returned to his seat on the rock, after turning his cow's head in a direction that would lead her away from the tempting yard of Esquire Goldings "what did he want of you?"

"I don't know."

"Didn't he tell you?"

"No."

"What did he call you for, then? Sam, I believe you're lying now. Didn't he come full drive down the road; and as soon as he had got through talking to you turn right back, and scurry off again? Very likely he didn't want you."

"He did seem to want me for something or other; but when he found I was baiting my cow, he said he would see me in the morning, though I offered to turn Brindle down on the common, where she could be quiet, along with other cows."

"Why should you, take all that trouble to oblige him? He wouldn't do as much for you."

"I never asked him to do anything for me."

"No; and if you did, he wouldn't be like to do it."

"Now, Sam, why should such a fellow as he come and ask you to do a favor for him? why didn't he go to the Golding boys or the Sampsons? they are cronies of his. No doubt, if he was going to have a party, he would invite such fellows as them; do you think he would ask you or me?"

"I shouldn't want him to ask me. How would I look in among girls and boys all dressed up? I should feel streaked enough."

"And why can't you have good clothes as well as him? Take and strip you both, and you're as good-looking as he is; it ain't nothing but the clothes that makes the difference."

"I don't know about that; clothes does make a difference, I know."

"I tell you what it is, Sam, I hate these rich folks; they are all proud."

"Ned Bascom ain't proud; it ain't his fault he's rich; it was gave to him."

"Gave to him! Well, why ain't we as well off as he is? why don't somebody give us money too? Here you and I have to work for a living, and that fellow can go riding about on his fine horse and have servants to wait on him, and never have to lift his finger to anything."

Sam's philosophy was at fault here; and as he could give no satisfactory answer, he began to whittle.

"I tell you what my pap says," continued Bill. "He says things is all wrong; this is a free country, and it ain't never a-goin' to do to have the rich domineering over the poor and keeping them down."

As Sam did not see clearly how it was that those who were better off than himself had anything to do with keeping him down, or that their being rich made him poor, he allowed his companion to go on without interruption. There were some things he might have said in reply — some things which he had heard his good grandmother say in reference to this very *pap*, whose wise sayings had just been quoted, expressing her fears "that he spent too much time at the ale-house for the good of himself and his family; and that he might be well off if he would attend to his trade, and that it would be better for Bill to be put out to some good farmer or tradesman, than to be idling round so much." But Sam had too much sensibility to say anything that would wound the feelings of a companion. He was relieved, however, from his embarrassment at not being able to make any reply by the approach of Bill's father.

"There comes the old man," said the hopeful son. "I wonder what he wants?" This was not all he said; there were some intermediate words which startled Sam, and caused a flush of shame — not on his own account — to suffuse his fine countenance.

As the man came up, his face, Sam noticed, was unusually red, and his look was angry.

"Here you are, you lazy skunk, lounging about, and I've been running round the town a-hunting everywhere to find you."

"What do you want?" was the short and rather surly answer.

"You'll see what's wanting when you once get home; there's your mam been a-waiting these three hours for the meal she sent you to the store for; hain't you been there yet?"

"They ain't got no meal."

"They lie, then, for I see a whole load go in there this morning; have you been there?"

"Yes, I've been there; or I met Brooks, and he told me I'd better go to the mill, as they was about out."

"Well, why didn't you go to the mill?"

"'Cause."

"'Cause what?"

"It's a whole mile down there, and then I hadn't no money with me."

"No money! You go right down there and git it right off, and tell Joe I'll pay him next week. He needn't be afeared for twenty pounds of meal; it's no killing matter."

"He says you owe him for forty pounds already."

"No matter about that. I'll see he has his money; he is rich enough, so go right off."

Grumbling to himself, Master Bill caught up the bag which he had been using for a cushion upon the stone wall, and walked off in the direction of the mill, while his father, turning to Sam, who was busy with his whittling, —

"That's the way with these fellows; as soon as they git above board, they kick the ladder down that helped them to git up. I've traded enough with such fellows; they wont git no more of *my* custom."

Perhaps the gentlemen felt that custom which only kept increasing a debt, with small prospects of pay, was not in the long run very profitable.

"And I tell you what it is, Sammy: I'm sick and tired with these rich fellows. They ain't got no soul: not one on 'em. What would they care if you and I was starving? It's a pretty hard case when a man wants a little flour, and maybe he ain't no change handy. Now take your case: your granny's as good a soul as ever lived; ready to lend a helping hand to rich or poor, day or night. Maybe she's out of money; must you and her go to bed hungry, 'cause them rich varmints wont trust her for a little flour? You know that ain't right."

"Granny wont have anything charged."

"She wont, hey! How does she do then — let you go to bed with a hungry belly?"

"No; not so bad as that; we keep plenty meal on hand."

"But you have to buy sometimes?"

"Yes, sometimes; but we mostly find everything with the butter; butter is as good at the store as money."

Mr. Sanders was silent a moment; there seemed to be a mystery here he could not see into? At length he inquired, —

"Does that cow a yourn make butter enough to pay your store bill, besides all you eat? Why, our Bill will eat half the butter our cow makes; yes, half on it at the least goes to grease his belly."

"Yes, but we don't eat much butter at our house."

"What under heaven, then, do you live on? Choke down dry bread?"

"Oh no! Granny uses a little with her tea, but I like bread and milk, or spawn and milk — mostly spawn: it's real good."

"You can't work on it?"

"I do, though — that is, when I can have a chance. But the butter ain't all granny sells; she keeps a-knitting all the whole time when she ain't got no mending nor sewing to do, and she takes a heap of stockings at a time there."

"And so you don't have no store bill?"

"I guess not, for I heard granny say they owed her now all of ten dollars."

"Owed her?"

"Yes, sir; so she said."

"Why don't they pay her the money, then, the mean scamps?"

Mr. Sanders wanted to find fault with somebody, and was quite elated when he thought he had a hitch upon the villainous storekeepers.

"Oh! she says she would rather let it lay there in case of need; because she might be sick, or against the time when the cow would be dry for a month or two."

Mr. Sanders paused again for a while.

"Is that your cow a-feeding yonder?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you're a-watching on her? She's got a good bag; pretty good feed along here — better than the commons. Do you come here every day with her?"

"Sometimes I take her down Long Lane; it's pretty dry there now. Sometimes I go on the road to the mill. I thought I

would try it here to-day; the commons are pretty short now, so many cows there."

"That's the reason, then, our cow don't give no more milk. Oh, dear! that lazy fellow, Bill, would never think of doing such a thing as looking out for better feed, not if she was to go clean dry. But I'll make him. Oh dear! Well, I must be a-going along."

Poor man! Things did not go prosperously with him. Somebody was to blame; and he was ready to charge everybody and everything but the right one and the right thing. He had a good trade; he was a carpenter, and in former days had plenty of employment, but for some years past things had been going wrong with him. His promises for work to be done were not kept, and people got tired of calling day after day, merely to find the article that was to have been completed not yet begun; and when engaged to commence a job on a neighbor's house or barn on a certain day, and all arrangements made by his employers in expectation that he would be on hand, it would be found either that he had forgotten his promise altogether, or had delayed the work previously engaged, so that he could not come. Such management lost him all the best custom in the place; and now he was only called upon when no one else could be obtained. The cause of this unfortunate state of things was, no doubt, originally, a *careless disregard of his promise*. He did not sufficiently prize the value of *Truth*; and that when he engaged to have a certain piece of work done at a certain time, or to commence a job on a specified day, that nothing but an unforeseen necessity should have prevented him from being up to his word.

This was the blasting error of his life, and that which led to other evils. No man or boy who has not a sacred regard to his word can expect to retain the confidence of his fellows, or to prosper in life by honest means.

When Mr. Sanders found that customers were leaving him, and that time began to hang heavily on his hands, he would call in at the tavern in an evening or on rainy days, where, especially of an evening, he would find quite a number of persons collected to talk about politics, or to complain of hard times; and as others around him were seeking comfort at the bar, not to be singular, he would join them. It was a dangerous kind of comfort, and seldom does any one resort to it but he finds bitterness and sorrow in the end.

Mr. Sanders might not properly be called a drunkard; but

the habit of visiting the tavern was becoming fixed upon him, and the ale which satisfied him at first was now substituted by something stronger, and he suffers from a want of something in the mornings until he has made a call at the bar.

It will be very easy now to understand why Mr. Sanders has lost his credit, and is so dissatisfied with things around him.

We will leave him for the present, that we may follow young Bascom, and find out what it was that led him so suddenly to change his purpose in regard to engaging Sam in his service that afternoon; for that he had come on purpose to get his help, there can be no doubt.

Edward Bascom was not only the son of wealthy parents, but he was heir to a large property bequeathed to him by a deceased uncle. His father had died when he was about nine years of age, and left him an equal share with two sisters in another considerable estate; so that if he reaches the age of twenty-one, he will be possessor of a large fortune; a comely, active boy, ready for play or book; although the former is on his mind at present, as he has just returned from school to enjoy the long summer vacation. One of his most engrossing pastimes was boating, although he was fond of his pony, and enjoyed riding, especially in company with his sisters; yet to be on the water was generally his choice amusement. He had this day, for the first time since his return home, lowered his boat out of the boat-house, and used her a little, but soon found that she took in more water than was agreeable, and that she needed a little tightening. Some oakum and tar he thought was necessary. None of the servants about the house knew anything of such matters. They could do all the lifting that was necessary; but as to calking her, or tarring the bottom, they were not equal to the task. Sam, he knew, was an expert at that business. From his infancy almost he had been about his grandfather, and witnessed the process of boat-building, and had, in fact, made quite a good skiff himself. So soon as Edward found that his boat needed repairs, he at once resolved to go in pursuit of him. But he had another object in seeing Sam than merely the repairing of his boat; he wanted his company in sailing her. He might, indeed, have obtained boys enough of the same station in society with himself: but he liked Sam; he had always known him to be obliging, kind-hearted, full of courage, efficient to do anything, ready at expedients, never out of temper, and with as much true wit as any of the boys who were in better circumstances, and in no

wise addicted to profanity. There was nothing vulgar about Sam, nothing low or mean or underhanded, and he would not lie, — not even in jest; it was in most cases enough to decide matters among the boys of the town, "Sam Tellfair says so." As to Sam's poverty, Edward never thought of that. Nor do boys in general think of such matters in choosing their playmates. If he is a good fellow in the main, they are not particular whether he has a few patches more or less upon his clothes. Rags they are a little squeamish about; but Sam's garments were always whole, even if the patches were not of a uniform color with the main article.

Edward not only liked Sam for his many good qualities, but he had more confidence in his management of the boat than in his own skill; and, as he sometimes ventured out of the harbor into the open bay, he felt a good deal safer to have Sam at the helm.

But why did Edward Bascom desist from making known his errand, when Sam so readily agreed to place his cow where there would be no special need for his watching her?

It was because of one of those sudden impulses which often affect the mind, — sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. In this case it was for good.

As Sam was giving his reasons for baiting the cow there, and the necessity for watching her, Edward perceived at once that Sam, though apparently idle, was attending to a necessary duty; and the thought at once occurred to him that it would be very selfish in him, who was seeking amusement merely, to call Sam away from his post, and take advantage of his willingness to oblige. Then, as he made some inquiries as to the use the cow was to them, the fact was revealed to him that it was necessary almost for the subsistence of Sam and his grandmother that the cow should have an abundance of feed. Edward had never known what it was to have any thought about a livelihood. He had never, even, at his home, heard such matters talked about; it therefore came to him as a new idea that so much care had to be taken to get food and raiment. And there came another thought: "What sort of a living could be got out of one cow?"

After he had turned and left Sam, he soon reduced the speed of his horse to a walk. He wanted to think, and he could not do that so well on a canter.

It will not be necessary to give all the thoughts that came

into his mind; but the following will be sufficient to indicate their general tenor:

"Why is it that I have never thought of this before? I have known that Sam was poor; for I have often been at his house, and he has been at mine, and we have played together and sailed together, and I have always liked him for his good nature and obliging disposition, and his handy ways; and I have everything I want, — good clothes, a fine home, a handsome boat to sail, a nice pony to ride, money always in my pocket, and all without being obliged to do anything but contrive how I shall enjoy myself. Sam is as good as I am, and I believe he is a good deal better; for I know he once spoke to me about using bad language when I got vexed at something; and that is more that I have ever done to any of my playmates, though some of them do swear pretty bad sometimes. And then he knows more than I do about many things; he is worth two of me in a squall of wind, or at setting snares or traps, or climbing trees, or catching fish; and I don't see why it should be that I should have so many things all at my hand without my having to do anything to get them, and he be obliged to wear poor clothes, and be confined whole days, either hard at work or watching his cow, in order that he and his grandmother may get something to live on; and that pretty plain, too, I guess, for he spoke about suppaun and milk. I bet he lives on it mostly. Why shouldn't I give him some of my money? They say I am rich. I don't know, indeed, how rich I am, though one of the boys says I am worth over two hundred thousand. I don't know how he found that out; ma has never told me nor any one else at home. I don't think they ever talk about money there; I never hear them, anyhow. But I guess there is enough for Sam and me too; and I mean to ask her about things. I mean to do something for Sam: see if I don't."

And now, being quite pleased as well as somewhat excited by the conclusion he had arrived at, he started off at a good canter for home; but, after proceeding a little way, he remembered an errand his mother had given him, and immediately turned his horse into the road that led past the mill. He was in a very happy frame of mind, — full as happy as when he left home in pursuit of Sam. He had forgotten all about himself and his own pleasure, and his heart was enjoying the first taste of that happiness that comes from the exercise of benevolence.

The distance he was going was soon passed over, at the speed

he made, and his errand accomplished; but, as he started on his return, he saw that if he did not care to be caught in a gust, he must make his pony use his legs rather more lively than he had yet. A dark cloud was rising in the west, and coming up rapidly. The mill was passed, and the lane which led to the main road nearly gone through, when he overtook a boy carrying something in a bag on his back. The boy was making all the haste he could, and Edward noticed that he kept turning his head every little while to look at the clouds, which did indeed have an ugly appearance. The boy was very pale, and seemed either alarmed on account of the coming storm, or in trouble of some kind. Edward felt at once interested in his case, and, after having passed him, suddenly checked his horse, and turned back and came close up to him.

"Are you going far?" he asked.

"Going home."

"It is going to rain soon. Cannot I carry your bag for you? have you come from the mill?"

"Yes; and I'm afraid the meal will get wet and spoiled."

"Let me, then, take your bag in front of me, and you jump on behind me; it's going to rain like everything. Run up to the fence — here, give me the bag first."

The poor fellow seemed so frightened, he hardly knew what he was about. The bag was placed in front, on the horse's neck partly, and partly on the front of the saddle. Jupe manifested some displeasure at this novel load, by tossing up his head and frisking round; but his young master was not afraid of him, and in a few moments got him alongside of the fence. Here a short parley took place.

"Will he carry double?"

"I guess so. Come, jump on, please, quick."

"You know where to go to?"

"Yes. Is not your name Sanders?"

"Yes."

"Well, please jump on."

"He looks darned skittish."

"Never fear; I can manage him. There — hear that."

A clap of thunder, breaking in jerks like the discharge of heavy cannon one after another, settled matters at once. Bill was afraid of the horse, but he was more afraid of the thunder, and in his desperation gave a spring, and landed astride of the horse.

"Keep tight hold of me, now."

There was no need for Ned to have said that, for Bill had grasped him with almost the grip of a drowning person; and well he had. Perfectly indignant at this new accumulation on his back, and on a part, too, where he had not been accustomed to carry weight, Jupe first reared, then threw up his hind legs, then reared again, then up again with hind parts; in the midst of which doings Master Bill, in an uproarious manner, kept calling out, —

“Let me get off — let me get off! Whoa, whoa!”

“Don’t halloo so. You’ll frighten him.”

“You stop him, then, and let me get off.”

But Jupe, finding that neither by kicking nor rearing could he get rid of his burden, gave a desperate plunge forward, and set off at full speed.

Edward would not have cared how fast Jupe went if it were not for his straitened circumstances; but with one hand holding fast of the bag, and his companion behind clinging to him, and pressing upon him, and bouncing like a ball, first one side and then the other, it required all his skill to keep in his seat

“I tell you stop your horse, and let me get off.”

But here his wish was accomplished in a way he did not mean; for bouncing a little too much on one side, as they were at a turn in the road, he lost balance entirely, and in an instant was lying on his back one side the road. As the distance he had to fall was not very great, he soon picked himself up. He was not hurt, but he was very angry, and to relieve himself began swearing roundly. A stop was put to this, however, by a vivid flash of lightning, followed almost simultaneously by a crash of thunder that seemed to rend the very earth on which he stood. This was at once followed by a furious gust of wind, a cloud of dust, and a pouring down of rain. From swearing, he began crying for mercy and blubbering like a baby. In the midst of his trouble, however, he heard somebody call out, —

“Bill, is that you?”

He had now reached the edge of the commons. These commons were waste lands on the outside of the more settled portion of the town, and scattered on their borders were a few small houses, not contiguous, but at considerable intervals. In one of them lived the Sanderses, and not far from them was the home of Sam. Sam had seen the storm coming, and had driven his cow away from those parts where he would be obliged to watch her motions, and into the commons, designing to return to the house before the storm should burst; but it came

on faster than he had anticipated, and with such fury that he did not care to venture through it, and had therefore embraced the best shelter that was nearest to him, and this was the eastern side of an old pound, which had been erected on the side of the common nearest the highway. It was built of loose stones, and somewhat higher than a fence. Crouching close under the wall, the storm had little effect upon him, as the wind, being from the west and very violent, carried the rain-drops beyond his snug hiding-place. Bill had been in such trepidation that his outcry reached the ears of Sam, and looking up, he saw his neighbor pushing his way along as best he could against the wind, and at once called out to him.

“Bill, Bill Sanders, come here.”

As soon as Bill heard the voice he called out, —

“Where are you?”

“Here, here. Don’t you see — under the wall.”

In a moment more he came up, and without saying a word, crouched down as close as he could under the shelter. It being but a summer shower, the violence of the wind did not last long, but the lightning and thunder seemed to increase as that lulled.

“What makes you keep your eyes shut?” said Sam.

“Such awful lightning! ain’t you afraid?”

“It’s pretty sharp. But it ain’t very near just now.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because I counted ten between the last flash and the clap of thunder.”

“What odds does that make?”

“Because when it’s very near the thunder comes almost as soon as the lightning, and when a person is struck, they say you don’t hear the thunder at all, and I believe they don’t see the lightning neither. How quick it must kill a fellow, hey?”

“Do, Sam, stop talking about it. I wish there wasn’t never thunder, or lightning neither.”

“Why not?”

“Cause — who wants to be struck down dead in a minute, and not know nothin’ about it?”

“Granny says if we are prepared it don’t make much matter how we die; and besides, it can’t strike us without God orders it, and that He knows best when we should be taken out of the world.”

“Sam Tellfair, I wish you would just shut up, and not be talking about such things. I’ve been most frightened to

death this afternoon, besides being hev off of a horse's back; and —"

"Thrown from a horse?"

"Yes. Ned Bascom's horse, the ugly d—l!"

"I should think, Bill, if you was really afraid, you wouldn't be using bad words. Suppose you'd been struck a few minutes ago when you was swearing so. Ain't you never read the swearer's prayer? But how come you on Edward Bascom's horse?"

Bill then gave him the particulars of the horse affair, ending with a very harsh expression about the horse, and his rider too.

"Now, Bill Sanders, you ought not to speak so. Wasn't it very kind in Edward to stop and try to help you along?"

"Help me along! Much it helped me, to be flung on my back, and left there, layin' in the road. It might have killed me, and he knew well enough before he asked me to get on that his horse wouldn't carry double. What are you laughing at?"

"I can't help it, Bill. But what has become of Ned?"

"I don't know, and don't care."

"And the bag of flour. Did that stick on?"

"How can I tell. I had enough to do to take care of myself. I tell you what it is, Sam, you may laugh. I see you are on a snicker all the time; but if you had been on that horse's rump, and him a rarin', and kickin', and runnin', and you a-bouncin one side and t'other, and then to be hev off, and not knowing where you'd land, you'd laugh tother side of your mouth. I'll lick that fellow yet — see if I don't."

"Then you'll have to lick me first or afterwards. Ned is a good fellow, and he showed his goodness in stopping and trying to help you along, and you know it too, Bill Sanders; and if you don't stop calling him hard names, I'll pitch into you before you know it."

As Bill knew too well what Sam could do in a tussle, he thought it best to be quiet. Sam would quarrel with no one willingly; but if urged to a squabble, he put his whole strength to the business, and was found to be a tough customer.

The wind had now lulled; but the rain continued, and as it came down nearly straight, the stone wall ceased to be much of a shelter; so Sam thought he might as well be making tracks for home.

"Where are you going?" said Bill, as Sam arose to his feet.

"I am going home. There is no use in staying here. The rain comes right down on a fellow. We shall get wet anyhow."

"I don't want to go home."

"Why not?"

"'Cause. Pap and all of 'em will begin swearin' at me, because I haven't brung the meal."

"Never mind; you did the best you could. The meal, maybe, is there already. Maybe it's a little wet, though. Come; I'm a-going."

Rather reluctantly, Bill hauled himself up, and off they started.

We must now go back to our young hero, Ned Bascom, and see how he and his bag and Jupe got along."

Jupe did not at once pause in his race because the hinder portion of his load had gone. The bag on his back annoyed him still, and he was making tracks for home as fast as his little legs could carry him, when an unexpected event gave relief both to him and his rider. As Ned was holding fast to the bag, and trying to keep it from falling, all at once it seemed to melt away under his hand, and casting his eye for a moment at it, he perceived that his own legs as well as Jupe's mane and shoulders were white, as if they had been riding in a snow-storm, and on attempting to raise the bag its remaining contents fluttered out, and he held in his hand only a useless rag. The motion of the horse had rent the cloth in twain; it being a cotton pillow-case, and old in the bargain, the strain was more than it could bear.

Just then the storm came—wind and dust and rain, all driving in their faces. He let go the rag; it could be of no further use, and the wind soon made sport of it. Both hands now freed, he soon made out to bring Jupe to a halt, and all the more readily for the reason that horses dislike going against a storm of wind and rain as much as men. So soon as Jupe yielded to the rein he was instantly put to his speed on the back track, until he came to a cross road, and turning up to a stone fence, Ned sprang off, and he and Jupe were somewhat sheltered from the violence of the gust. While standing there, notwithstanding the lightning and thunder, Ned could not help thinking what to do about the meal. It was not exactly his fault, he thought. He intended to do an act of kindness; but things had gone contrary to his expectations. Jupe had not acted well; he ought to have behaved better, but he hadn't; and now the meal was gone, that was sure, and the bag too; and the

boy was not in sight — he had, no doubt, hurried off on his way home; but for fear he may have been disabled by his fall, the moment the wind should lull, he would ride back and see about it; and so he did. He was a brave little fellow, and although the rain poured down, and the lightning and thunder startled Jupe occasionally, Ned had resolution enough to go back to the place where his companion had been spilled, but saw no traces of him.

"I guess he wasn't hurt much," said Ned to himself; "he has run for home, I guess. But what shall I do about the meal? like as not they want it for supper. I'll put for home, and ask ma to let me have some to take to them, and as soon as it holds up a little, I'll take it down there."

Thus resolving, Jupe was put for home at a lively gait. But as Ned was about to pass the store, the thought occurred to him, that, as his house was all of a mile and a half out of the way to the house of Mr. Sanders, it would be better to stop at the store and buy some flour; it could be got to the place it was wanted so much sooner. So he checked Jupe and turned into a shed adjoining the store. He and Jupe were by this time well soaked with the rain; the latter with white streaks on his mane and forelegs; while the blue cloth of Ned's trousers, and the front of his roundabout, presented a very speckled and dingy appearance. The rain had made paste of the flour that had been sprinkled upon him. After tying Jupe, he began with his handkerchief to wipe off the muss; but that only increased the difficulty, by spreading the spots. It was a gone case, he saw, with his clothes, but it could not be helped now. So, leaving the shed, he entered the store.

"Why, sonny, where have you come from?" said an elderly man, who was sitting in a large arm-chair, and who looked the very picture of repose and good-nature. He had a full, round face, hair combed back smooth and gray, a full person, breeches buckled at the knee, and large steel buckles on his shoes; he was the owner of the store.

"And what have you got on to you — been down to the mill?"

"No, Mr. Parsons, I have not been to mill, although I have been past." And then Ned gave an account of his catastrophe, adding as he closed, —

"Could you spare me a bag, if I buy some flour to put into it?"

"I guess we can; how much flour do you want?"

"That is what I don't know — I should like to have as much as was in the other bag."

"How large a bag was it?" This was asked by a young man behind the counter.

"I should think it was the size of a pillow-case."

"Then, I guess," replied the young man, "there must have been about thirty pounds. Was it wheat or rye?"

"I don't know, but perhaps you had better put up wheat."

Edward then took out his purse and was about to pay for it, when the elderly gentleman spoke.

"Edward, come here."

The boy at once went up to him.

"You won't get any thanks for doing all this."

"Oh! Mr. Parsons. I don't want any thanks."

"But that is not all. You will make enemies to yourself of all that family."

"I hope not, sir; why should they be angry with me for doing them a kindness?"

"Why should they? Because they are ugly and lazy and proud."

"But I thought they were poor!"

"So they are; too poor to pay their debts, and too ugly to work for a man because they are in debt, and too proud to acknowledge their inability, or that they are under any obligations for any kindness or liberality shown them." Mr. Parsons was a kind-hearted man, and would sooner suffer himself than oppress or harass the poor; but he had been treated very ill by Mr. Sanders. They kept an account at his store, and it had run up to quite an amount; and in order to help Mr. Sanders to liquidate the debt, had engaged him to erect a small building, as an extension to his store. The man had promised to begin the work at a certain time, but did not come; he would begin next week. The next week came and went, and no Mr. Sanders. But he would send to the store for such things as they wanted. His boy Bill had been sent there that day for rye-flour. He met one of the hands belonging to the establishment, and asked if they had any flour. The answer was, I believe not; but you can go in and see. Bill did not go in. He was, in fact, ashamed to go. He knew something how matters stood, and was glad of any excuse to get over the errand; and strolled off up the road where Sam was baiting his cow, and where we first met with him.

"But," continued Mr. Parsons, "I would not discourage

you, Edward, from doing a kind act; only remember what I say. When you do a kindness to such people, you must not be surprised if you should meet with ill-treatment instead of thanks."

Edward had not thought about any reward on account of the trouble he had put himself to. His only motive was to get the flour to the family, because he thought they might be wanting it. A new idea had come into his mind that afternoon; it was received from his interview with Sam. Strange it may seem, but true as strange, he had never before thought of poverty; it had never come into his mind that some people have to contrive from day to day how they were to get something to eat, and the idea was painful to him, and he would have encountered a much harder storm and greater difficulties rather than have failed in getting this bag of flour to its place of destination.

Bill Sanders had a good mind to have gone in with Sam, as he had to pass his house before reaching his own home; but the flour was on his mind, and although he expected trouble on account of it, yet matters might only be worse by delay. So, refusing Sam's invitation to go in until the rain was over, he continued on his way—not making much haste, indeed, for he was already as wet as he could well be, and the prospect before him at the end of his walk not very inviting. As he entered the house he heard quite an altercation going on between his father and mother, and soon found that the unfortunate flour was the cause of it.

"For a strong hearty man to be keeping his family from hand to mouth—not a morsel of meal or anything in the house to eat; it wasn't so at my father's."

"I wish you'd have stayed at your father's, then."

"A pity I hadn't; we always had enough to eat."

"Ain't you always had enough to eat here? Blame it all! because it rains and the boy has stopped somewhere, would you have him come in the rain with it and get it wet? You'd make a fuss then, I'll warrant you. What are you dinging at me for? I didn't make the rain;" and Mr. Sanders puffed away at his old pipe, feeling that he was an ill-used man.

Just then Bill entered the room; he had halted a minute or so in the entry.

"Well, you've got here at last!" said his mother. "Where's the flour?"

"I don't know."

"You good-for-nothing, you," said his mother, "what do you tell me that for?" and coming at him with a rush, caught him by the collar and began to shake him merrily. As Bill knew this was a prelude to something worse, his tongue loosened instantly.

"Ned Bascom's got it."

"Ned Bascom! What is he doing with it? You are a-lyin' now; you know you are, you good-for-nothin', you," shaking him. "What is Ned Bascom a-doin' with the flour? Tell me, or I'll shake it out of you."

As soon as the shaking stopped, Bill began to tell all he knew about the flour, closing with,— "and that's the last I seed of it."

Mrs. Sanders now turned and looked at her husband, who sat quite composedly in his chair, holding his pipe in his hand and witnessing the scuffle, rather relieved than otherwise that his wife's anger had something to vent itself upon besides himself.

"Do you believe any sich stuff as that?"

"You say you was flung off?" asked the father.

"Yes, he did fling me off, and Ned Bascom knew he wouldn't carry double when he made me git on; for he kicked and reared and carried on like a mad cat, and I kept hollering to him to let me git off; but instead of that he set his horse off on a dead run. He knew I had no stirrups nor nothin' to hold me on, and when I was flung off he never stopped to see if I was killed or no, but put for home just as hard as the horse could tare."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Sanders; "that is just like 'em. What did that fellow care whether you broke your neck or no? Not he; that's the way with them rich fellows; it ain't enough that they keep us down: they want to ride over us and stamp on us."

"I mean to lick him the first time I git him alone; that horse of his shall pay for it, see if he don't."

There was no reproof on the part of either parent for this threat; perhaps they did not hear distinctly what was said.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Sanders as she took a seat, "I should like any one to tell me what we are to do; not a mite of bread in the house and no meal to make anything of."

A pretty young girl came into the room just as Mrs. Sanders was speaking. She was plainly dressed; but her hair was neatly combed and lay in curls behind her ears. Her dress was short, exposing her feet, which were small and prettily shaped as was the ankle above them. Her countenance was pleasing

in expression and her features finely formed. With the exception of her dress, which was plain calico, she seemed very much out of place in that company. A finer copy for a painter, of a beautiful girl, could not easily be found. Her age was about thirteen. She must have heard what was going on, for she immediately asked, —

"Shall I not run down to Mrs. Tellfair's and borrow some flour. I know she has some."

"No, no, Maggie," replied Mr. Sanders; "it ain't no fit weather for you to go out. No, no, let Bill run there; he's all wet a'ready."

Mrs. Sanders had taken a seat, and, somewhat exhausted by the shaking operation, seemed disposed to let things go as they might.

"I don't care who goes or who stays, it's all one to me. Things has come to sich a pass a body may as well be dead as alive. It's a miserable world anyhow! You needn't pooh! pooh! Sanders. So long as you can puff that old pipe you don't seem to care whether there is any victuals to put in our mouths or no."

"Why don't you go right off, you sir?" said Mr. Sanders, addressing Bill; "the rain is about over."

"Give me a bag, then," responded Bill.

"There ain't no more bags to spare. Get a tin pail out of the closet; and mind and tell Mrs. Tellfair how it is, and that I will send it back with the other I owe her just as soon as your pap gits some from the store, or the mill, or somewhere."

"Do you owe her some a'ready?" said Mr. Sanders, taking his pipe from his mouth, and looking as if quite surprised by this intelligence.

"Do we owe her some a'ready? Just as if you didn't know it! We owe her all of a pailful like that he's got in his hand there," — pointing to the tin pail Bill had just taken from the pantry and was dangling in his hand without making any motions towards the door. In fact, Bill did not want to do the errand; he had pride enough to feel ashamed of thus adding to obligations already incurred.

"Mebby, if that's the case, he better not go," said Mr. Sanders.

"Better not go! tell me then, in the name of goodness, what we're to do, then? Do you want any supper?"

"Here, William, give me the pail. It does not rain now.

As no one made any objections, Miss Maggie took the pail,

which Bill yielded quite willingly. She had already procured her hat, a round, straw, gypsy-shaped little article, trimmed with a band of red ribbon, with modest streamers dangling on one side. If any one could have refused the little beauty anything she asked for, he or she must have had a very hard heart or utter inability to meet her request.

Off she started with a light step, but she had not proceeded farther than the front stoop when Edward Bascom halted his horse at the door.

The two looked at each other a moment, and then Edward raised his cap, and she smiled and spoke:

"You did not tell me your name the other day; but I think I know it now."

"Nor did you tell me yours. But I suppose I can guess it now. Has your brother reached home yet?"

"I have no brother here."

"Is not your name Sanders?"

"Oh, no! my name is Bellfield — Maggie Bellfield."

"Does not Mr. Sanders live here?"

"Oh, yes! Is that the flour you've got there?"

"It is. Is there any one in who can help me off with this bag."

"Cannot I help you? Let me take it."

"Oh, no, you cannot lift it."

Just then Mrs. Sanders, followed by her husband and son, came to the door. She was the first to speak.

"Well, you've got here at last?"

"Yes, ma'am: I had to wait a little for the rain. I hope your son was not hurt by his fall."

"As good luck would have it, he wasn't killed; but he might have been. I'd 'a thought you'd ha' known better than to get him on behind you, and then set your horse off on a dead run."

"I assure you, Mrs. Sanders, it was not my fault. My horse got the advantage of me, as I had only one hand to manage him with. I had to hold fast of the bag with the other hand; but if your son had only held fast of me he need not have fallen. I kept telling him to hold fast."

"That's a lie!" called out Bill, who was standing behind his father in the doorway, "and if you say it again I'll give you a licking."

"Go along out there, you villain, and lift off that bag;" and Mr. Sanders accompanied his words with a grasp of Master Bill by the coat-collar, and after a shake or two sending him down

the steps by double-quick speed; "let me hear you again speak of licking anybody, and I'll trounce you till the blood comes."

As Bill was carrying in the bag, Edward addressed himself to Mrs. Sanders, who was still standing on the stoop.

"Will you please, Mrs. Sanders, to empty the bag, as I promised Mr. Parsons to return it immediately."

"The bag! what bag? ain't this my bag?" looking at it a moment, and catching hold of Master Bill in readiness to give him another shake. "What have you done with my piller-case, you good-for-nothing you? tell me quick!"

Poor Bill was as much amazed as herself. He was conscious the bag was a good deal heavier than the one he was carrying when relieved by that unlucky horseback affair. And as he now looked at it, he saw clearly that it was not a pillow-case. How it had come to pass he could not imagine; but fearing trouble, he answered very quickly, —

"I don't know nothin' about it. I handed the miller the bag you gin me. He must have changed it."

"Mrs. Sanders, it is not his fault," called out Edward, as he saw Master Bill about to be dealt with; "he is not to blame. I will tell you how it has happened."

And while Mrs. Sanders still kept her hold of Bill, Edward related the whole story. The moment he paused, Mrs. Sanders vociferated, —

"And where is my piller-case?"

"Indeed, I don't know, ma'am. The wind took it off like nothing. It maybe has lodged on the commons somewhere."

"On the commons somewhere! Well, well, young gentleman, I s'pose you think you're one, but it ain't very gentleman-like to play a trick on that poor, silly boy, and make him get on behind you, and then set your horse a-runnin' and a-kickin' until he was flung off; and then, as if that wasn't enough, you must tear my new pillow-case to pieces, and then tell me to go look for it on the commons."

Edward was in no condition to reply to the unreasonable woman. He was beginning to feel very uncomfortable in his wet clothes, as the wind was coming up quite cool after the shower, and the sun was near setting. He was quite tired with the exertion he had made to get the flour to them; and then to be accused of a malicious intent when his whole conduct was induced by a spirit of accommodation; altogether, he felt more like crying than making a reply. Mr. Sanders, however, had some little sense of propriety left. He had been a silent spec-

tator for a while, but seeing that Edward looked rather crest-fallen and worried, and being himself but too happy to have the flour, bag or no bag, he felt that there was no use in quarrelling over it now.

"Why don't you go take that bag in and empty it, and let the boy take it home again, and not keep a-talkin' all day? When a thing is done and gone, where's the use of whining? The piller-case is somewhere, no doubt. The wind couldn't a-taken it fur, I know. Do you hear me, you sir? In with it!"

In went the bag, and Mrs. Sanders in high dudgeon followed it; and Mr. Sanders stepped down from his place in the doorway, and came up close to Edward.

"You say you got the flour at Parsons', — how much was there?"

"I got thirty pounds. I didn't know how much there was in the other bag, but if there was more than that, I will either get more or pay for the difference."

"Oh, that ain't no matter. I s'pose they put it down to me, as I keep account there. Is it wheat or rye? tother was rye."

"I told them to give me wheat, as I did not know which it was."

"All right, all right! wheat costs a little more; but I tell our folks it's cheapest in the end. You did right; and they was willing to charge it?" Mr. Sanders was quite elated at this idea, for he had been thinking that perhaps that source of supply was cut off.

"Oh! I did not ask them to charge it, sir, to you or anybody. I paid for it."

"You did, ha! Well, I am sorry for that. Dear me! what shall I do? I ain't no change about me just now. Pity you hadn't just let 'em charged it. How much did it come to?"

"Oh, sir, only a dollar and a half. I don't want you to pay me at all for it — only I am sorry about losing the bag. But I will go there to-morrow morning, and try to find it."

The conversation was here interrupted by little Maggie, who came running down the steps with the empty bag. As she handed it up to Edward, she said, —

"I thank you very much for the ride you gave me. I should have been caught in the shower if not for that. But are you not wet through?"

"Oh! no matter for that."

"Wont you please take this. It's from my own bush."

"Oh, thank you — it is a beautiful rose. I will try to keep it as long as I can."

"Have you far to ride?"

"Nearly a mile and a half."

Edward raised his cap as she pleasantly said good-by, and went off on a good gallop. Mr. Sanders had taken the opportunity, as soon as Maggie came out with the bag, to scud into the house. He did not wish to prolong the conversation with young Bascom — the flour was safe, at any rate, and a larger quantity than he had bargained for.

Maggie stood and watched the retreating horse and his rider, saying to herself, "I wish I was on behind him, and going to his home. I wonder if he has any sisters? I guess he has, though, because he is so civil and polite. I mean to ask him when I see him again. Oh, dear! I do wonder what they are all quarrelling about now. I wish James would come and take me away. Oh, what a beautiful cloud that is! I must go up in my room and look at it."

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD BASCOM reached his home at last; but in no very good plight, and not in very good spirits. He was wet and cold and hungry; but he had a home of comfort and love when he did get there. It was not a showy home — the house was a plain stone building; respectable, indeed, in appearance, but with no lavish expenditure of ornament about it. It was large and well proportioned; and with its attachment of outhouses, and the venerable trees that were clustered about and scattered through the lawn in its front, presented a home look that many more showy houses fail to do.

Edward rode immediately up the lane or carriage path that ran one side of the lawn, to the barns in the rear.

A man stepped out of the stable just as he reached the shed which ran in front of it.

"Aha! my boy. Ain't I glad you've come. I was just a-goin' off on Old Towzer to look after you. The mistress has been a-wonderin' why you tarried so. She was thinkin' mebbly

Jupe had got affrighted at the thunder, and mebbly heeve you into the creek. Arrah, you! stop that. Bedad! he'll nip some one yet, Mr. Edward."

Jupe, if he felt a little cross, or had an idea that he could frighten any one by the manoeuvre, had a habit of snapping when his bridle was seized near the bits.

"Jupe, Jupe," said Edward. "Did he catch your hand then, Uncle Tom?"

"Arrah, you! Indeed, Mr. Edward, he's a dangerous beast. Arrah! you little vicious —"

"Don't fear him, Uncle Tom. He can't bite while you hold him that way. I guess he don't feel in a good humor; he and I have had a time of it. We've had a soaking, I tell you, and I guess he is a little hungry. Here, let me hold him while you take off the saddle."

Edward sprang quickly off, and Uncle Tom, as he was called, gladly released his hold, for which, indeed, there had been no occasion whatever; at least so it seemed, for the moment Jupe was free from restraint, and Edward stood near his head and was feeling in his pocket for something, Jupe quite lovingly rubbed the side of his head on Edward's shoulder.

"Here, Jupe, here's something for you, my good fellow!" at the same time caressing him, pressing Jupe's head up to his own.

"Indeed, Mr. Edward, I wouldn't do the like o' that for the worth of the beast in pure gold; one wallop of his teeth, and there wouldn't be much of a cheek left. But save us! Mr. Edward, what's this on the new saddle-cloth? spoilt it is! Oh, dear! One would think you'd been rolling in a meal heap."

"There was a heap of meal rolled on to me, rather, Uncle Tom."

"Onto you! Where, then, under heaven have you been, Mr. Edward? And them nice clothes, too! ye're all plastered wid it! Oh dear, oh dear!"

"Never mind, Uncle Tom; it can't be helped now."

"Ye may well say that! them trousers! Dear me, to think of it; so span new you looked when ye left here this afternoon; And this pretty saddle-cloth — they're past help, sure enough; but how comed it?"

"You see, Uncle Tom, as I was coming along the lane that crosses the mill stream, — I had been over to Middleton's, on an errand for mamma, — I saw a boy ahead carrying a bag, and he

was hurrying along, and kept turning his head every minute to look at the clouds; you know they were awful black."

"I tell you what, Mr. Edward, I was frightened myself, and I telled Bridget there must be a hurricane a-brewing."

"Well, when I came up to him, I saw he looked dreadful pale, and just then the clouds had got over our head, and the rain would be coming on soon, and then his meal would get wet and spoiled; so I took his bag in front of me, and made him git on behind; but he was so long getting on, that the storm had most begun when we started. But you see Jupe didn't like it; so he began to rear and kick, and the boy began to helloa, and then Jupe set off on a full run. I couldn't hold him, you see, for I had to hold on to the bag with one hand, and I couldn't guide him either; so he put right round the corner for home, and he turned so short, the fellow lost his balance, and off he went."

"What was his name?"

"Sanders — Bill Sanders."

"Was he kilt intirely?"

"Oh, no!"

"Ah! that's a great pity; gin he had broke his neck, you'd have done a service to the whole place, Mr. Edward. He's the worst boy of his size I ever seed yet; he's bound for the gal-lows, is that fellow. Well, what become of the bag?"

"It split right in two, Uncle Tom, and just then the wind and the rain came on; so I let the old thing go, and took hold of Jupe, and the wind and rain, you see, being right in our faces, he was glad to stop. So I wheeled him round, and got behind the stone fence till the flurry was over, and then put for Parsons', and got a bag there and some meal, and took it down to Sanders's."

"You oughtn't to done that, Mr. Edward."

"Why not, Uncle Tom? they are rather poor, I guess. I was afraid they might want it for supper."

"They don't deserve supper nor nothin' else. The old man is lazy, and proud into the bargain, and the boy is an ugly sarpint; a thousand pities Jupe hadn't made an end on him. Did they thank ye for doing them sich a turn as that?"

"Oh, well, I didn't want any thanks; they didn't say much about it." Edward felt ashamed to tell just how he was received.

"Jist like 'em. I tell you, Mr. Edward, it ain't no kindness to be after helping the like of them. But, my boy, ye must

not be tarrying here: ye are sopping wet. I'll take care of the little beast till the coachman comes. Arrah, you! ah, you villain! bite, will you? Faith, Mr. Edward, he'll do a mischief to some one yet."

Oh, he is only playing, Uncle Tom. You mustn't seem to be afraid of him. Jupe, Jupe, be still, sir!"

But Jupe knew his man; and the moment Edward left for the house he commenced a series of capers that soon caused Uncle Tom to release his hold, when Jupe sprang into the stable, and running into old Towser's stall, there began a rumpus that so alarmed Uncle Tom that he called loudly for the hostler.

"What is it, my old boy? what's to pay now?"

This was said by the hostler or coachman — he carried both titles.

"There's the Old Nick to pay! That young devil of a horse of Mr. Edward's is got into Towzer's stall, and they're a biting —, and yelling, and kicking. Arrah, you! there, you see that! Bedad, them legs of his will be death of some one yet."

"Jupe, Jupe, my boy, come back out of there, you rogue, you! back with you!"

Jupe knew the voice, and, backing out, was in his own place in an instant, and began eating his hay as demurely as if he had done nothing out of the way, and was the best-behaved horse in the world.

"I tell you what it is, daddy," — Patrick, the coachman, being quite a young man, generally gave the person in question this title, — "you mustn't never let a horse know that you're afraid of him; he might be the death of you."

"He'll be the death of some one yet; his legs is too nimble for me, and he come nigh nippin' my fingers off."

"Oh, it's only play like; see how quick he minded me! Jupe, my pretty fellow, I must give you a good rubbing; I should think you had a hard time of it this afternoon. I wonder what's on his mane, here? it is all plastered up."

"Look here, Patrick; look at this saddle-cloth."

"By the powers! that is bad, though, ain't it? Is it meal he's got on it?"

"Yes, and what do you think? — it all come of helping that good-for-nothing Bill Sanders carry a bag from the mill; it busted, and spilt all over everything right in the midst of the rain, too."

"Helping Bill Sanders?"

"Ah! the poor boy didn't know much about him; and he is so mindful to do right himself, he never thinks there can be wrong in other people."

"Yes, and Bill was spilt on the ground, too."

"Did he take him on too?"

"Yes; and Jupe got mad, and kicked and run, and at last walloped the fellow off."

"Hurt him much?"

"No; a thousand pities it hadn't put an end to him."

"I am sorry it has happened. I tell you I know that fellow; he will have a grudge against Master Edward now, and he will try to do him a mischief."

"And after the boy has gone and bought meal for him with his own money, and carried away down there to his own home?"

"Did he do that?"

"Indeed he did."

"One wouldn't think a fellow could harbor any bad feelings in sich a case; but he is a sly, mischievous rogue. You know how he treated the Widow Gaines, a nice lady as ever lived. She hired him, you know, to do the out-door chores for her last winter, and in three weeks he dried up two of her cows, and he'd have dried up the other if she hadn't got rid of him; and every one thinks it was him that set fire to her haystack, and had like to have burned everything up."

"It's a thousand pities Jupe hadn't made an end of him!"

"It wouldn't a been no great loss. But I shall keep the stable door locked after this; he'll have a spite against the horse at any rate, and he wouldn't be a bit too good to injure him in some way if he got a chance."

As Edward entered the house, he was met by his mother, who, on seeing him, exclaimed,—

"My dear Edward, I have been quite uneasy about you; were you out in the storm?"

"I was out in the worst of it, mamma."

"What is the matter, my dear boy, with your clothes? they are ruined! What has happened to you? Has Jupe thrown you?"

"No, mamma. I will tell you all about it by and by; I believe I had better go and change them; I am wet through."

"Do, my son, as quick as you can."

"Oh, Eddie, I am so glad you have come!" exclaimed his youngest sister, a lovely creature about twelve years of age,

who came running up, and putting her arms around his neck, kissed him as warmly as if he had just come home after a long absence. "Oh, how wet you are! But where did you get this beautiful rose?"

"Will you not take it and put it in water for me?"

"But where did you get it? Did Kate Middleton give it to you?"

"Let me see it, Julia," said the mother; "it is indeed very pretty: what a lovely color!"

"Mamma," said Edward, "who is that young girl at the Sanders's—Maggie Bellfield—is she a relation of theirs?"

"Where did you see her? But no matter now. Run up, without a moment's more delay, and change your clothes. Julia, dear, let your brother go; he will tell you all about it by and by."

Edward, as Julia released him, whispered something in her ear, and hastened to his room.

"Mamma," said Julia, "don't you remember Edward told us the other day about his taking up a very pretty young girl as he was riding home from Shoreville, because he thought she would get caught in the shower, it was so far from any house? And he told us, you know, how beautiful she was, and how very lady-like, and how pleasantly she thanked him for her ride?"

"Yes, my dear, I remember the circumstance."

"Well, it was she who gave him this rose; and I mean to take all the care of it I can."

Edward had a request to make of his mother, and as he knew that in general, though ever ready to listen to his requests, she did not always see things as he did, and therefore sometimes was denied a gratification upon which his heart had been set, he began by a roundabout way to get his proposition before her. It was just on the edge of evening; the clouds had all vanished; the air was soft and balmy; his two sisters, Mary and Julia, were promenading the broad, smooth walk that led through the front lawn to the highway, and enjoying a view of the rising moon as she emerged from the ocean, and threw her pale beams in a silver streak on the long stretch of water spread out as far as the eye could reach. His mother had taken her seat by the window, and Edward, drawing his chair up beside her, asked,—

"Mamma, did you ever have to think how you were going

to get a living? I mean did you ever have to do anything—to earn anything, I mean.”

“No, my dear. What makes you ask?”

“Oh, well, I’ve been thinking how a person must feel that has to think from day to day how they are to get things. I mean food and such things.”

“We all have to exercise thought about such matters,—that is, those who are heads of families or have the care of providing for themselves or others. For instance, I have now to see to it that meat is got from the butcher, and that there is plenty of flour in the house, and that there is tea and coffee and sugar in the house, and that you children have a good supply of clothing on hand, and all that.”

“Oh, yes; but that ain’t what I mean. You do not have to think where the money is to come from to buy them with.”

“No, that is true; no, I have reason to be thankful I have never had any anxiety on that account.”

“Well, then, how do you think you would feel if you had to think how you was going to get these things, and had to contrive to do with as little as possible so as just barely to live.”

“I cannot say, my son. I have never thought of such a condition; and I do not see any use in imagining myself in such circumstances, because there is no human probability that we shall ever be so situated as to want any of the necessaries of life.”

“I know, mamma; but some people do have to contrive and save even to get enough to eat, and good people, too.”

“What has led you to think of such matters, my son? You are not likely to be in any such circumstances, without you should turn out to be a spendthrift, which I trust you will not.”

“I hope I never shall; I should rather try to save and help those who are poor. It must be a dreadful thing to be poor, don’t you think?”

“All cannot be rich.”

“But ought not those that are rich to help them that are poor?”

“Yes, in a certain way. I always give when I am called upon.”

“Yes, I know we always give something to beggars; but there are some people who are poor who would scorn to beg.”

“The poor are generally very careless and wasteful, and have no gratitude; and if you do not do for them all they think you

ought to do for them, they will like as not turn round and abuse you. You have told us how you was treated by Mrs. Sanders and her son this afternoon, after all the trouble you took to accommodate them.”

“I think like as not William told them a wrong story about the matter; when they find out the truth they will feel differently about it. I am glad, anyhow, I got the meal there. I think they must have wanted it, or they would not have sent off so far to get it. We ought to be very patient with poor people, ought we not?”

“One has to exercise a good deal of patience with them; in general they are very unreasonable.”

Edward began to be discouraged. He found, instead of getting nearer to the subject that was upon his mind, the conversation had taken a turn in no way, as he thought, favorable. He, however, tried another tack.

“You know Mrs. Tellfair, mamma?”

“Sam’s grandmother?”

“Yes.”

“I know her. What about her?”

“She is quite poor, is she not?”

“I do not think she is so very poor; she keeps a cow, and seems to have things comfortable about her?”

“I know things always look clean there; but do you not think they must have to be very saving, in order to live from what the cow brings them? Suppose we had nothing but one cow, or say three cows, to live from?”

“Edward, I don’t see what has got into you. How strangely you talk! What have our circumstances to do with those of other people? Because Mrs. Tellfair has one cow or a dozen cows, it is nothing to us.”

“She couldn’t have a dozen cows, because she has no pasture for them. Sam has to spend all his time baiting the one cow.”

“Why does he not let her feed on the commons?”

“He says the feed is so short there; there are so many cows feeding there they have eaten it close.”

“Well, his time, I suppose, is of no consequence; he may as well spend it that way as any other.”

“But he says he could be earning forty cents a day if he had not to bait the cow.”

“Well, how can we help that? Do you want that we should pasture her for them?”

"Do you not think we could?"

"Pasture their cow?"

"Why not, mamma?"

Mrs. Bascom looked at her son a moment, and then, taking his hand, for she saw his eyes were glistening with tears ready to fall, —

"My dear boy, how much you do feel on this subject! What has excited you so?"

"I cannot tell you, mamma; but it came into my head this afternoon when I was talking to Sam."

"Did he ask you to speak to me about it?"

"Oh, no; he has no idea of such a thing."

"Well, my dear, you will have to ask Uncle Tom about it; he has charge of the dairy, and can tell about the pasture better than I can."

"And I may say to him that you are willing, mamma?"

There was such a brightening up of Edward's countenance as he looked into his mother's face on asking this question, that she put her arm about him, and pressed him to her.

"Yes, my dear, you may; and tell him, if it can be done, I wish your request to be gratified."

"Oh, thank you, mamma, thank you."

And throwing his arms about her neck, he gave her a hearty kiss.

Mrs. Bascom held her son in a silent embrace for some moments. Some new thoughts had started in her own mind; we cannot stop to attend to them just now, for Edward is in a hurry to go and see Uncle Tom, and we must go with him.

Uncle Tom occupied a small tenement not far from the mansion of Mrs. Bascom, and belonging to the estate. It was a neat-looking building, and everything around it in keeping.

"Ah, Mr. Edward!" exclaimed Uncle Tom, as Edward opened the little gate of the front yard, and was advancing up the walk to the stoop on which the former was seated enjoying his pipe.

"Good-evening, Uncle Tom. How beautifully it has cleared off!"

"Indeed, you may well say that; but it was a black-looking tempest as ever I see. Are you no the worse for being whetted?"

"Oh, no! I am all dry. Mamma thinks, though, that my trowsers are a gone case."

"Ah! that's bad — and span new they were!"

"I had worn them a little."

"And I'm fearing, Mr. Edward, the saddle-cloth ain't much better. A thousand pities ye hadn't jist made your way home and no minded that fellow. Patrick says that Bill Sanders will owe you spite for his fall — the good-for-nothing that he is."

"I guess not, Uncle Tom."

"Ay, he's a sly rogue that. The less any one has to do with sich people the better."

"There is no harm in doing them a kindness when it comes in your way."

"Ah! Mr. Edward, I tell ye that sich as them, the better you treat them the worser they be. They think ye have some bad motive that moves you till it; better give 'em a kick than do them a favor."

"I have come to ask you, Uncle Tom, how we are off for pasturing."

"Pretty fair, pretty fair, Mr. Edward."

"Do you think there is room for another cow?"

"I'm thinking there is, surely; does your ma think of getting another?"

"No, but I wanted to know; because I thought, if we could, I should like to let Mrs. Tellfair put her cow in our pasture. The feed is very short on the commons, and Sam has to spend all his time baiting their cow."

"That's a good thought on ye," said a voice that came from the window close by. Edward turned his head, and seeing Bridget, said, —

"Good-evening, Mrs. Maloy." Bridget was much younger than her husband, a second wife, and had not been long in her present situation.

"Good-evening to ye, Mr. Edward, and I am right glad to hear the proposal ye are making. There ain't a nicer woman in the town than Widow Tellfair, and her boy is raal civil and well-behaved."

Uncle Tom, ever since he heard the reason for Edward's inquiry, had been scratching his head — the thing was not the most agreeable. Uncle Tom had a cow of his own, and the privilege of pasture was one of his perquisites, and he was just trying to trump up a reason against the proposition, when Bridget's voice broke in upon them. He saw it was a gone case now; so he was determined to lose no credit with Edward, and therefore chimed in with his wife.

"That Sam is a worthy boy, and a dabster at work when he

can get it. I'm a-thinkin', Mr. Edward, there will be feed enough. In the morning I shall put the cows in the north lot, and that will be handy for the boy to drive his critter back and forth. And is your ma willing?"

"Oh, yes, Uncle Tom; she says I might tell you, if you thought it could be done, she would be glad."

"Tell her yes my boy; I'll answer for it there'll be feed enough. And besides, I'm a-thinkin' it might be a good thing to give that boy a chance during our hayin'."

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Tom, that will be first-rate; I am so glad you mentioned it. I know Sam would rather come here than go anywhere else. Shall I engage him for you? I am going to see him early in the morning."

"Well, mebby you might as well. I'm thinkin' the mistress will approve it; she leaves it to me in general. Yes, Mr. Edward, tell him we can give him work all July."

"Thank you, Uncle Tom; and now I must run home, for mamma wished me to come back as soon as I could. Good-evening, Uncle Tom — good-night, Mrs. Maloy."

"A good-night to you, and God bless you, Mr. Edward, and give you good drames the night," sounded out in clear, ringing tones from the window, for Edward had already started on his way with a quick step.

"I'm a-thinking what's got into the boy," said Uncle Tom to his young wife as she came out on the stoop and took a seat on one of the steps. "He's bent upon doin' a kindness to some one or another."

"Blessings on him for that," said Bridget. "A kind heart ain't no loss to him nor any other body. Do you not think it yoursel'?"

"Sure you're right there, but he'll be some troubled in getting much thanks for the same."

"Ah! that may be, husband; but it's my mind them that's for doin' a good turn to a fellow-creetur ain't much minded about the thanks."

"Mebby not, but it's kind a natural to be lookin' for the same. Ye know yoursel' ye like to be praised for your smartness. Didn't ye tell me but the day gone, how the mistress said there were no hands like yours to do a thing to a nicety."

"And who wouldn't be proud to know that sich a nice leddy as she is approved of your doin's? ye are fain to please her yersel'; ye know that, husband."

"Well, I am no spakin' agin, your bein' proud of the same."

Sure am I she's kind and reasonable, and no stint wid the pay. But there's many a mistress ye could no plaze, do the best yur hands could do; and it ain't no very pleasant the doin' for the like of sich. And I fear me Mr. Edward will no git thanks for all his trouble to sarve them Sanders folk; that Bill will owe him a grudge, and I'm fearing will do him some mischief in a sly way. He's all for the bad, is that Bill."

"He must be a raal imp of Satan gin he should harbor malice to sich a boy as that — to think of his goin' through all the lightnin' and thunder and rain to sarve them, 'cause he thought they might be in straits for their bread. I'm thinkin' it's because ye're so ould, Mr. Maloy, that ye are so feared for evil. They say ould folk are fain to look on the dark side."

And as Bridget said this she turned a roguish look at her husband. Uncle Tom was somewhat sensitive on the subject of age. He may have been over sixty, or not quite fifty — nobody knew besides himself, and whether he could have told the very day or year is rather doubtful. There was no record of it that his young wife could find, and she had hunted carefully among the few books and papers in his possession, and when she had put the question to him he had answered so indefinitely, that she found a large margin for figuring in, and her womanish curiosity was not satisfied.

The look which she now gave him caused a slight screw of his mouth to one side which was the nearest to a smile that Uncle Tom generally attained. It was near enough, however, to signify to those who knew him that he was rather pleased than otherwise. What pleased him now was the sly way in which he saw that Bridget was trying to get at the matter of his age.

"Have ye no found out yet?" he replied.

"Ay have I; ye're on to the last stretch, my man — sixty and odd."

"I'm wonderin', then, ye should ha' took up wid an ould fellow when ye might ha' had many a young chap; for ye know, Biddy, ye be well favored."

"Ay, that's just the way ye cum round me at the fust; ye are full of blarney — and ye know it. But look, husband; what are they about you? Is that Patrick?"

Uncle Tom looked in the direction Bridget had pointed, and noticed two persons, apparently boys, just about to climb over the stone wall that enclosed a small pasture-field, and on the south end of which lay the barns and stables of Mrs. Bascom.

In this field were a few apple-trees of choice early fruit. The apples were not yet fit for eating, but as they were already of good size, and as Uncle Tom knew that boys were not particular about apples being ripe if they were only grown, he made up his mind that the individuals in question were after the fruit, and as Mrs. Bascom prized it much, he felt it his duty to go and see about things; so laying down his pipe and taking up his hat, he at once started off.

"Shall I not go wid ye?" called Bridget.

"No, no; bide where ye be."

But Bridget did not feel easy, and resolved in her own mind to be on hand. They looked to her like pretty large boys, — at least one of them, — and she feared, if brought to bay, they might be too much for Uncle Tom. So stepping within, she seized a stout ox gad that stood in one corner of the kitchen, and started in pursuit. The moon was up, but as an orchard lay between their house and the enclosure, into which the two persons had been seen to enter, it was not easy to have much of a view ahead. Bridget, however, was able to mark where her husband got over the wall; and in a short time she was at the place, and peering cautiously over into the enclosure. She could neither see nor hear any one, however, but resolved to stay where she was, as she knew the bars by which she stood would be the most likely place for those who were in there to seek to pass over, for the wall beyond the bars was too high to climb with ease; and in order that she might not be seen, she seated herself on a stone by the side of the wall, near the bars, to be in readiness should any persons attempt to pass over them.

When Uncle Tom reached the field into which he saw the two persons entering, he was surprised that he could see no one there; he walked about it a few moments, and then a new thought came into his mind. He at once started for the stables, opened the gate which led into the barn-yard, and was startled to find that it was already unlatched and ajar. He crept cautiously along beneath the shed which lined that end of the barn-yard, towards a door that gave entrance into the barn, and also into the stable appropriated to the horses. As he reached this door he thought he heard voices, and pausing one side of the door which was partly open, he listened attentively. The two persons were there. They were in some difficulty, and were talking over matters in a low tone, not much above a whisper, but loud enough for Uncle Tom to catch most of what was said.

"Is there no other door into the stable?"

"Only the outer one."

"I thought you said they didn't lock the doors."

"They didn't use to. Can't you find something to get out the staple with?" Here the elder of the two let out a string of profanity, cursing his companion for leading him on such a fool's errand.

"Pry out the staple? It can't be done; and then, like as not, we shall get our brains kicked out. Come, I'm going back; it ain't a-going to pay."

Just at that moment, Uncle Tom, without being able to stop the operation, had to sneeze; he stifled it all he could, but it was a veritable sneeze. In an instant there was a rush to the door; it was thrown open with violence. Uncle Tom went with it, for he was standing against it, and he brought up rather hard on the bones of an ox. He was not hurt, but his anger was kindled to the highest pitch. As he recovered his feet, some rather strong expressions burst forth, and a quick chase was made after the fugitives. What was to be done with them if he caught them, he did not stop to think; if he had a gun, or a club, or a stone, there would have been a messenger after them without delay. But as he was empty-handed, he could only try to catch them, leaving the result to be determined when he got hold of them; and he came pretty near accomplishing that part of the business.

When Uncle Tom came through the outer gate, he had closed it, fearing the cattle in the yard might take a notion to go out in search of apples. The intruders in their haste (which was somewhat quickened by the threatening words that were poured forth after them), seeing the gate closed, did not stop to open it, but essayed to climb over. One of them, the taller, accomplished it without much ado; but the other in his haste and fright made a slip, and before he could recover himself, Uncle Tom was up with him, and had caught him by one foot, just as he was throwing himself over. He gave a desperate kick; the foot was bare, and somewhat slippery from going through the wet grass, and Uncle Tom lost his hold. The youngster fell heavily on the bare ground, head first, and face downwards. He must have hurt himself, for he uttered a pitiful cry; but he sprang up, and was off, blubbering as he went, and Uncle Tom in full chase.

As Bridget anticipated, they both made for the bars by which she was seated. She saw them coming, and Uncle Tom in pursuit, and growling like an angry bull. She stood ready with

her weapon, resolved that they should feel the weight of her arm. The first, however, made but one spring, and was over before she could bring her forces to bear. He saw her, but he did not stop to ask questions, and was out of reach in an instant. The other was at once on hand. He saw her as he put his hand on the top rail, and seemed for a moment at a loss what to do; but feeling that death was behind him — for Uncle Tom kept up his threatening growl — and seeing only a woman before him, he jumped to climb; but he doubtless had little idea of the power in a woman's arm, or the speed she could make in laying it on thick and fast. Bridget was not particular where she struck — face, back, legs, or anywhere. She did her best; it was quick work, and soon over. The fellow made a great outcry, and no doubt had good reason for so doing; but he did not stop to argue matters, and flew out of reach of the terrible stings as fast as his legs would let him.

"Whare be they?" said Uncle Tom, as he came up growling and panting.

"Well on their way, I'm thinking; and a sore hide one of them has, if there is ony virtue in this saplin'."

"But how comes you here, woman?"

"I e'en thought ye might be worsted in a tussle wid the youngsters, and bedad one of them is as tall as yourself — a strapping loon. He jumpit the fence in a leap afore I could raise my weapon intil him; but I've scored the one: he'll no want to be after stalin' no more apples in these parts."

"Ah! the villains; it was no apples they were after — there's worse mischief as that in their heads."

"Where did ye grapple 'em?"

"Ah! I didn't grapple wid 'em. Ye see they got the start o' me, whiles I was standin' agin' the stable door and wide-awake to hear what deviltry they would be at. I was jist took wid a sneeze, and they flew agin' the door like mad, and away I went doon on the auld ox; but as luck would have it, struck in his belly instead of the horns. But I forgathered mysel' in time to catch the youngster by the leg; but he slipped from my grasp and over, down head first from the top of the gate, and then away like the ould one was after him."

"Then it's in the stable they was?"

"Sure, no; the door was locked. But it's my mind they were after doin' a mischief to Mr. Edward's pony, and if I'm no deceived, the younger one was that imp of Satan, Bill Sanders. But I couldna swear to it. Did you notice 'em?"

"Ay did I, and I'm thinkin' he has a sore token from this same;" shaking her long gad.

"Lather 'em, did ye, wid that? Bedad, I'm thinkin' he'll carry the marks, gin you got a fair lick at him; but it's my guess there'll be mischief a-comin'. Ah! it was a thousand pities that fellow didn't break his neck when he fell from the horse!"

"Hout-tout ye mustn't speak so, husband; he ain't no fit to die, and wid no warnin', ye are no marciful. But ye are no sartain it was that same; ye say ye couldna take oath of it?"

"I couldna jist take oath of it; but I'm thinkin' ye had a better look at him as I had. Could ye no affirm to it?"

"Me affirm to it! why, I knows him not. I never seed that Bill Sanders you're spakin' of; but he's got a reckonin', whomsoever he be. They ain't done no harm, you say! and I'm a-thinkin' he'll no be after visiting this ways agin. So let's jist go in, and git to rist, for ye must be sore harried wid the race ye had. And was ye no hurted wid the fall?"

"I'm no hurted in body, but I'm sore vexed in mind. There'll be mischief out of this yet; see if there ain't."

During this conversation, they had been leisurely walking towards their home, and had just reached it as Bridget made her proposition "to git to rest." With a heavy sigh, Uncle Tom ascended the stoop and entered his dwelling, and all was soon quiet in their humble cottage.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDWARD was in fine spirits when he arose the morning after the events recorded in the last chapter. He was to see Sam, and tell him not only that he would no longer be under the necessity of baiting his cow, but that an engagement was ready for him during the month of July. The joy that filled his heart was different from that which he had ever experienced before. It had no immediate connection with his own amusement or selfish gratification. He was absorbed in the idea of the pleasure it would give his humble friend Sam, and Sam's grandmother. It was the first taste to him of the luxury of doing good; and if he had entered

very closely into the comparison between his feeling then, and the feeling he had ever before experienced from any of his pleasures, he would no doubt have come to the conclusion, that it was a richer happiness to benefit others than to merely amuse and please himself. But he did not attempt any such analysis. He did not think of himself at all; he thought only of others.

"Where are you going after breakfast, Edward?" said his younger sister, as they were taking their seats at the table.

"Well, Sister Julia, I am going, in the first place, to see Sam Tellfair about some business; and then I am going to see if I can find that bag or pillow-case which I lost yesterday."

"What to do with it?" said his elder sister.

"Why, to take it home to them, Sister Mary."

"I should think it hardly worth while to give yourself all that trouble. You had bother enough with getting the meal to them. It must have been very old, too, or it would not have torn so easily."

"I think, Mary, I had better try to find it. Mrs. Sanders seemed quite out of humor about it. Perhaps they may want it."

"It would be as well, perhaps, Mary," said their mother, "that Edward should look for it, and take it to them if he finds it. But I will give you a bag, my son, to take to them. The family has not a very good name, and I do not care to give them any occasion to feel that they have in any way been injured by us. And besides, as Edward says, they may be in want of it. I believe they are quite poor."

"Thank you, mamma, I should feel a good deal better to take a nice whole bag along with me; the other, if I find it, will be in rather a sad plight, I guess."

"Mamma," said Mary, "who is that young girl — what is her name, Eddie?"

"Maggie Bellfield."

"Who is she, mamma," continued Mary.

"I cannot tell you, my dear; I never heard of her before Edward mentioned her name."

"She seems to have taken quite a fancy to Edward, to think of giving him that rose," said Julia.

"La, Sis, she merely did it because I gave her a ride the other day. I saw there was a shower coming, and she was just coming out of the Pines, and most two miles from any house, and I knew she must certainly get wet. It was right, was it not, mamma, to ask her to ride?"

"Certainly, my son; it was what any gentleman would have done."

"I wish I could get a slip of that rose. Do you think it would grow from a slip, mamma?"

"I fear not, my dear."

"Perhaps there may be shoots from it. I know she would give you one, Julia, if there are any," said Edward.

"I should pay her for it, then," said Mary.

"Well, I don't believe she would take any pay, and I should hate to offer it."

"Why, mamma says they are poor."

"I know; they are poor, perhaps, but, —"

"But what, Eddie?"

"Oh, well; you know there is a difference in people. Supposing we were poor, Julia would not like to have money offered to her for a rose-slip, or a bush even."

"Eddie," said Mary, "I feel very curious to see that girl. Are you not willing to have me go with you there this morning? I can have a good excuse to call there by asking her to let me see her rosebush; and I can manage the matter about getting a slip from it."

"I wish you would go, Sister Mary. I will just run down, first, and see Sam Tellfair, and then I will go and see if I can find that bag. About what time shall I tell Patrick to have your horse ready?"

"About ten o'clock."

Jupe was not long in galloping over the one mile which was about the distance between the two houses. Mrs. Tellfair was just entering her door as Edward rode up.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Tellfair."

"Good-morning, Master Edward. All well at home this morning?"

"Thank you, ma'am, all very well. Is Sam about home, Mrs. Tellfair?"

"He will be home shortly. Won't you come in?"

Edward had alighted from his horse, and, hitching him to the fence, was soon in the little house which served Sam and his grandmother for a home. It was, indeed, a small concern, containing but two rooms on the ground floor, — the one in which they lived, and about twelve feet square, and a smaller one opening from it, the bedroom of Mrs. Tellfair. An open garret above served Sam for a sleeping apartment when the winter weather was not too severe; at such times he would

bunk in their sitting-room. Sam could sleep anywhere. He was a jovial, light-hearted boy, free from bad inclinations; and, as he kept a clear conscience, rough fare of any kind never put him out. The greatest trouble with Sam was about clothes; he never complained or made mention of them before his grandmother; he knew that she did the best she could, and that it took pretty much all she could earn by knitting and the produce of her cow to get provisions, and to keep a little store on hand against sickness. He might indeed, if alone, have procured a situation where he could have earned decent clothes and good board, but his grandmother was too old to go out to service herself, and she could not have taken care of her cow or tended her garden. In fact, if Sam should leave her, she would be obliged to go upon the town, and Sam knew that would be to her worse than death, and he himself felt that any privation he could endure would be nothing in comparison with such disgrace as that. The little house and the two acres of ground attached belonged to Sam, and he never meant to let his grandmother want for a home, if he could help it. The place, poor as it was, had a pleasant location—it stood on the bank of the river that ran past the town, and a few old trees stood about it, shading it from the mid-day heat of summer as well as sheltering it from the storms of winter; the grounds belonging to the house ran along the banks of the river, and were enclosed by a stone fence; not a very high or substantial fence, for they were for the most part round stones. Sam kept it up as well as he could, and in spots where it was too low to keep cattle from intruding, he had placed old rails and stakes, and in some spots branches of trees; while in other places, wild bushes had grown up beside the wall, and these formed resting-places for poles or bits of board. It required, sometimes, all the ingenuity Sam possessed to defend the weak spots against the unruly cattle and hogs and geese that roamed at will over the commons, which ran all around his premises. The fence, therefore, was not a very sightly object, but it protected their lot from mauraunders, and enabled Sam to gather a crop of hay, sufficient, by close feeding, to keep their cow through the winter. The little garden was also within this enclosure, and on the south side of the house; and Sam made this available, besides such vegetables as they needed for their own use, for roots and squashes, to make the hay go as far as possible. It was a tight squeeze, anyhow, both in the house, and the stable; but they got along independently of outside aid, and as Sam told

Mr. Sanders, "they didn't owe the store anything." This sort of pride his grandmother had cherished and nurtured in Sam, and, also, she had a prejudice against rags. Sam's clothes were always whole; but if he could have helped it, he would have liked at least that the patches should have been of the color of the trousers or coat; but, as such were not always on hand, it had to be that there was somewhat of a variety.

Sam was not only a civil, well-behaved boy, and well disposed—he was also good-looking. He had a fine, fresh, honest look, very dark eyes and dark hair, and when not cut too short, quite disposed to curl. His countenance, staid when at rest, or when thinking, but lighted quickly by a pleasant aspect when spoken to.

"We are dreadfully pestered with our neighbors' critters a-gittin' into our mowin'," said Mrs. Tellfair, as Edward, at her request, took his seat. "Sammy does all he can to fix up the fence, but the commons is dreadful short this season, and the critters are put to it to get enough to eat; and that cow of Sanders's, our next neighbor, I guess, must have been left out all night, for when we got up this morning, she was in our mowin', and Sammy has gone to drive her home, for he says he don't believe she was milked last night. I'm 'most afeared there's something the matter there, he stays so long. Ah, me! I'm feared things ain't in no good shape there."

"Are they quite poor, Mrs. Tellfair?"

"Well, Mr. Edward, it ain't altogether that: they are poor, no doubt; but in the country, you know, if a body has but a little, if they take a little pains, and manage to save, and no git too much in debt, they can git along somehow; but when they git into bad ways, and there ain't no agreement together in the family, and one pulls one way, and another pulls another way, and there ain't no head nor nothing, things can't go right no how."

"Can you tell me, Mrs. Tellfair, is that Miss Bellfield a relation of theirs?"

"La, bless your soul! he ain't no kin of theirs, no how. She is a real gentleman's daughter; and I'm 'most sick at heart sometimes, when I think of her. Poor thing! she hadn't ought to be in no sich place; and I'm afeared, Mr. Edward, the money what her brother left to pay her board for two months, has been all used up, or taken to pay debts of one kind or another; and I guess the poor child has to fare pretty hard sometimes."

"Has she parents living?"

"No: her parents be both dead?"

"She has brothers and sisters, then?"

"Only one brother. I have never seen him, but they say he's a spunky boy." (By that Mrs. Tellfair meant that he was bright, and full of energy.) "But I don't see why Sammy doesn't git along; he ought to be here to take the cow out to bait; you see, it ain't no use a-turning her out into the commons — they are clean eat off; you see, some have got to turning their sheep out on the commons, and they nibble it clean down into the ground."

"Well, Mrs. Hatfield, I came here this morning to tell Sam that he could turn his cow into our pasture; Uncle Tom says we have plenty of feed."

The old lady had taken up her knitting as soon as she was seated, and her needles were going briskly all the time she had been talking; but, as Edward said this, she dropped her hands upon her lap, and fixed her bright eye full upon him.

"Has my Sammy been asking for sich a favor as that?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Hatfield; he has never said a word about it."

"How comes it about, then? Sure Mr. Maloy did not propose sich a thing as that!" Uncle Tom was not regarded by people generally as being very liberal in his feelings.

"Why, Mrs. Hatfield, I heard Sam say yesterday, that he believed he could earn good wages during the month of July, if it was not that he had to bait the cow; and I knew we had plenty of pasturing, and so I asked mamma about it when I went home, and she was quite willing; and Uncle Tom says there is plenty of feed."

"It was very kind of you, Mr. Edward, to be so thoughtful about us, and it was very kind in your mamma to give her consent; and you will please tell her I thank her very much, and I thank you, dear boy, for the kind intention; but we haven't never yet been beholden to any one; and though we are poor, we can make the ends meet. The cow does pretty well as it is, but I thank you all the same."

Edward began to feel that this business of meddling with other people's affairs, without first being solicited, was not very pleasant, nor very profitable either. He got no thanks for his endeavor to help Bill Sanders along with his bag of meal yesterday, but curses rather; and now even Mrs. Tellfair is almost angry with him for offering her a free pasture for her cow. She thanks him, indeed, for the offer; but he can see plainly

from her looks and manner, that she is not pleased. He was about to tell her that Sam could get employment at their place, too, for the month of July, but concluded that he had better say nothing about it; so as soon as he could, without seeming to be offended, he arose, and bade her good-morning.

In a few moments after he had left, Sam came in; he was almost out of breath running, for he had seen Jupe at the door, and was in haste to get there; but Edward, when he left the house, was in rather a thinking mood, and did not look around to see whether Sam was coming: he jumped quickly on his horse, and was off, like a shot, the way he came.

Sam's first inquiry was, —

"Did Edward Bascom want me, granny?"

"Well, he asked for you."

"Did he say what he wanted?"

"Well, I s'pose, he told me pretty much what he wanted; but I don't see what's put it into his head."

"What was it, granny?"

"Well, he seems to think we are so poor that it would be a charity to let us pasture our cow in their lot with their cows."

"Did he say we might?" and Sam's eyes fairly sparkled with joy.

"Yes: he said he'd axed his ma, and she was willin'."

"Oh, good! ain't he a good fellow! and did you tell him we would, and thank 'im for it greatly?"

"I thanked him for his kind intentions, but I telled him we had got along so fur without bein' beholden to any one, and that the cow was doin' very well as it was."

"Oh, granny!" and Sam threw himself in a chair, and gave his cap a fling that landed it on the other side.

"What now, Sammy! what do you say, 'Oh, granny,' for? Do you want to be beholden to them rich folks, and people all about sayin', 'The Bascoms are very good to Mrs. Tellfair, to pasture her cow for her, and they, no doubt, help her in many ways.' I don't want to hear no sich talk as that."

Sam's heart was full, and he was on the point of letting out his feelings; but he had great respect for his grandmother, and if he had spoken out then, he feared he might say some things he would be sorry for, so he sat looking out of the window. One thing, however, he could not help, and that was wishing heartily that the old cow was dead.

"What's to pay at the Sanders's this morning?" asked his grandmother. She wanted to change the subject.

"Bill didn't come home last night, and I had to stay and milk their cow — she hadn't been milked since yesterday morning; and then I had to feed the pig. Mr. Sanders has been off since daylight looking for Bill; Mrs. Sanders wanted me to go, but I told her I did not know where to go to look for him, and besides, it was time the cow was eating."

"Yes, Sammy, that is true; and now, sonny, git your lunch — there it is, all ready, in the cupboard. The cow does nicely by baiting; I guess we'll have a churnin' by to-morrow."

Sam got his lunch, picked up his cap, and in as pleasant a manner as he could command, just then, — for he was in no good humor, — bade good-morning, and went off on his tedious task of baiting the cow, not forgetting to take his arithmetic with him, and a piece of a slate, which he carried in his basket with his lunch.

To an active, ambitious boy, as Sam was, this employment of baiting the cow was very galling. He was fond of work, and of choice would much rather have been busy with his hoe in the field or the garden all day, than lolling on the ground or the fence. He was not so idle, however, as he seemed to be to those who might notice him as they passed on the road. He was fond of arithmetic, sometimes calculating in his head, and sometimes using his piece of slate. He was fond of reading, too, when he could get hold of a book; but books were not plenty with him. He had also a lively imagination, and was fond of building air-castles; they were not, however, splendid castles that he pictured to himself — nothing finer than a neat cottage in place of the old one, and a few more rooms to it, and a substantial stone fence in place of the low ricketty one surrounding his premises; a pony and wagon, and a good tight stable; — but as these luxuries could not, by any stretch of imagination, be obtained by lolling on the ground all day, baiting the old cow, he pictured to himself various pursuits by which a change in his circumstances might be effected; so sometimes he would be a sailor-boy, dressed in blue, with a turnover collar, all figured round the edge, a glazed cap, and snug pumps on his feet, coming home from a long voyage, with a bag of dollars in his hands, and from that to the captain of a brig or ship, with a chest full of gold eagles. He would have beautiful weather, and moonlit nights — no storms nor cloudy skies ever; and he would come into port with a good breeze, and all sails set, and a host of folks crowding the dock to welcome him home, and old granny a-crying for joy. Then,

again, he would go off to the great city to seek his fortune; he would get into a store; he would work hard, be very prompt and faithful and honest; he would keep books, and finally, be taken in as a partner; and then he would come back to the old place dressed like a gentleman, and build a new cottage for granny, and fix up everything nice around it, and maybe live there. And thus he would amuse himself, until a sight of the patches would bring him back into a state of reality, and he would find the old cow just about to get into some forbidden place, and off he would start on the run after her.

We must now leave Sam for a while, and see what has become of Bill Sanders; for although he is not a pleasant character to deal with, yet he is necessarily connected with the events of our story.

Mr. Sanders might have looked a long while for his son to no purpose, if he had not met with a man he knew who was coming into the town with a load of wood. The man stopped his team for the reason that Mr. Sanders owed him for some wood he had carted to him some time since. The man was not in a good humor, and he called out in a stern manner, "Hilloa, Sanders!"

Mr. Sanders was walking quite fast, for him, and had no idea of stopping to hold any conversation with this person. He knew, too well, what the subject of it would be; but seeing the team stop, and hearing his name called in such an earnest tone, he came to a halt, and stepped up by the side of the teamster.

Mr. Goble was in general an easy sort of a man, and, people said, lost more than he made by carting wood. He had entered into a wood speculation, by buying some acres of wood to be cut off and cleared from the land within a certain specified time, and being anxious to get rid of it, and realize his profits, had been tempted, he said himself, of the "D-D-D — 1" (when Mr. Goble was in a hurry, or much excited, he stuttered badly), to sell to Sanders, and some others of his stamp, and as yet had received only promises in payment. As Mr. Sanders came up, Goble looked at him a moment without saying a word. Sanders, in the meanwhile, with a smile on his face, or rather an attempt to put on a cheerful look, as though he was quite glad to meet such a good friend, was wishing "Good-morning," "A pleasant day," "Up early this morning," etc. Goble's lips were moving, but no sound came from them. At length, holding out his arm, at the end of which was a good stout fist,

tightly clenched, and shaking it at the same time in a very ominous manner,—

“I want m-m-my m-m-money — do you *hear*?”

Mr. Sanders might have heard, had he been on the other side of the road, for the voice was loud, and there were some words as accompaniments, which we omit, as not necessary to an understanding of the demand, but which manifested on the part of Mr. Goble a terrible disturbance of his mind.

“Don’t be angry, Goble; you and I have always been good friends.”

“B-b-bah for your friendship! I want m-m-my m-m-money.”

“You shall have your money, Goble, just as fast as I can git it; times are hard, you know that. I ain’t been able to do nothin’ for a month, with a pain in my back. I can’t sleep a nights; I ain’t slept a wink all last night, and I am in a great deal of trouble this morning. I ’most wish I was out of the world; everything goes bad with me. I’ve no peace to home; that you know as well as I do. Sall is cross, and lays all the blame onto me because the children have turned out as they have. It ain’t my fault that Jamime has gone off as she has; and there’s Ben Tompson been a-beating Sue and raisin’ Old Ned in his house — can I help that; and now here’s Bill, he’s off somewhere — ain’t been home all night; dead, maybe, or something or other the matter of him. I’ve been up since afore daybreak a-hunting after him. I’ve been down to the river, and up to the pond, and all round; and what’s become of the boy, or where to look, I don’t know; and Sall is about crazy, for he’s her pet. I tell you what, Goble, if you knew half the trouble I have, you wouldn’t think of bein’ hard on a fellow. I want to pay you. I know you ought to have your money; but I ain’t enough by me to buy a paper of tobacco.”

Mr. Goble’s anger had gone off with the hard words he had used, at least he had been somewhat relieved; and the pitiful story poured into his ears helped greatly towards mollifying his displeasure, and by the time Sanders had finished, he was almost ready to have let him have half the load of wood he had with him, if the former had told him he was out, and hadn’t a stick to burn. But there was a favor he could do for him, and he pitied his debtor enough to do that.

“I saw your B-B-B-Bill, about a-a-a-eight o’clock last n-n-night.”

“Where? do, for heaven’s sake, tell me, Goble!”

Mr. Sanders was so relieved by the altered tone of voice of his friend Goble, that he became quite excited in turn.

“Up n-n-near the B-B-Bascom place.”

“Anybody with him?”

“Y-y-y-yes, that g-g-g-good for n-n-nothing scamp, Jim T-T-Tucker.”

“Jim Tucker?”

“You h-h-had b-b-better look out and n-n-not let him go with such a f-f-fellow as that.”

Poor Sanders did feel bad now, and looked down on the ground as if he thought, things were running in that direction pretty fast. Goble moved his team along without saying another word, and left Sanders standing.

Jim Tucker was the son of a man who kept the poor of the town. The poor in this town were let to the lowest bidder, and all the latter could make out of the pay he received, was his gain for keeping them. He had held the position for many years, and it was said did the fair thing by those under his care. The number was small, and composed of various characters; and in all probability, as they mingled together with the family, their habits and conversation had done much to vitiate the character of this son. At any rate, he was known as a bad young man, and one whom the decent people in the place avoided. Mr. Sanders had indeed been careless, and was really getting on the road to ruin; but the idea that his son was associating with such a character as Jim Tucker gave him a shock that made his heart sink within him. After the wagon had moved, off, Sanders turned his steps in the direction of the poor-house, thinking his son might be there, or at least that he might find out something about him.

All he learned was that Bill had come there late in the evening, and had staid the night, and gone off, as they supposed for home, early in the morning. As Sanders turned to go away, the man who kept the poor, left the house in company with him, and after proceeding a few rods, stopped under the shade of a large maple-tree.

“Sanders,” said he, “I want to have a few words with you. It ain’t, maybe, any of my business, you may say; but we are neighbors, like — that is, we’ve always known one another from boys. We ain’t neither on us done more than just so, but I’m afeared our boys ain’t a-goin’ to do even as well as we have. My boy, I’m afeared is past all help. He’s grown up to be a man; I can’t control him. He’s got a bad name, I know he

has, and he deserves it. He has took to drink; he's saucy to me; he wont work, only maybe do a job here or there, and git a few shillings, and then he'll lounge round the tavern and spend it, and then come home and turn the house into a bedlam; and sometimes his mother and me are most afeared for our lives. But what I wanted to say to you is, keep your boy out of his company. Do you know your boy drinks a'ready?"

"My boy, Bill? no."

"Well, he came here last night drunk as a fool; and he's gone off this morning afore any of us was up. I s'pose he was ashamed, like, for he was all battered up, as if he had been in a fight."

Sanders looked probably as he felt. A terrible vision had suddenly spread itself before him; he stepped against the fence; he felt the need of something to lean upon; his knees trembled; his face was pallid as if death had touched it.

"I wouldn't have telled you this, Sanders, to make you feel bad; but I thought you ought to know it. Your boy is young yet."

"I thank you, Tucker," — he could speak with difficulty — "I thank you."

"Come, go in and take a little something? You look pale and weak."

"Thank you, Tucker, no. I do feel as if the life had gone out of me; but before I'll touch another drop of liquor, I'll die first."

"Well, I don't say but you're in the right about that; I believe it kills more than it cures in the long run."

Sanders had been casting over things in his mind during his walk that morning. He was not a bad man; he loved his family; but he and his wife were not happily mated. She was at times unreasonable; and rather than be subject to her unruly tongue, — and it was very unruly at times, — he had sought relief frequenting the tavern, and by degrees had become addicted to drinking. He did not, indeed, get drunk; but he was fast on the way to ruin by what amount of liquor he did use. His means were wasted; his ambition was dying out; his strength to labor was diminishing; his customers were leaving him; his credit was about gone; and everything at home was in a bad state.

All these things came up to him on this morning walk; and he could see very plainly that unless a change was made at once, there was nothing before him but disgrace and misery. The in-

formation he received from Mr. Tucker was the crowning blow. Then and there, he at once resolved that no more liquor should pass his lips. That resolution had been made in his own mind while his neighbor had been talking; but when he made the avowal in language that another could hear, it seemed to give him strength of purpose; and the fact that he was able to resist the temptation right on the spot, was another help; and he left Mr. Tucker to go in pursuit of his boy, not indeed happy, but with one drop of comfort in his bitter cup, — *a determination to change his course of life.*

When Edward Bascom left the cottage of Sam Tellfair, he started in the direction of the scene of yesterday, where he threw away the torn bag, in the hope of finding that, and closing up that unfortunate adventure. As he drew near the spot, he was about to pass a gully that ran through the commons and opened on the shore of the river. Turning a look in that direction, he thought he saw a person lying under one of the small dwarf oaks which grew there. He stopped his horse, satisfied that, whoever it was, he must be in some trouble, for he kept continually in motion, drawing himself at times all into a heap, as if in pain. He saw to, that it was a young person — a boy not much larger than himself. At first he had supposed it must be some poor drunken creature, and he merely intended to take a look to gratify his curiosity; but when he perceived how young he looked, and also that he seemed in pain, he turned his horse and rode along the edge of the gully a few paces, and then struck a footpath that led by a zigzag course to the bottom of the ravine, on to a fine smooth turf. It was on this smooth bottom the person lay. In a few moments he was up by the sufferer, who was then groaning piteously. Edward sprang from his horse threw the bridle of Jupe over the hind part of the saddle, and left him to take care of himself; he knew he would not go off so long as he himself was near him. He then stepped close to the boy; he knew him — it was William Sanders.

"Are you in much pain?"

"Oh, dear!" was the answer.

"Are you in pain? what can I do for you?"

"Oh, dear! I shall die; I know I shall."

"Have you fallen and hurt you?" He asked this, as one eye was much swollen, and on his temple a streak of black and blue. As Edward asked this question, the boy looked a moment at the

speaker, and then covered his face with his hands, and turned over as if to hide away from him.

But Edward was not to be thus put away; he kneeled down beside him and put his hand on his shoulder.

"Do let me help you; tell me what I can do?"

"You had better go away from me."

"Why should I go away? I don't want to go and leave you in pain."

"It ain't no matter about me; let me die."

"Shall I go and call your father?"

There was no answer but a violent burst of weeping. Edward again spoke.

"Do please tell me what I can do for you? I will do anything in my power to help you."

"I don't want any help; least of all from you. I'm in dreadful pain all over me. Oh, dear! I shall die; I know I shall."

Edward was about to leave him and go in search of assistance, when, to his surprise and joy, he saw a man coming down the path by which he himself had entered the ravine; and as the person drew near, to his great relief he recognized William's father.

Mr. Sanders had searched in vain for his son among all the haunts where he thought it likely that wretched Jim Tucker might have led him, and was on his way home, when, on passing the ravine, he descried Edward's horse, and also two persons near him; one was on the ground, and the other kneeling beside him. The thought occurred to him at once, that his son was one of them, and either dead or drunk. The latter he thought more probable, as at a low drinking shop where he had called he was told that his boy had been there early in the morning, in company with Jim Tucker; and on asking whether he had asked for any liquor, was answered,—

"I can't say the boy asked for it, but Jim did; and helped himself and the boy too; at any rate he paid for two drinks."

"I shouldn't have thought," said Sanders, "you would have let a boy like him have liquor."

"I don't know nothin' about that; I never ask any questions; they pay me the money, and whether they drink it or throw it away, it's all one to me. Don't you never take a drop yourself? and ain't boys a-right to do what they see their paps do?"

Sanders felt the reproof, but he made no reply; his inward

resolve, though, had received an additional impulse in the right direction.

As Mr. Sanders came up, Edward said, as he met him, for he advanced a little towards him,—

"Oh, Mr. Sanders! I am so glad you have come; I didn't know what I should do. Your son seems to be very ill."

Mr. Sanders, without making any reply, stepped up to Bill and stood looking a moment at him; and then, turning to Edward,—

"How came he to be here?"

"I cannot tell you, sir. As I was riding by the upper end of the gully, I happened to notice some one lying here; I didn't know who it was, so I thought I would come down and see, for he seemed to be in some trouble; he kept rolling about; he says he is in pain all over."

Sanders now stooped and tried to turn him over.

"Let me alone, I say."

"William," said Edward, "it is your father; he has come."

The boy still persevered, however, in keeping his face down, resting on his hands.

"Bill, it's pap. Tell me what's the matter; how did you git here?"

"How do I know. Just let me alone, will you?"

"Are you hurt?"

"Oh, dear—d-o-o-o-n't."

His father was trying to turn him over, but on his crying out so, desisted, and again arose to his feet.

"I wonder," said he, "if it can be he's fell?" And saying this, he looked up at the bank near which his son lay. The side of the gully here, for some ten or fifteen feet from the bottom, was quite steep—almost perpendicular. A person might, by clinging to the shrubs that lined the bank, have possibly let himself down; but it would have been a troublesome way of descent. Above this, the bank had a gentle slope to the top.

"I believe," said Sanders, "here is the very place he's come down; just look here."

Edward stepped up to where Mr. Sanders was putting aside the branches. He perceived very clearly that some of the smaller shrubs had been bent over, and some quite broken off. It was evident that some body had passed down there, and that very recently, for the broken twigs showed their injury to be quite fresh.

"He must have had an ugly fall," said Edward; "had we not

better try and get him home as soon as possible? The ground down here is pretty damp."

"That is true, my friend. But how we are to git him out of this hole is more than I can see. He can't walk, I don't believe, and as to carrying him, it is more than I can do with this here rheumatiz in my back. Oh, Lord! what a trouble I am in. What to do I don't know."

"Don't you think, Mr. Sanders, that he could sit on my horse, if you could lift him into the saddle? I could lead the horse, and you could walk by his side and hold him on."

"But if we got him on, how under heaven are we a-goin' to git out o' here up into the road. The path up yonder ain't hardly wide enough for a cat to crawl through."

"Oh, but, Mr. Sanders, we needn't go up the path at all; we can go right through the gully down to the river; I know the way, for I've been through. It is stony some part of the way, and the ground is a little uneven, but Jupe is sure-footed; he will go through, no danger, and then we can go all along shore 'most to your house."

"That would be a good thing, my young friend, if it could be done. I thank you much for thinkin' of it, and for your offer to help. It's good in you to be willin' to help a fellow-critter in trouble; and the Lord knows if there ever was a man in trouble, it's me — Joe Sanders. I've seen tight places afore, but none equal to the doin's of this day. But if we can git out o' here, I hope to be thankful. We will see first how his legs is, if they ain't broke nor nothin'."

While Edward went to bring up Jupe, Mr. Sanders went to manipulating Bill. He soon found, however, that he could use his legs lively enough; and he then tried lifting him bodily, so as to get him to stand on them; but he was really too weak to use them in walking. He was indeed ill, and he was alarmed. He was not possessed of much resolution. He had, no doubt bruised himself by his fall, which, together with his debauch the last night, and not having eaten anything since noon the day before, made him now weak and faint. The stimulus of the liquor he had so foolishly taken, was going off, and his mind and body were alike debilitated. He made no violent opposition to the means of transport, but was a dead weight to lift. As his father raised him up to his feet, and he really felt how weak he was, he began to cry.

"I wish I was dead," he whimpered.

"So, so, sonny," said his father, "keep up heart; think of

this good friend here, how he's trying to help us. Help all you can while I lift."

Mr. Sanders made a desperate effort. He was not very strong himself; he had eaten nothing that morning, and his long tramp and worry of mind, together with the want of his usual stimulant, made him feel weak and miserable. At the first lift he made out to get Bill on the saddle, but with both legs on one side; and the boy feeling insecure in that position, as if by instinct, grasped the horse's mane with both hands; Jupe, not understanding what was going on, and not accustomed to having his mane thus handled, began to throw up his head, and manifest symptoms of uneasiness.

"Steady, steady!" cried Mr. Sanders.

"There, Jupe — there, Jupe! Whoa, my boy, whoa!" said Edward. "Hold fast, Mr. Sanders. There, Jupe, there!"

But Jupe didn't like things, and kept stepping round pretty lively, Mr. Sanders flying around with him, and holding on to the boy, who was clinging to Jupe's mane with the grip of a drowning person.

Edward began to be much alarmed lest if Mr. Sanders should make a misstep, or not be up with Jupe in his movements, the boy might fall and get seriously hurt. He managed, however, to get the restless creature at last by the side of the bank, and that prevented his whirling round.

"Now, Mr. Sanders," said Edward, "if you can get him to let go the horse's mane and get one leg over this side, we shall do well enough. Try to *do it, quick!*"

Mr. Sanders was by this time in a high state of excitement; the perspiration was pouring from him, for that gully was a hot place in summer, and he was in a tremor from the violent exercise and strain upon him in holding fast to Bill, and he also felt the necessity of doing what was to be done in quick time.

"Let go now — let go the mane," and he seized Bill's hands with a jerk. "Now your leg — give us your leg."

Bill cried out with fear and pain, and made a noise that echoed through the gully; but the leg was got over, and the feet placed in the stirrups.

"Now," said Edward, "you hold the reins; that will steady you; and I will lead the horse. Look, out Mr. Sanders, and hold fast of his arm; Jupe steps quick. Now — all ready."

It was indeed a quick step they had to keep, and very soon the ground became broken and stony, and in one or two places

Jupe made a jump in spite of all Edward could do to prevent it. But the gully was at length passed without accident; and when they came out on the shore, and they felt the refreshing air from the water, they drew long breaths.

"Now, sonny," said Mr. Sanders, "we have got plain sailing. Keep up good heart."

"You feel better now, don't you?" said Edward, looking up to Bill, with his bright face wreathed in a pleasant smile.

Bill looked at him; it was only a glance, and then the tears started and ran freely down his face. He was coming to a sense of his condition; and feelings to which he had hitherto been a stranger were at work, and we hope doing a good work. He was beginning to feel the mighty influence of love. Hitherto, from the wrong way in which he had been educated, and the unhappy state of things at home, all the better emotions of the heart had been stifled. He had become used to hard words and reproof and fault-finding. No encouraging word or smile to stimulate him in doing right, and very unhappily taught to regard with distrust and envy, those who might be in prosperous circumstances. No wonder, then, that he had little ambition to do right, or, at the instigation of boys older and worse than himself, he had done things that gave him a bad name, and caused many to avoid him as an evil thing.

That kindly look of Edward's has touched the better feelings, and those tears announce the fact that there is some good thing even in Bill Saunders.

His father's language, too, was having a softening influence; the tones of his voice such as he seldom remembered. They were feeling and tender, and manifested love rather than anger. He had reason to expect a beating, and to be called a lazy, good-for-nothing dog, rather than to hear the tender epithets his father was using.

It was a happy thought in Edward — this going along the shore. It prevented exposure, and saved the feelings of the family, and, as it happened, they were able to get to the house without meeting a single person from the town.

"Where did you find him?" exclaimed his mother, as she ran down the steps, just as his father had lifted him from the horse. "And what's happened to him? has he been thrown from this plaguy horse again? He's all scratched up. What's the matter of him — can't any of you speak?"

"Jist take hold one side, ma, and I'll help this side," said Mr. Sanders.

"Can't he walk? Speak, Will — what's the matter of you? Was you thrown? And how comed you to get on that horse again? Tell me what's broke about you?"

"Let's git him onto the bed, wife, and let him rest. There ain't nothing broke, I guess. He wants to rest. I'll tell you all I know about it to rights."

"Drat that horse! I hate the sight of him."

Mrs. Sanders had got the idea, that all the trouble, in some way, had come through Jupe and his master, and no one present had as yet time to undeceive her. Edward had not entered the house, but was outside the gate holding his horse. As he was about to mount, however, and ride off, Mrs. Sanders stepped to the door and called, —

"Come in, wont you? He wants you."

Edward, as soon as he had hitched Jupe, entered the house and was beckoned by Mr. Sanders into the back room. As he went in, Mr. Sanders left; Mrs. Sanders remaining in their sitting-room; talking to herself, and as soon as her husband entered beginning to let out upon him.

"What is it Will can have to say to that fellow? I think he's had trouble enough from him."

"You don't know nothin' about it, wife, or you wouldn't talk so. That boy has saved the life of our Bill. He fell over a steep bank into the south gully and he saw him there a rollin' about in pain, and went down to help him, and he has been a real help."

"Was it there he's been all night?"

"How long he was there I don't know. But as I was coming home by the gully, I see that little horse down there, and nobody on him; and so I thought that was queer; and so I looked again, and I see the boy standing by some one on the ground, and I thought I'd go down and see; and sure enough it was our Bill; and the boy came up to me with the tears in his eyes, he was so glad to see me, for he didn't know what to do, and I didn't know what to do, for Bill couldn't walk no how, and I couldn't carry him with my rheumatiz — not to save me. But the boy proposed to put him on the horse, and so we got him along."

Mr. Sanders was careful to say nothing about the drinking; he had reasons of his own for not wishing to bring that matter up.

Just then they heard the door of the next room open, and on going into the entry they met Edward coming from Bill's

room. They saw he had been weeping. Mrs. Sanders at once said:

"You think is he goin' to die?"

"Oh, I hope not, ma'am; I think he feels better."

Edward had indeed been shedding tears. He had been through a scene entirely new to his young experience; when going up to the bedside of Bill, the latter looked at him a moment, and then put his hands over his eyes. The sense of shame would not allow him to meet the clear, bright look of his young helper.

"I want you to forgive me!" were the first words he said; and they were in broken accents, and Edward could see the tears trickling down below the hands that still shaded his eyes.

"Oh, I have nothing to forgive! You have not done anything to injure me."

"Yes, I have; I hated you! I wanted to —" He paused there, as though the deed was too bad to utter.

"Oh, but," Edward replied quickly, "I knew you was mistaken; and I can assure you it was not my fault you was thrown from the horse."

"That wasn't nothing; you wasn't to blame; but I wont never be ugly to you again! I'd die first!"

"Well, it makes me glad to know that you don't blame me for your fall; and I am so glad we were able to get you home. Did you fall down that steep place?"

"I believe I did." And then the thought of the situation he had been in caused an outburst of weeping.

Edward knew not the cause for the bitter remorse that was wringing out these tears; but he saw that he was suffering, and his sympathies were deeply excited, and silent tears ran down his cheeks.

"I think I had better leave you now; you had better get some rest."

"There ain't no rest for me, nor nothin'! I am a poor, miserable —" Tears again stopped his utterance.

"You must not talk so! I am sure I do not lay up the least thing against you. I feel very sorry that you have got hurt so; but I guess you will soon feel better. I will come and see you to-morrow. Good-by."

Bill made no reply; but Edward saw him wiping away the tears, as he turned towards him, on leaving the room.

Mr. Sanders followed Edward to the gate. He wanted to say something to him which he did not care to let his wife hear.

"I feel very thankful to you, my young friend, for all the trouble you've been to; and if there is anything I can ever do for you, or any of your folks, I will do it with right good will."

"Oh, Mr. Sanders! it hasn't been any trouble to me at all; and I am so glad I happened to see your son as I did! I hope he is not much hurt."

"I hope not. Did he say anything particular to you? He seemed to want to see you alone."

"I believe he had some idea that he had not treated me right, or something of that kind; but I told him that wasn't anything."

"Well, I'm glad he feels so. And about that money for the flour — I shan't forget it; and as soon as ever I get some change, you shall certainly have it."

"Oh, Mr. Sanders! I wish you wouldn't think any more about it; indeed I do!"

"Yes, but right is right; and as fast as I am able, I mean to git things straight and right, if there is any such thing!"

Edward saw nothing of Maggie, as he was in hope of doing; for somehow her bright face and pleasant manner was a good deal in his mind. He had never yet come across one so near his own age to whom he had taken such a fancy. He was, like most boys, pleased with a pretty face, and perhaps a little more susceptible of tender fancies than many; and sometimes had to bear the jokes of his sisters on that account; but while his mother would sometimes unite in the laugh which his blushes excited, she would generally close with saying, —

"I am pleased to see you so sensitive, Eddie, but you need not be ashamed of your fancy; it will never do you any harm to admire a well-behaved, pretty girl!"

Mrs. Bascom knew that there was no greater safeguard for a boy or youth than a readiness to yield to the attractions of the gentler sex; these youthful feelings being in general the outspring of the softer and purer elements of our nature, and although rarely leading to any serious result, keep the sensibilities alive, and are a barrier against all that is gross and unseemly.

As Edward was on his way to his home, riding at a gentle pace, on turning the corner of a road, whose borders were lined thickly with bushes, he perceived a young girl stooping near the hedge, and picking berries of some sort. As he advanced, hearing no doubt the approach of some person, she raised herself, and looked at him. He saw at once it was

Maggie; and drawing up, sprang from his horse, and gave his hand.

"What sort of berries are you picking?"

"I came to look for strawberries; but they seem to be almost gone. But blackberries are beginning to ripen. Do you like them?" and she held the little basket out towards him.

"Thank you: I like them, but I do not care to rob you; I will take one or two, however."

"Oh, dear, take more! take them all! it will give me pleasure to have you eat them. I can easily pick more; hold both your hands."

"Indeed, no! I will eat a few, and then I will help you fill your basket again." And he took the basket from her, and began eating.

"I don't care much about filling the basket. I only came out to walk a little; it is so much pleasanter being out here than in the house, and the birds are so like company to one! Don't you think this is a dreadful lonely place?"

"I don't know," Edward replied; "it is a pretty still place, but I never thought about its being lonely. Have you no companions?"

"I don't know anybody. Nobody comes to Mr. Sanders' house, but rough, unpleasant people."

"Have you been there long?"

"About a month. I am expecting every day to hear from my brother. He went to New York, to look for a place; and when he got a place, he was to send for me."

"How old is your brother?"

"I guess he is about your age."

"I am fifteen."

"I believe that he is seventeen; maybe he is sixteen—I forget; but he is about your size."

Edward had stopped eating, and was engaged in picking. Maggie did not seem to care about gathering any more berries, and she told him so; but Edward's curiosity had become excited; he wanted to find out more about her.

"Where is your home?"

"Just as if you don't know!" And she smiled, as he looked up at her. She was standing, holding one of the branches of a bush, and plucking the leaves.

"I don't mean at Mr. Sanders'; but your own home, and your brother's home."

"We have got no home!" She did not reply immediately; and when she did, he saw that her lip trembled, and that a tear had started.

"Please excuse me," he said at once; "I had no right to ask you any such questions."

"Oh," said she, "I don't mind telling *you!*" laying quite an emphasis on the last word. "I had just as lief tell you all about things, only when I speak about it, it makes me feel bad."

"I am sorry then that I asked, for I do not wish to make you feel bad."

"No, I don't believe you do; you don't want to make any one feel bad."

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh, because, I can tell. One thing is, because you are a gentleman; my brother is a gentleman too, and you seem just like him."

"I thank you for your good opinion."

"And I thank you for filling this basket; it is fuller than it was; you have picked more than you have eaten!"

"That is what I intended to do."

"Why, Eddie! where have you been?"

This sudden break upon the conversation, made both the young people start, and turn round; their faces had been in a direction different from that in which the intruder had advanced upon them, and they so absorbed in conversation, as not to hear her approaching footsteps.

"Oh, Mary! exclaimed Edward."

"You may well exclaim 'Oh Mary,' my truant; I thought you were to be ready to wait upon me by ten o'clock. Kate has been saddled this hour, so I thought I would jump on and look after you—is that Miss Maggie?" this last was said in a whisper.

Edward's face was covered with blushes; he had sprung out into the road on seeing his sister, and was standing close beside her. He felt the awkwardness of his situation; for although he was conscious of having a good apology for not being home in time, yet he could not so well explain everything at present; he merely replied to her last question,—

"Yes; will you not jump off and see her?"

Mary complied at once; she had caught a glimpse of Maggie's face, and was very curious to see more of her."

"I am very glad to see you," said Mary as she took Maggie's

hand; "I was so charmed with that rose you gave my brother yesterday, that I made an arrangement with him to accompany me to your house this morning, to see if you could give me a slip from it."

"I will give you a slip with great pleasure; will you go with me now and get it?"

"I do not wish to interfere with your picking berries; and can come any time you may propose."

"Oh, I came out merely for amusement, and your brother has filled my basket you see — will you not eat some of them? you may take the whole basket with you home; I have eaten, as I picked, all I care for."

"Oh, thank you, you are very kind. No, I will just take a handful of them — how fresh and sweet they are! Eddie, I think we must make up a company for berrying — are they plenty round here?"

"Not very — not so plenty as they are in the Pines, five or six miles from here, so I hear."

"Eddie, if you will ride Jupe, and lead Kate, I will walk with Miss Maggie."

The result of this walk together of the two young girls must be left for a future chapter; in the meanwhile we must see how Mr. Sanders and his family get along under the new state of feeling that seems to be manifested by both father and son.

CHAPTER XV.

IT is a great thing for men or boys to rise out of a low condition, when they have fallen there by a course of improper conduct; they find so many things to contend against; first, the bad habit, especially if it be drink, is to be overcome, and that is no trifle, as those affirm who have had experience of its power; then, there is the bad condition into which their affairs have gotten — the penury and uncomfortable, shiftless state of things at home, discouraging to one, even who had nothing else to struggle under; again, most probably, there are debts to be attended to, small perhaps in amount, but none the less heavy as a burden and hindrance;

and last of all, though not the least in importance, is the lost character to be retrieved.

All these difficulties poor Sanders had to contend against, but as though the experience of the last twenty-four hours had started new life into him, no sooner had he seen Bill comfortable in bed, and taken something to eat himself, than he went immediately to work in his yard, and around his premises. His well-curb was in a loose and dangerous condition: he at once repaired that and made it strong and decent; then he took hold of the garden fence, put a wanting hinge to the gate, straightened the leaning posts, and cut away wild bushes that had been forcing themselves through the palings, and making things look wild and untidy; he then went to his wood pile, arranged the cut wood in order, and gathered some stray logs that had been lying round for a long time, too long and too large round to be used as they were, and made them into good firewood, and it gave him great satisfaction to see how largely they added to his pile of wood; and then he raked the chips and splinters in a pile for use also, and could not help admiring how much more comfortable everything looked for a little mending and clearing up. From the yard and garden, he went to his pigsty, and cow stable, and put things in proper shape there; and all the while he was thus occupied, his mind was running on other matters of serious concern to him; and one of these of most importance was the debt he had accumulated at the store.

Mr. Parsons had been very kind to him, as he was to everybody; that is, he had a kind heart but not a very patient spirit; at times, when things went wrong, or he thought a man was imposing upon his forbearance, he would raise a storm that was troublesome to those about him who were perfectly innocent, but it did not last long, and when it was over, all bad feeling subsided with it; there was a perfect clearing of the atmosphere.

He had been very patient with Mr. Sanders, and let his bill run on for some time without really looking to see how large it had become; but being put out of humour, in consequence of Sanders neglecting to keep an engagement to come and do some work for him, he ordered his clerk to look over and see how much Sanders owed. This was soon done and the amount stated.

"Fifty dollars, do you say?"

"Yes, sir; it has been running some time."

Mr. Parsons said nothing further, but took his seat and began taking snuff rather violently, which was generally a sign

that he was getting stirred up. After working in this way for a short time, he called again to his clerk,—

“George!”

“Sir?”

“Make out that fellow’s account, right off; don’t stop to put up those goods — do you hear me?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Then do it right off, this instant — I am in a hurry, for I want to get that rascal in jail; I’ll have him there before to-morrow morning. The lazy, lying scoundrel, I’ll teach him the villain, to trifle with me — the lazy, lying scamp!”

Mr. Parsons was now walking up and down the store, with one hand under his coat-flap and the other gesticulating furiously when not engaged in punching the snuff up his nose.

Just at this moment the subject of his wrath entered the store.

Sanders had been thinking over his affairs, as has been said, and the conclusion he had come to was, that he had better go at once and see Mr. Parsons, acknowledge his wrong in not attending to his engagement, and offer to do any work he had got to do; and by faithful performance in the future endeavor to get a character upon which not only Mr. Parsons but others might rely. It was, indeed, another move in the right direction, for he well knew that a word in his favor from that gentleman would do more for him than that of any other man in the place. As Sanders entered, Mr. Parsons was on his return trip from the back part of the store, where he had sent his clerk to make up that unlucky account.

Sanders of course did not enter with that confidence in his look which a reversed state of things might have inspired. There was a heavy burden upon his mind, and it was manifest in his countenance.

Mr. Parsons paused in his walk, and as Sanders took off his hat and said, “Good-afternoon, Mr. Parsons!” the latter spake no word, nor made any sign in return; he merely stood with his hands both now under his coat-flaps, and his keen eyes glaring upon his visitor.

Thus matters remained for perhaps a quarter of a minute; when Mr. Parsons blurted out,—

“What have you come here for — come to pay your bill?”

“I have come, Mr. Parsons, to have a talk with you about it.”

“Talk! yes, talk, — *talk, talk!*” turning and walking away a

few steps and then back again. “Do you know that you have talked and talked, and lied and talked till you’ve talked yourself into jail, sir — do you know *that?*”

Poor Sanders felt ready to drop. He was indeed so faint that if he had not taken advantage of a bench that was placed there for the benefit of customers, he would most likely have fallen. He made no reply.

Mr. Parsons continued walking, and at times throwing out some cutting remark. At length he paused again and fixed his eyes upon the sufferer. Sanders was indeed suffering badly.

“Why don’t you speak? Why don’t you say something?”

“I have nothing to say, Mr. Parsons.”

“Nothing to say! Don’t you know I can send you to jail?”

“Yes, sir, if so you please.”

“You make me do it, — yes, you make me do it.” Mr. Parsons was beginning to soften down.

“I know it’s my fault, Mr. Parsons; you ain’t nowise to blame.”

“I don’t want to send people to jail; you know I don’t.”

“I know you’ve been very kind to me, Mr. Parsons.”

Mr. Parsons now, after a few more silent promenades, became so self-composed that he resumed his chair, drawing it up near to Sanders.

“Now, Sanders, what have you got to say? You said you wanted to talk; now let’s hear it.”

“I have not much to say, Mr. Parsons. I have done wrong, I’ve been on a wrong track for some time; but I’ve made up my mind to alter and do different. I’ve done wrong, but now I want to try and do right; but I don’t know as it’s any use. When a fellow gits down, every one is ready enough to curse him, but no one is ready enough to give him a lift, and it’s hard gittin’ out alone.”

“Now, Joe,” — Mr. Parsons had always given him that title, — “you know I am not a man to hold back when a neighbor wants help.”

“I know that, Mr. Parsons, and I thought no one would be more likely to give me a helping hand; and as I knew I owed you pretty much all I did owe, I could come straight to you —” here Mr. Sanders had to stop; the more kindly manner, as well as look, of Mr. Parsons touched his feelings.

“Well, now, Joe, tell me what I can do for you?”

“I didn’t know but you might have some work to do, so that I might not only be paying off my bill but —”

"But what, Joe?"

It was a little while before the reply came.

"I want to let you see that I can be prompt to my word, and do my work as it ought to be done."

"In other words, Joe, you want to make a new character?"

"That is it, sir."

There was silence for a few moments. Mr. Parsons was looking at Sanders. He noticed his sad look, and he also noticed what he thought to be a more natural character to it. Sanders of late had been most of the time under the excitement of liquor; he was never, indeed, seen drunk, but the marks of stimulants were quite visible. There was no such mark there now.

"Now, Joe, I understand things. You want to begin anew. It is no easy matter, — not half so easy as if you had never left the right track, — yet it can be done. But, as you say, a man needs help. And now, Joe, I tell you right off I am going to help you. I have work to do, and you may begin on it to-morrow morning. And as to the account, I will tell you how we will fix that. Every week your wages shall be reckoned up; one half shall be paid you in money and the other half shall be credited to your account. How does that suit you?"

Poor Sanders found it hard to make any reply. It was so much better than he had any reason to expect; there was so much kindness in the manner too that his emotions almost overcame him. As soon as he could speak, all that he could get out was, —

"May God bless you!"

But Mr. Parsons had more to say.

"Now, Joe, I want you to be a man again. Bless my soul! I remember when you was a brusque, smart young fellow, — as smart as any around. Things, as you say, have been wrong of late, and you have been disheartened, and cross, and careless, and have lost ground. But let that all go; look *ahead*, don't look *back*. Go right straight forward; keep yourself busy, be prompt to your engagements, and when you want a friend, come to me."

These were blessed words to pour into the ear of a poor, weak, trembling fellow-creature, coming as they did from the lips of one who was strong in his own character and in the opinion of his fellow-men, and whose friendship was indeed a pillar of strength. Mr. Parsons was known far and wide. He was an upright, honorable man, and quite independent in his

circumstances; and when he told poor Joe Sanders to come to him when he wanted a friend, it was making use of that broad, substantial foundation on which his own feet were placed to support and encourage a weak and tottering brother. And Sanders knew its value, he felt its power energizing his whole mind and body as no stimulant had ever done before, and when he left that store and walked on his way home, he felt more like a man than he had done for years. His gait was altered, a burden had dropped from his shoulders. Hope was alive, and pointed encouragingly to a future which had hitherto been as a dreary, forbidding waste.

It was toward evening when he reached home; and as he looked round upon the premises, he could not but feel a satisfaction in the improvement his labors had accomplished. His chores were attended to with alacrity, and as Mrs. Sanders saw him stepping through the yard behind the cow which he was driving home, she paused and looked at him through the window, saying to herself, —

"What upon earth has got into him? He's done more work to-day than he's done afore for a twelvemonth on any one day, and yet he walks as chirp as a boy."

Mrs. Sanders was naturally a bright, stirring woman, not devoid of kind feelings, but somewhat excitable and tinctured with suspicion and jealousy. These natural traits had been aggravated of late years by circumstances. People do not in general realize how much easier it is to exercise the kindly and more amiable emotions when everything about them is in an easy and prosperous condition. It must be an unhappy spirit indeed that frets and worries when every want is supplied and every reasonable desire gratified. Poverty brings out many bad traits that would never have been suspected in a condition of ease or affluence. Thus it was at least with Mrs. Sanders. When Sally Wentworth married the smart young carpenter, Joe Sanders, no one who knew her ever anticipated she could make a fretful, scolding wife, or a jealous, suspicious neighbor, and if things had continued prosperous it is very likely these faults would never have been exhibited. But things did not go on for many years as they promised at the beginning. A change gradually came on, proceeding from bad to worse, until at the time the reader is first introduced to them, they had become positively poor, and Sally Sanders was almost a byword for a cross, scolding wife and mother, and an unpleasant neighbor. They had three children. Two daugh-

ters, both married very young and against the will of the mother. It was said they married in order to get away from home. Bill was the youngest child and the mother's favorite. She no doubt did love him, and although very unwise in her management of him, yet the affection she manifested proved that all the better feelings had not died out. There was something left for more favorable influences to work upon.

Almost immediately after supper that evening, Sanders began lighting a candle. It was an unusual act; in general he would take his seat, and lean back his chair, and there sit smoking and yawning until it was time to step to the tavern and meet his cronies. Mrs. Sanders had an eye on him, and said in a quick manner, —

"What's to do now?"

In general he would have replied in the same snappish way; but now it was, —

"I want a light, ma, in the shop, a little while to-night."

"In the shop?"

"Yes. I had like to have forgot that I promised Mrs. Gage to have that flower-stand done for her by to-morrow noon, and as I am going to work for Mr. Parsons in the morning, I thought I would finish the stand this evening, and then I can take it along with me and leave at her house, as I go right by there on my way to Mr. Parsons's."

Mrs. Sanders made no reply, and he went on his way. It was, however a mysterious matter to her, and when she saw him go into the shop and heard the hammer going, she said to herself, —

"I don't see what's come over him; he ain't done sich a thing as that this many a day. Going to work to Parsons, too! That's queer! I thought that jig was up, and that he wouldn't never git another day's work there. Yet it wont do us no good; it's only payin' for a dead horse. I s'pose old Parsons has wheedled him into workin' only jist to git his pay, and we may all starve in the meantime; the old rip, its jist like him! Yes, I'm coming."

This last was in a louder voice, and in answer to a call from Bill in the next room.

"What's the matter now?"

"I feel bad all over me; my head is dizzy, and my back pains me, and I feel so faint. Where is pap?"

"Oh, he's to work in the shop — does your head ache?"

"Some."

"Are you cold? what makes you shake, like?"

"I don't know; put more cover on me."

Mrs. Sanders began now to be in earnest, for she was alarmed. She would have dispatched Sanders at once for the doctor, if she had not known it would be useless at that time of the evening, as he seldom reached home after his day's circuit until nine or ten; but she went immediately to giving him warm drinks, and doing what she could to excite perspiration; in about two hours Mr. Sanders came in, having finished a job in that time which he had been a whole day thinking about, and had not resolution to begin.

He was quite alarmed about Bill, and started at once in pursuit of the doctor, who promised to come in the morning. The doctor came, but only to pronounce the boy in a pretty bad state. He had an ugly pulse and rather bad symptoms, and would likely have a run of fever.

"And now," said he to the mother, as he was about to leave, "don't let there be any noise about the house; keep him as still as you can; attend closely to the prescriptions — keep strangers out of the room. I will be in again this evening."

Mrs. Sanders was alone when the doctor came that morning, Sanders having started early to his labors for the day. The first thing she did after the doctor left, was to sit down and have a good cry. It seemed to her the worst evil that could happen had come upon her, and how was she to get things for the comfort of the sick boy — only a scant supply of the barest necessaries were in the house. Sanders would not get a cent of pay from Parsons, that she felt sure of; little things she had borrowed from one neighbor and another had not been returned; and, worse than all, she felt conscious that there was no one she could look to as a friend on whom she could call for help. She had made no friends, at least she knew she had not acted so as to have any claim to kindness and sympathy.

While Mrs. Sanders was in this desponding state, she heard the tramp of a horse at the gate, and looking from the window, saw Edward Bascom fastening his horse and about to come in. In spite of some remaining dislike she had to him, it was something of a relief to see him. She started at once to the door, lest he should make a noise by knocking.

"Come in here," she said in a low voice, pointing at the same time to the front room where she had been sitting.

"How is William this morning, Mrs. Sanders?"

"Well, he's pretty bad! he's —" and then she had to put

her apron up to hide the tears. Edward, out of respect, said nothing until the paroxysm was over.

"Do you think he is very ill?"

"Well, the doctor says he's got to have a run of fever."

"I told him yesterday I would call this morning; will you please give this to him from me?" taking a large orange from his pocket and handing it to her.

Mrs. Sanders could hardly credit her senses; she had so lost faith in kindness, that this token of good feeling on the part of that bright boy whose face was turned up towards her with every mark of truth and honest good-will beaming from it, took her by surprise. She almost hesitated to receive it; her hand came towards it slowly, but she took it, looked at it a moment, and then said,—

"It is very good of you to think of my boy like this; it will please him I know."

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Sanders,—any errands or anything?"

Again she looked at him. A crowd of thoughts rushed upon her. This was the boy whom she had united with her son in abusing, by speaking ill of him, calling him proud and full of self-importance, despising them because they were poor; she remembered also how rudely she and William both had treated him, and how she had almost hated the sight of him. All this rushed upon her; it was indeed a "heaping of coals of fire on her head."

She almost felt like telling him of her wrong feelings; but shame was too dominant. She was however about to answer him kindly, when a call from the next room was heard, and she left him.

Edward did not leave; he thought from her waiting and hesitating to reply that she was thinking of something she wished done, but almost afraid to trouble him with it, and so he remained until she should return; it was but a few moments, though, he had to wait; as she came into the room, she said in a trembling voice,—

"Maybe you wouldn't care to go in and see him?"

"If it wouldn't disturb him, I should be glad to."

"Well, he's heard your voice, and seems possessed to see you."

"Oh, I will go in with pleasure."

Mrs. Sanders led the way to the room, and then closing the door, returned to the sitting-room.

As Edward came up to the bed-side, he noticed that William looked at him with a different expression on his countenance than he had ever met from him. It was an earnest, confiding look; there was a faint smile as he held up the orange which his mother had given him in token that he realized from whom it had come, but he did not speak.

"Are you no better to-day?"

He shook his head, and tears started to his eyes. Edward asked,—

"Are you in much pain?"

"I feel bad all over—I believe I shall die." And the tears began to flow freely.

"Oh, I hope not!"

"Yes, I shall."

"My mamma always tells me when I am sick that I must not worry myself, but must keep up good cheer."

"But you are good. You ain't wicked as I am. Oh, dear if—"

"Can I do anything to help you?"

There was no answer for a few moments. Bill lay with his face turned towards the wall—then changing his position, he looked up at Edward.

"Do you ever say your prayers?"

"Oh, yes, every day."

"Couldn't you say 'em for me?"

Edward blushed deeply, and for a moment was silent; it was so unexpected! Such a strange request; something, too, so sacred as a prayer to be uttered before any one! it was some years since he had even said one in the presence of his mother.

"Don't you say your prayers every day?"

"I don't know any—I never learnt any."

"Don't you know 'Our Father who art in Heaven'? can't you say that?"

"No, I don't know nothin' about it!"

"I can teach you how to say it, and then you could say it by yourself."

"But that wouldn't be like your saying it—it wouldn't do no good for me to say it."

"Why not?"

"Because you are good, and I ain't."

Edward was somewhat startled by this reply. It seemed to intimate that William thought his prayer would be heard because *he was good*. It shocked him! he had never thought

on the subject; he had been trained in a certain way religiously — he had been taught the catechism and the Lord's Prayer, and had been taught from infancy to say his prayers night and morning, and had continued the practice after he became too old to repeat them at his mother's knee; he had also been trained to regard the Sabbath and the church with respect and reverence. The amenities of life, too, he had been taught to regard in an especial manner. He was a true gentleman, young as he was, and no doubt to others he appeared almost faultless. But when the idea was suggested that his prayer would be more beneficial because *he was good*, he felt there was something wrong. He was *not good* — he felt ashamed to hear the words; he however replied, —

"If it will be any comfort to you to say the prayer for you, I will do it, but you have just as much right to say it as I have. I ain't good. You have just as much right to say 'Our Father who art in Heaven' as I have."

"Oh, please do say it."

Edward knelt beside the bed, and in a low, trembling voice repeated the Lord's Prayer.

It was a trying task, but he went through with it — his own emotion no doubt affected his listener, for when he rose from his knees, William was weeping again, and looking up to Edward said, —

"Ain't them good words! wont you say 'em for me every day?"

"I will bring you my catechism, and then you can learn it and say it for yourself; that will be better, you know. I hope you will be better when I come again."

"Wont you come again to-morrow?"

"Oh yes, I will try to come."

As Edward came out of the room into the entry, Mrs. Sanders met him and beckoned him into the sitting-room. As he stood looking up at her to hear what she had to say, suddenly she caught up her apron and covered her face.

"I've heered you! you blessed child! you are too good to come among the like of us. I am a poor wicked creatur'; I ain't never done anything right, and I ain't never learned my boy to say his prayers nor nothin', and now mebby he's a-goin' to die."

"Oh, I hope he is not going to die, Mrs. Sanders; I guess he will be better to-morrow. Is there anything I can do for you,

Mrs. Sanders. I have plenty of time; if you have any errands, I can go just as well as not!"

"Well, you are real kind, and I am real sorry I spoke ugly to you the other day. I don't deserve to have you so willing to help — mebby you'll forgive it. When a body is in trouble and hardly knowin' which way to turn to get victuals to put into the mouths, and everything goin' down hill day after day, it sours them, and they don't care for nothin' nor nobody, what they say, nor what they do. But it makes me feel real bad to think a' my treating you so rough-like, but mebby you'll forgive me."

"Oh, Mrs. Sanders, please say no more about that. I am sorry for your trouble, and I want to help you all I can."

"Well, you're a blessed child, and I shan't never forget your goodness. I don't like to ask you to do it, 'cause it's a long way to send, but I should like to git word to my darter Sue. I don't know as you know where she lives, but it's the first house this side the Pines, on the river road."

"What, the Thompson house?"

"Yes, Ben Thompson, he married my Sue; he ain't a very likely man, but she's got to make the best on it she can now. It seems right she should know that Bill is sick; she don't set much by him, I know, but he's her own brother for all that; but it's a good ways, and I don't like to ask you to take so much trouble."

"I can go just as well as not, Mrs. Sanders; it is a pleasant ride there. Shall I say anything besides, or merely let her know that he is sick?"

"Well, I don't know as there is anything else to say; though mebby you might say, if she could as well as not send pap the money he let Thompson have last spring, as there is no tellin' how long Bill will be sick, and there be many things to git; but you needn't say nothin' about it if Thompson is by."

A call from Bill soon broke off the conference, and Edward soon mounted Jupe, and was on his way to the Pines.

That river road to the Pines was indeed a pleasant road. One or two small farm-houses lay at considerable distances apart; the river was in full sight all the way; for the most part clumps of cedars lined the sloping banks, with here and there fields spotted with rocks just cropping above the grayish turf, picturesque to the view, but offering no great temptation to the tiller of the soil.

As Edward reached the house, he saw a young woman pick-

ing up sticks from a pile of small wood, near the premises. She stood and looked at him. She was not a very picturesque object; her hair was loose and hanging down her back and over her shoulder, and partly covering her face. She had nothing in the way of covering for the upper part of her person but her undergarment, leaving her arms and shoulders, of course, exposed; her feet and legs were bare, the dark-colored skirt she wore being rather short.

As she saw Edward about to stop, she threw back the hair from her face and looked full at him; her face was comely, and there was a slight smile upon her features, as though she recognized him. If he had ever seen her before, her present appearance had entirely obliterated all recognition; he therefore asked,—

“Is Mrs. Thompson at home?”

“I guess I’m the one you mean. I know *you*, though you’ve grown some. Was you wanting anything a me?”

“Mrs. Sanders requested me to call and tell you that your brother William was sick.”

“Is he much sick?”

“The doctor says he will have a run of fever.”

“A run of fever! well, then, I guess he’ll die.”

“I hope not,” said Edward, “although he is pretty sick.”

“Well, I know, one maybe ought to hope he wouldn’t die, but when folks git down poor, and all things are goin’ agin’ ’em, it ain’t much use a livin’;” and rubbing her hand across her eyes, she wiped away some rebellious tears; and then a thought seemed to strike her, — “How comes it that you should come on such an errand?”

“I went to see how William was this morning. Yesterday I was there and he was quite sick, and so I thought I would go this morning and see how he was; and I asked Mrs. Sanders if I could do any errand for her?”

“Well, it’s real good in the like a you, to be putting yourself to sich trouble for poor folks like us; you’re real good.”

“Oh, it is no trouble, Mrs. Thompson.”

“Did ma’am say she wanted me, or anything?”

“Why only this, that if you could send her some money she said, which Mr. Sanders let Mr. Thompson have last spring, she would be glad.”

The young woman — she was not more than seventeen, and had already been married a year — came up close beside him. She looked round, apparently to see that no one else was near,

and then, looking up at Edward, a deep flush upon her countenance, —

“Wont you please tell ma’am I hain’t got a cent in the house, and Thompson” — here she paused, as though unwilling to make known her troubles. “Oh, dear! she ought to have the money, but” — and now a full burst of weeping overcame her. “It’s bad enough to be poor, but it’s worse” — another break down. Edward felt very unpleasantly, and wished he had not said anything about the money.

“Don’t trouble yourself, Mrs. Thompson, about the money. I will see that William does not want for anything.”

There was such an earnest sympathy manifest in Edward’s tone of voice, and in his look, that the poor young woman was completely overcome; the principle of kindness was a novelty to her — she had not been used to it; at her parents’ home, rude and rough speech and uncouth manners were the rule; and since her marriage, the rule was about the same, and perhaps a little more manifest. Her husband had been born and brought up in a community where but little regard was had to the amenities of life. The Pines constituted a large tract of woodland, distant about five miles in its nearest contact to the village of ———, covering in its whole area about five miles square; the timber was principally yellow pine, but there were spots somewhat marshy, on which grew the tall sumac, mingled with black birch and alder. There were occasional clearings of a few acres each, on which were located a few mean dwellings; there may have been scattered over the whole region about a dozen of these settlements. The principal means of livelihood was the gathering of sumac berries, which commanded a certain price from dyeing establishments, and the burning of alder into charcoal for powder-mills — the latter quite a remunerative business, but requiring considerable care and labor, as the trees were not only small, but each stick must be stripped of its bark before being put into the kiln, and therefore it was followed by only a few of the more industrious, and not to much extent by them. The cleared spots were cultivated slightly; there would be a little garden patch round the house, a small patch of rye, and another of corn, and a little field of wild grass, which might, with the corn-stalks and rye-straw, keep a cow alive through the winter; although in the spring her appearance indicated that there had been a struggle even for life.

A community like this, where all were poor, isolated, too, from the stirring world, is not favorably situated, either as to morals

or manners; there was nothing to excite ambition or to arouse energy, and yet to those who lived there, a certain fascination attended it; there was a freedom in their loose and careless way of living, which made those from among them who ventured to go abroad, to seek employment as domestics or field laborers, restless under more civilized restraints, and generally returning after a short experience.

Part of this wild tract, and the more valuable part, bordered on the river, and here one or two of the better sort of buildings had been erected; one of them on the very edge of the Pines, and the other about a mile distant, the former being the one occupied by Thompson — a one-storied house, quite fair for a common farm establishment; some twenty acres of land was connected with it, and, rightly managed, might have yielded a fair living. But the present proprietor paid little attention to farming, and sought a living by hiring himself as a ferryman to the proprietor of the latter establishment. This was a house of more pretension than any in that region, and the owner, or rather lessee, of the place, was noted as a shrewd, money-making man, not remarkable for honesty, if in any underhanded way he could get an advantage, but making great professions as to fair dealing. He was a smooth-faced, mild-spoken man, and ready to do everything for the benefit of another, without any regard to his own interest; that is, if his own word could be taken as proof thereof. Opposite to this establishment, was a village of some size; and considerable trade was carried on there, two manufactories being in operation, employing several hundred hands. Two sloops also sailed regularly, one each week, for New York; and the country round, occupied by thrifty farmers.

A ferry was established here, and Ben Morgan, the name of the person last described, was the lessee thereof; and he, having other business on hand, hired Thompson, at rather small wages, to do the work. It suited Thompson very well, for there was not much to be done; and it suited Morgan well, because, for the most part, the drinks which Thompson found essential to his comfort, left very little due at the end of the week to be paid in cash, or taken up in goods; for Mr. Morgan, besides a tavern and and bar, kept an assortment of common articles for family use, and had the run of all the custom from the Pines.

But we cannot stop any longer at present with Mr. Morgan, and must go on with our story.

The feeling manifested by Edward had touched the heart of the young woman as nothing had ever done before. He was

but a boy, indeed; yet she was very young, not much his senior; and it was such a great thing — to her it was, to unburden herself where she could hope for sympathy; it was a new circumstance in her life.

“Oh,” said she, “you don’t know what a hard time I have; ma’am was hard, I thought; but it’s worse now. I always had plenty to eat to home,” — here she had to pause again, — “but it’s dreadful hard to be scolded, because I don’t have supper or breakfast ready just when he comes in, and nothing in the house to git ’em with!” Here she quite broke down, and wept so pitifully, Edward had to say something, although utterly at a loss what to say or do.

“Please, don’t cry so, Mrs. Thompson.”

“I know it don’t do no good, but I can’t help it; it’s foolish in me, too, to be telling you my troubles; but you seem so civil spoken, as if you had some feeling, and could pity one that is in trouble, that it seems good just to tell it out. There ain’t no living soul I can tell my troubles to; there ain’t never a living soul spoke a kind word to me like you has, and it clean breaks me down.”

Just then a man was seen coming through the Pines; the trees being large, and nothing but the trunks to obstruct the view, objects could be seen at quite a distance. He was on foot, and walking on one of the paths that led to and from the settlements already mentioned.

They both noticed him, and at once the young woman began clearing away, as far as she could, all traces of the tears.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “there comes Daddy Jack; wont you please wait one minute — I’ve got something to give you — just one minute;” and in she ran. Before the man reached the main road she was out again, and looking much improved — a dress had been slipped on, her hair smoothed back, and her appearance very much improved. She was really good-looking. She had a basket in her hand, but as it had a cover to it, Edward could not see its contents.

As she came up again close beside him, she said, in a very low voice, —

“That’s Daddy Jack; he’s our minister in these parts.”

Edward looked inquiringly in the direction of the stranger, who was now close at hand; he was certainly the oddest specimen of a minister he had ever seen. On his head was a straw hat very low in the crown, with a brim of unusual dimensions, which kept flopping up and down with every movement of his

person; below this, his hair hung long and straight, resting on his shoulders; a species of cloak enveloped his person, fastened at the neck, otherwise swinging loose. The garment was no doubt originally of yellow nankin, but through long use and many washings, was now bleached to a dirty white. As this outer garment swung open, it disclosed a check shirt and dark-colored pantaloons; neither coat nor vest was to be seen, and in fact were wanting. A stout crooked cane was in his right hand, but not used as a staff, for it rested on his shoulder, bearing on its end a bundle, which contained no doubt the wanting coat and vest. As he came up, his only salutation was a loud "hem!" so loud that the echo might have been heard from the surrounding woods if Edward had listened. He was otherwise engaged; for as the man came straight towards them with long, regular strides, which did not in the least slacken even when close at hand, Jupe seemed to think somebody must make way; and as he did not fancy the flopping hat, nor the flying cloak, was quite willing to make room; he pricked up his ears, gave a slight snort, and began wriggling himself out into the road; and Edward had to coax and pat him, and rein him up, and at last touch him with his heel to keep him quiet. He felt that it was ill-manners in Jupe to behave thus, and fairly blushed, as though he himself was implicated in the bad conduct of his horse.

"You needn't be afraid, young man; I shan't hurt you." This was his first salutation.

"Oh, Daddy," Mrs. Thompson replied, as Edward was still doing his best to bring Jupe back to his position, "it ain't him as is afraid, it's the horse; I guess it's the wind blowin' the cloak so — that's what's frightened him."

The man looked keenly at Edward a moment, surveying the dress of the boy, and the beautiful form of Jupe, and his pretty trappings.

"Ay! I see," aside to Mrs. Thompson; "I see he ain't used to poor folks; he's been used to fine feathers; we ain't stylish enough."

"Oh, Daddy!" (this was in a whisper), "you don't know how good and kind-hearted he is; do speak pleasant to him — do, Daddy, he's so lovely!"

By this time, Edward had overcome Jupe's scruples, and got him up to the place near the house from which he had started, and immediately removing his cap, politely saluted the reverend gentleman; for in spite of his uncouth appearance, having

heard him announced as a minister, he was ready to pay him all due respect. Just then the gentleman had begun a conversation with Mrs. Thompson.

"How is it you wasn't to meeting last Sabbath?"

"Oh, Daddy, Will — wouldn't let me."

"He wouldn't, ha! Well, I shall see to *him*. You're sure you didn't want to stay to home yourself? Ah, these excuses!" here his voice became quite elevated. "Do you know the world of woe is paved with excuses? It's this thing, and that thing, and t'other thing, anything, no matter what; and yet sinners are pressing on, hurrying along, all helping each other, laughing, and dancing, and frolicking on the broad road to perdition — yes to *perdition*. Do you know you are going *straight* there? a little more and you'll drop over into the great deep black pit — the pit of blackness, and darkness, and despair, and misery, and torment. Where will be your excuses *then*? what will you do *then*? *who* will hear your excuses! Daddy Jack can't help you *then*; no, no, you can't cling to my skirts. I, a poor sinner, will have to answer for myself; I can't do nothing to help you *then*. All I can say will be, 'I warned them, I coaxed them, I tried to drag them out of the broad road, and they wouldn't heed a word I had to say.'" His voice had reached an exceedingly high pitch, and the tears were streaming down his cheeks. The young woman at first had turned very pale, and then, as he proceeded, began to weep; and as Edward looked at her, he perceived that her whole frame was in a tremor. The address, from the very earnest manner of its delivery, and the dark images presented, had also affected him, but by no means as it had her; it had thrown a gloom around him; he felt as if a dark cloud had suddenly spread before the face of the sun. As the man saw she was weeping, he paused and lowered his voice. "How long will those tears last! only just till my back is turned, and then you'll dry them up, and go on your way singing your light songs and dancing as careless as ever on the road to eternal woe!"

"Oh, no, Daddy Jack; I wont — I promise you I wont."

"And you say Will kept you to home? Well, I'll see to him."

"Please Daddy, don't tell Will; he'll be dreadful mad, and then —"

"Don't be 'feared, child; I shall only put it to him why he staid away; he'd no business to stay away. Here am I going through heat and cold, wet and dry, living from hand to mouth,

laboring in season and out of season, and what for? It ain't for your money, it ain't for your victuals; it is for your souls I labor, trying to pull you out of the fire, and you all a-trying as hard as you can to get in. Oh, it's awful!" Here his voice was raised again, and the last sentence came out with a loud ring.

"Oh, Daddy I will be good; I will mind what you say."

Having apparently got through with what he had to say to the young woman, he came up to Edward, and putting his hand on Jupe's mane, a little too near his head, before Edward could stop him, Jupe snapped at the cloak and caught it between his teeth.

"Jupe, Jupe! let go — let go sir!" But Jupe had to suffer a good slap one side of his head before he would consent to loose his grip; he seemed to have a spite against that ungainly concern.

The man took it very coolly; he merely looked to see that no rent had been made, and then said, —

"The dumb beast don't know any better; some one has learned him that trick; he is a pretty beast, though, and I am pleased to see that his young master is a gentleman. I have met with many in my day, of your age, who would have liked no better fun than to have their horses snap at me, and if a rent had been made, the merrier they would have been. Do you live in ——?"

"Yes, sir, a little south of the village; my name is Bascom."

"Oh, ah! yes, I know! I understand now. Well, sonny, God has been very good to you; he has *given* you plenty of this world's goods. I hope you will give Him your *heart* in return — your *heart* — mind *that*. It ain't much, is it? Our hearts ain't very good; there ain't much good in 'em, anyhow, but God asks us to give them to *him*, and better do it now when you are young. Good-by, my young gentleman; good-by, Susey."

"Good-by, Daddy."

Edward bowed respectfully to the gentleman, although he said nothing; his feelings had been singularly touched by the address thus personally made to him. The manner of the man had changed so suddenly into a mild, soft, and kind demeanor, and his voice lowered almost to a whisper, that its impression was the greater. He had sent an arrow at a venture, and it had touched this young heart; how lasting the impression, time will develop.

As the stranger turned from the road into a path that led

towards the ferry, Edward kept his eye upon him; he almost wished he would come back; he had questions to ask him; and yet, in all probability, he would not have put them had the opportunity offered.

This man's real name was John Blydenburg; he had been ordained as a minister in the Methodist church, but for some cause had broken off from ecclesiastical connection with that branch of the Christian church, and did not act under authority from any particular denomination. He was laboring on his own responsibility; and it was his choice to labor among just such a class as he found in the Pines, and that vicinity. He had made himself very popular among them; and as they knew he neither worked for food nor pay of any kind, supporting himself from a small income of his own, his influence was very great in all that region, and he could say to even the most rude among them, plain things to their face, which they would have resented from any one else; and although his addresses were in general intended to work upon their fears, and not therefore calculated to do the most good, yet there is reason to believe they had a wholesome restraint upon a state of society that otherwise would have been little better than heathenish. He was not married, and lived in a small house which he had erected on the edge of the Pines — a pleasant location to one who could enjoy the music of the wind in its varied tones so peculiar when playing through a forest of large growth, and its solitude and deep shade and fragrant odor. He lived alone with an old and faithful housekeeper, a distant relative who had known him from his childhood. Much of his time was spent in going among the different little settlements, visiting from house to house, exhorting, advising, instructing, and at times scolding — taking truly a patriarchal interest over them; often from his own small means administering to their wants. In sickness he was their main dependence as to medical advice, and except in extreme cases, a physician seldom was seen in that region. No wonder, then, that he was respected and loved, and that he could in the most fearless manner attack the most reprobate among them and tell them plainly, face to face, of their wrong-doings. Daddy Jack was indeed a power in that place; and a rude hand raised against him would have been resisted and avenged by the whole community.

"Wont you please take this," said the young woman, handing Edward the basket which she had been holding in her hand,

"and give it to your folks; they are nice and fresh. I picked them myself this morning; they are real sweet."

"Blackberries!" said Edward, as he lifted the cover. "How very large! they are beautiful! But you must let me pay you for them; my mother wants to buy some, I know."

"Oh, no, I don't want no pay from you; your kind words have done me more good. I feel as chirp agin as I did; it's so good to hear a kind word from such as you. No, no," seeing Edward take out his pocket-book, — "no, no, I don't want no pay; jist you take 'em, and you can leave the basket any time you please at marm's."

"Well, said Edward, have not I as much right to make you a present as you have to make me one? I thank you very much indeed for these berries; and now, if you do not take this as a gift from me, I shall feel hurt," at the same time holding out his hand.

Very reluctantly — there was no affectation about it; she really did want to make him a present of the berries — she received it; it was a gold piece of the value of five dollars. He had wished to give it before he left her, but felt reluctant to offer money merely as charity; as a return present, the affair had a different aspect.

A moment she looked at him, then seized his hand and kissed it. Edward felt the warm tears that accompanied this unexpected salutation; and his heart was full.

"I wont never spend a cent of this as long as I live; I'll just keep it to remember you by."

"Oh, but I want you to spend it; get anything you want with it. *Do*, now. It will not give me any pleasure unless you do; promise me now?"

Oh, well, I know I want many things bad enough; but I can't bear to part with it. I'll bet it's your spending money."

"It was mine, at any rate, to do as I pleased with; and if I thought you would get what you may want with it, I shall be much happier than if I spent it for things I do not need. But let me ask you, are berries plenty round here?"

"Oh, thousands of 'em."

"I thought of making up a party to come and get some."

"Oh, do; and just come here and I can show you where they are as thick as hops. *Do*, will you?"

"I will; and maybe you can show us where it will be a good place to boil a tea-kettle and eat our lunch? we shall bring lunch with us."

"I guess I can. Oh, do come; I'll do anything to help you along; and if you want to sail, I'll get my husband to bring the boat down from the ferry. They've got a nice sail-boat there, and it ain't hardly ever used. Oh, do come!"

"I think we shall be here day after to-morrow, if the weather is good."

"Oh, good, good!"

"Good-morning." And Edward lifted his cap with as much grace as if she had been one in the same circumstances as his own.

"Good-by. Oh, bless you bless you!" she exclaimed. "Oh, ain't he a dear!" and then the tears came again. She stood and watched until a turn in the road hid him from her sight; and then, with a spring, as if a new life had been given to her, started into the house.

No one can realize but those who are under the dark cloud which broods over so many of the human family, what a chilly atmosphere surrounds them, turning all the social ties into bonds that gall and fret the heart, until it becomes callous to every tender feeling, and life a round of weary plodding.

This young woman was just beginning to feel the chilly air; and already had its influence begun to press down her youthful spirit. Her careless dress showed that the evil had taken hold of her. Her first feeling on seeing Edward was that of repulsion. It would have been a sort of satisfaction to her to have treated him rudely. At her parents' house, she had been used to hear the rich accused of oppression and as trying to keep down the poor; and since her marriage the same idea had been fostered and strengthened by hearing her husband and others speak of the man Morgan, who was the only one about that vicinity who was comparatively rich; and whom they all believed to be unscrupulous in his exactions, and ready at any time to take advantage of their necessities; and even Daddy Jack himself was not as careful as he ought to have been in this respect. There was a bias in his mind against the richer class; and it cropped out in the first remark he made in reference to shying of Edward's horse.

The pleasant address of Edward at once dissipated the hostile feeling and drew forth the better emotions which had been dormant in the breast of the young woman. A common nature asserted its power; the wall of separation was demolished and the greater the distance at which she had imagined he felt himself above her made the reality of a common kindred as mani-

fested in his sympathy more touching to her feelings. A new spring had been given to her life. Ambition had been aroused, kindly emotions awakened; life had some beauty yet. There is a silver lining to the dark cloud.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAGGIE BELLFIELD.

THE reader will remember that as soon as Mary Bascom had been introduced to Maggie, she proposed that Edward should take charge of her horse and she and Miss Maggie would walk to the house of Mr. Sanders, Maggie's present home. Mary was induced to this by the impression which the appearance of the young girl had made upon her. Edward had spoken highly of her beauty; but she knew he was quite apt to be taken by a pretty face, and therefore did not anticipate any remarkable discovery. But Maggie's beauty was of a different order from the common; it grew upon you as you looked and talked; it was not tame, consisting of merely regular features and finely tinted complexion. There was a spirituality to it, as if the complexion and the features had received their hue and form from the soul, and were but the symbol of the inner life. Her eye was soft, a light-brown in color, as was her hair, which hung in curls beneath her gypsy bonnet. Her lips were beautifully arched, and the mouth by no means small or contracted, as if you might expect to hear a simpering voice issuing from the narrow aperture; and it did not surprise you when she spoke, to hear round, clear tones that fascinated the ear like strains of music.

Mary was not surprised, when she had taken Maggie's hand and had a full look into her face, and a few words had passed between them, that Edward should have said "she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen." At once her curiosity was aroused to know something more about her; and especially how it had come to pass that one like her who had evidently been accustomed to refined society, should be living with a family like that of Mr. Sanders. Therefore she proposed the walk. And almost the first remark made by Maggie after proceeding but

a few steps on their way, afforded the opportunity to gratify the latter wish.

"I feel almost ashamed to have you go with me to Mr. Sanders."

"Why so?" said Mary; "are they very poor?"

"Oh, not on that account; they are poor, so I think, but that would make me pity them; and I do feel very sorry for them sometimes, as they do not seem to have money enough by them to get even common things, such as meal and tea and such things. But they are very rude people; they never speak rudely to me, not very; but they do to one another; and Mrs. Sanders is apt to speak rudely to strangers; she did to your brother yesterday, and it made me feel quite ashamed."

"Have you been there for some time?"

"About a month."

"Are they relatives of yours?"

"Oh, dear, no! and I hardly know how my brother happened to get me boarded there. You see he has gone to New York, to look for a situation as clerk; and as soon as he got a place he was to come for me and take me there, but he has not come yet. I hope he will soon, though, it's so lonesome here."

"Have you no friends in this place?"

"Oh, no! you see when my father died our friends, or rather our relations, took us. One aunt took James, that's my brother, and another took me. Well, James staid awhile with Aunt Margaret; but she and his cousins treated him so badly, he left them and went to some other place, and hired himself out to a farmer. Well, after a few months he came to Litchfield to see me; and he saw I wasn't treated well, and he could not bear to go away and leave me there; and I felt very bad to be separated from him. But uncle felt sorry for us, and he helped us off. So we got into the stage and came to this place; and James thought it would be better for me to stay here than to take me with him to the city, until he could get a situation."

"Was your father a farmer?"

"Oh, dear, no! my father was a merchant. I don't know how it was, but when he died they said all our things must be sold, and our beautiful place and everything, and that we must go and live with our relations. But James says he means to buy it back again one of these days; for only think, there are the beautiful cherry-trees that our dear pa set out for James and me; and there is the pretty arbor he built for me right alongside a little brook where I kept all my plants. Oh, such pretty ones

as I had! and when I wanted to take some of them with me, my aunt said no, she could not be bothered with plants. But James begged her to let me take one little one, and she finally consented. And that is the very one that I'm going to give you a slip from."

"You must think a great deal of it?"

"I guess I do; it is the only thing I have that makes me think of home; I kiss it sometimes."

Mary smiled at the idea and the warmth of feeling manifested; and her heart yearned towards the young orphan, and the thought occurred to her she would like her mother to see her; and therefore she asked, —

"Are you not willing to go home with me and make me a visit after you have given me that slip? I will let my brother lead my horse home and you and I can walk; it is only a mile and a half; would you mind walking that distance?"

"Oh, dear, no! I often walk much farther than that. I thank you very much. I should like to go with you."

Mrs. Sanders, contrary to Maggie's fears, not only manifested no uncivility, but was quite ready to help her array for the visit. Maggie's usual dress was quite plain; but she had such as were suitable for visiting, and Mrs. Sanders told her that where she was going, it would be proper to appear in her best.

It was a great change for the young girl, from the dull, rude home of Mrs. Sanders to the abode of comfort and refinement to which she was now introduced. But the change did not have a happy effect upon her spirits. There was too great a similarity to the home she had formerly enjoyed. The beauty of the location, the order of the family, the polite attention shown to her by each member of the household, the affection displayed on the interchange of kind epithets between mother and children, and sisters and brother, were all reminders of a past in her own young life; and they brought that past too vividly before her. In the latter part of the afternoon, as Mrs. Bascom wished to have some conversation with her in private, she stepped into the girls' room, expecting to find her there. Upon her asking "where was Maggie?" Julia replied, —

"She asked leave, mamma, to run out into the garden while we were dressing."

Mrs. Bascom looked over into the garden, and not seeing her, concluded she had gone into the summer-house—a small building, roofed and latticed, near the farther end of the garden, but almost hidden from view in consequence of a slope in the

grounds on which it was erected, a brook that ran around that part of the premises affording a delightful spot for such a retreat, the presence of some large trees giving a complete shade; while the large stones which formed an obstruction to the waters, not only dammed them up so as to form a diminutive lake, but made that music so lulling to the senses, as the sparkling waters rushed around, and between, and over their well-worn surfaces.

The noise of the water no doubt prevented Maggie from hearing the approach of Mrs. Bascom. She was seated on a bench, with her head leaning against one of the posts of the building.

"You here all alone, my dear?" said Mrs. Bascom.

Maggie started, and seeing the lady, began wiping away the tears that had been freely flowing. Mrs. Bascom silently took a seat beside her and taking her hand said, —

"What troubles you, dear?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Nothing has occurred since you have been here, has there, to grieve you?"

"Oh, no, ma'am." A short pause, and then she resumed: "I don't know why I should feel so; but I have felt bad ever since I have come. I have not had any such feelings ever before. I don't know why it is, but I keep thinking about —" here she burst into tears. After a few moments' silence, Mrs. Bascom said, —

"Is it about your old home?"

"Yes, ma'am. Everything here seems to remind me of it."

"I should like to have you tell me of your home at some time, my dear; not just now, but when you feel like it. You will stay some days here, I hope?"

"I had thought to go back this evening, ma'am."

"But I think Mrs. Sanders will not object to your staying to-night, and to-morrow morning I will see her myself and arrange matters."

"I thank you, ma'am. I am sure I should like to stay, everything is so pleasant here."

"I am glad if it seems so to you," and as Mrs. Bascom said this, she put her arm around the sweet girl, pressed her to her breast, and kissed her.

Maggie fixed her eyes upon the lady, their expression peculiarly tender; there was a beseeching look to them; a question was in them. Mrs. Bascom asked, —

"What is it, my dear?"

"May I love you?"

The heart of the lady was deeply touched. Again she pressed her closely.

"And would you like to have me love you also?"

"Oh, so much! if you only could."

"I think it would not be hard for any one to love you, my dear."

"But I may love *you* with all my heart, may I not? You seem so like —"

"Your dear mother! You think so?"

"Without being able to reply, Maggie rose from her seat, threw her arms around Mrs. Bascom, pressing her face against her bosom.

As the child lay there, all the mother's heart was stirred, and clasping her own arms about the young motherless being, she let her know by her warm embrace, that she had accepted the heart thus yearning for a resting-place. Nor could she keep back the tokens of emotion thus excited. She knew now, as well as if Maggie had explained her life's history, she had been tenderly brought up; her affectionate disposition had been nurtured in a home of love and refinement. She had lost that home. There had been a vacancy in her heart, a yearning that had met with no sympathy even from kindred. How could she refuse a place in her own heart to this motherless child, to these young affections that so strangely had found the repose they craved? The interest manifested by Maggie had a powerful effect upon the heart of Mrs. Bascom. It seemed like a call from heaven to extend a brooding care over this motherless youngling.

Mrs. Bascom did not at once come to a decision in her own mind what she would do in reference to the young girl. It would be time enough for that when she had seen more of her and knew more particulars respecting her history.

The next morning, Edward drove his mother to the house of Mrs. Sanders. He was very anxious to take a variety of good things to Bill, but his mother had a good stock of prudence, and while she would have been glad to furnish any amount of necessaries for that family, or any other that needed, yet she was quite a stranger to them, and therefore wished first to ascertain whether gratuities of that kind would be acceptable.

"You will find, Edward," she said in reply to his request,

"that persons who are poor, that is, many of them, are sensitive about receiving aid from those who may be called, in comparison, rich. They would sooner receive favors from those more nearly allied to themselves as to means. Remember your experience with Mrs. Tellfair as to the cow."

This silenced Edward. That rebuff from Sam's grandmother had made a sore spot in his mind, and in fact he found from all his late experience in that line, that is not best to be too forward in offering assistance unasked. The spirit of independence is strong in the minds of most persons; and it ought rather to be fostered as a stimulus to enterprise and energy.

Edward, however, slipped another orange in his pocket; Bill seemed so gratified with the one he had previously given, he felt no fear of a rebuff from that source.

It took some little time to alight and fasten the horse, which afforded Mrs. Saunders, who had seen the carriage approaching, time to make some slight preparation. And Edward noticed, as Mrs. Sanders met them at the door, that her countenance wear a more genial aspect, very decidedly in contrast with that which had met him at the first.

Now, had Mrs. Bascom and her son made such a call a week previous, the probability is Mrs. Sanders would not have condescended to rise even from her chair, nor have raised the latch. The reply to their knock would have been "Come in," in a hard, indifferent voice, and they would have met a stern cold look, and probably not been asked to take a seat. The behavior of the lady translated into plain English would have been:

"Who cares for *you*, if you *are* rich? You look down upon *me*, and I can show you that I care as little about *you*. I have never been invited to your house, and now you have come without an invitation to mine. I can let you see that I am neither awed nor flattered by it. You can help yourself to a chair, if you can condescend to take a seat. I shan't ask you."

But a great change had come over her. She not only seemed gratified at seeing Mrs. Bascom, but she was more respectably clad than Edward had hitherto seen her.

"I'm so glad you're come," she said to Edward; "he's been a-worryin' ever so much. You can go right in there, if you please. Will you please come in this way, ma'am?" opening the door of her front room. "I don't know as ever I see the like afore," addressing herself to Mrs. Bascom, who had taken a seat

by the window. "The boy seems possessed after your son. He don't seem to care for the doctor, nor no one else."

"Is your son quite sick, Mrs. Sanders?"

"Well, marm, he is pretty considerable ailin'; the doctor thinks it may run a week or two."

"Fever, is it?"

"Yes, ma'am—low fever. I'm afeared it's been brought on by a fall he had down a steep place in the gully. I s'pose your son has told you about it. It was him who found him there."

"No, ma'am. I have heard nothing."

"Hasn't he told you nothin' about it? Well, I guess he thought mebbe William wouldn't like to have it told about. It is real considerate in him. He is a real dear good young gentleman. Oh, ma'am, you don't know—" And Mrs. Sanders paused, trying to choke down her feelings. But the tears had started. After a little she went on: "I wouldn't a believed it if I hadn't heard it with my own ears. But it's true, ma'am, as you are sitting there. I heard him myself a-prayin' with my poor boy." Here the poor woman burst into a flood of tears.

Mrs. Bascom was deeply affected. "Her Edward to have done that! He *already* a Christian comforter at a sick bed? She knew he had a generous heart. He was her pride and her comfort. But that he should have taken such a stand as *that*?"

Just then Mrs. Sanders, who was seated at some little distance from the lady, and nearer the door which led into the back-room, looking earnestly at Mrs. Bascom, raised her hand and beckoned to her.

"There, ma'am, you can hear for yourself." This was said in a low voice, not much above a whisper. The lady at once arose and stepping near the door, listened a moment, then returned to her seat, and covering her face, gave vent to tears.

It would be difficult to analyze the feelings that had been aroused in her breast. There was self-condemnation. "What had she ever done to encourage this dear son to such an act?" She did not herself profess to be a Christian. She had indeed taught him in infancy to say his prayers; and as was usual in that day, had heard him in company with his sisters recite the catechism. She had not even thought of training him up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She had indeed set her children an example of good order and propriety. She had paid an outward regard to the Sabbath, but more from custom than because it was God's command. Her children had been baptized in infancy, or "christened," as she called it; not as an

act of solemn consecration on her part of those precious souls committed to her trust, but because it was custom. And all the vows she had taken in that act, she seemed to have thought quite satisfactorily fulfilled by teaching them their prayers and hearing them repeat their catechism. She had never prayed with them or for them. She had made very solemn promises in reference to them but had never realized the obligations she had come under. A new light was breaking in upon her; its present influence is not cheering. A consciousness of guilt has been awakened; it may lead to better things. Time will develop.

After Mrs. Bascom had somewhat recovered herself, she addressed Mrs. Sanders:

"My special object in calling upon you this morning, Mrs. Sanders, was to inquire whether you would have objections to my keeping Maggie a few days at my house?"

"La! no, ma'am: not in the least. Indeed it would be a great help to me, ma'am; seeing my boy is sick. But she had ought to have some of her clothes."

"That perhaps would he well, and if you will be so good as to put them up, I will take them in my carriage. And may I ask you, Mrs. Sanders, if there is anything I can do for you? Sometimes when sickness is in the family, many thing are wanted which in health are not necessary. I hope you will excuse me for asking; I do it in all kindness."

"I believe you do, ma'am, and I thank you very much; but somehow, things seem to be a-gittin' a little better with us. Sanders has taken a new turn; he's to work now all the time, and he don't spend a cent at the tavern, nor nowhere, only for the family, and I believe it's all come about of that blessed boy of yours; for the very day they all come home, a-fetching my Bill on the horse—I s'pose he's told you about it?"

"Edward has not said a word to me about it, unless you mean his bringing some flour here the day it rained so."

"La! ma'am, that wasn't it; but that was real kind in him, and I am ashamed how I treated him that day; and if it wasn't that he is so good, he'd never have darkened my doors again; but, ma'am, when a body is poor, and things are all in confusion, and nothin' to do with, one gets all riled up, and they don't care much what they say, nor what they do, nor what becomes on 'em; but I'm real sorry I done as I did. But he don't seem to lay it up agin' me, and I hope you wont, ma'am."

"You need not fear on that account, Mrs. Sanders. I feel

that I have too many deficiencies of my own; and I hope you will feel free at any time, to let Edward know if we can be of any help to you."

Mrs. Sanders really felt the kindness of this offer, and thanked Mrs. Bascom the best she knew how.

In a short time, the clothes for Maggie were procured, and Edward coming from the sick-room, they departed for their home. It was a silent ride they had; Mrs. Bascom was busily engaged with the new thoughts that had been started during her call, and Edward was troubled with questions which Bill Sanders had asked, and poor child, he was unable to answer. He was several times on the point of asking his mother, but as such a subject had never been hinted at between that parent and child, he felt a reluctance to proposing it; he most heartily wished, though, that she might say something that would afford him the opportunity.

The next morning, Edward was on Juce, and galloping on the road to the Pines. He stopped at the house of Mrs. Thompson, and was about to alight, when she, seeing him, rushed out to meet him. Her appearance was much altered for the better; for she had a snug dress on her person, her hair was in order, and shoes and stockings, instead of bare feet and legs. A bright smile illumined her good-looking features as she came and took his offered hand.

"Wont you but just come in — I'm so glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Thompson; I only stopped to leave your basket, and ask if you could direct me where to find that gentleman I met here the other day."

What! Daddy Jack! ah, la, yes! You go on this road a bit, you'll find a path turning to the right; you'll know it by a big chesnut-tree to the corner of it; you just follow that path, and it will take you right straight to his house. But I do wish you'd come in; but mebbly you're in a hurry; but I do want to tell you so about things. Thompson has quit the ferry, and he's come home to work the farm; that good Daddy has had a real smart talk with Will, and he's gi'n Morgan a blowin'-up, and he's persuaded Will to quit the ferry, and come home; and then, you see, as you would make me promise to spend that money, I got things nice and comfortable for the table, you know, and slicked things up round the house; and see here — I got these too," — exhibiting her foot, which was small and well shaped, with the close-fitting shoe. "I felt so ashamed that day you see me a-lookin' so but I don't mean to go so no more. I'll work

my fingers off, but I'll earn enough to keep tidy; and Will's gone to work right smart this morning. But how is Bill? — have you heard?"

"Not to-day. I was there yesterday; he seemed to be better."

"I hope he wont die — he ain't no ways fit to die; but it is real good in you, to go to see him so; but you'll stop here when you go back? I've got something for you."

"Thank you I will, if you wish me to."

"Bless him!" she said, as he cantered off, "isn't he a dear!"

Edward had no difficulty in finding the path, and after entering it, was soon at the house. It was a small building of one story in height, with a wing at one end; it had a neat appearance — everything around it in perfect order; a small garden in the rear profusely ornamented with flowers, and well cultivated, spoke of industry, as well as taste on the part of its owner. The house was pleasantly situated, in full view of the river, and an extensive prospect beyond. As James dismounted, the gentleman came from the house, and through the small doorway, to the gate.

"Good-morning, my young gentleman, good-morning; I am happy to see you."

"Thank you, sir," said Edward, as he raised his hat, and presented his hand. "I have taken the liberty of calling upon you, for some special business, if you have a few moments' leisure to spare."

"Yes, yes, as many as you please, with great pleasure; walk in, walk in; right glad to see you. Do you know I've been thinking a great deal of you since our meeting the other day? I have wanted to tell you how much good you have done that poor young thing, by your kind treatment. Sit down, sir. Your name is Bascom — your first name?"

"Edward, sir."

"And my name is Blydenburg. I suppose that was not the name you heard me called by?" and a smile accompanied this question.

"No, sir."

"I thought not. Well, they seem to like the name they have given me — and so long as I can do the poor souls any good, it matters little; but as I was saying, Master Edward, — excuse my familiarity, — your kind treatment of that young woman has given a new spring to her life. You cannot think, my young friend, how terrible a thing poverty is! Riches are dangerous,

I know; not from my own experience, however, for I never possessed them. The Lord has given me neither poverty nor riches—I have enough; but poverty is a terrible evil! It takes away all ambition, it presses down the spirit, it engenders distrust and envy and jealousy; it leads to careless habits, and it tends to harden the heart towards God and man. All poverty cannot be prevented, but a great deal of it might be alleviated a little; it don't often need but a very little, given in a kindly way by those who have abundance; just a little, with a sympathizing heart, just letting the poor things feel that you care for them, that you acknowledge the brotherhood, that you own them as kindred, in spite of their rags. Oh I tell you it would do a world of good."

"I think it might, sir."

"Now that young woman fairly worships you; she would do anything for you, at the risk of her own life; and it was not merely the money you gave her—you must not mind my speaking about it." He noticed, at mention of the money, that Edward grew quite red in the face. "It wont go any further, they all make me their confidant, poor things! I know all their joys, and their sorrows; but it goes never from me, except some good can be done by letting it be known. Now that young thing has some good qualities naturally; but take you or me, and let us be situated as she has been, and there's no telling what a different turn might have been given to our feelings and our characters. We are, if we have any right views, more indebted, under God, to the circumstances which surround us than we imagine. We are all by nature pretty much alike; there is not much room for boasting. But now for your business, my young friend—let me hear it."

"My first business was to ask you if you could possibly make a call at the house of Mrs. Thompson's parents; their son is quite sick and his mind is very much troubled."

"What about?"

"Well, sir, I suppose he is afraid he is going to die."

"Did he ask to see me?"

"No, sir."

"Do his parents wish me to see him? I ask these questions because I do not wish to obtrude myself beyond the circle where I pretend to labor. Some people are jealous of the ground they occupy. I don't wish to trouble any one; I have but a small field to work in, but there is a great deal to do in it,

in consequence of the nature of the soil; let me know, then, what call I have to make the visit."

Edward was somewhat confused, and hesitated for a moment.

"I cannot say, sir, that any one has sent me on this errand, but I felt that some one ought to see him; he wants to know what to do, and I could not tell him, but I thought you could."

"What to do to be saved! is that it?"

"Yes, sir," and Edward gave way to tears.

A moment the gentleman looked at him.

"And my dear boy, could you not tell him?"

"No, sir," still weeping.

"And if I mistake not, you are yourself anxious to have an answer to that question—is it not so?"

"Yes, sir, I am *very* anxious to know it."

"Have you been long wishing to know?"

"Some things you said to me the other day first led me to think of it, and then William being so troubled, has made me think more about it."

"Well, now, my dear child, there is only one way to be saved—only *one way* for us all—for the old and the young, for the greatest sinner, the *vilest*, most *guilty* sinner, and the youth who has been trained as you have been, to virtuous habits—*only one way*. *We must go to Jesus*. Our *correct lives* wont save us; our *tears* wont save us; our *prayers* wont save us. *Jesus alone is the Saviour*. But you know that, don't you? You have learned that in your catechism?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yes, you know that; but you want to know what *you* must do."

"Oh, yes, sir; that is it."

"And there is something *you* must do. *We do* have a part to perform in this great work. Jesus has died for us. He wants us to be saved; He is able to do it; He holds out his hand to us. Take my hand, He says; don't be afraid; trust to me; just give yourself up to me. Do you see now, how it is?"

After a few moments, Edward replied,—

"I think I understand, sir, what you mean; but—"

"But how are you to do this—to take his hand? that is your question, is it not?"

"Yes, sir; that is it."

"Well, now, I will tell you how to do it. You have no doubt

read about Peter, when he felt himself sinking in the angry waves — how he cried out, Lord, save me, or I perish!”

“Yes, sir.”

“You know also, that at once, Jesus caught him by the hand and he was saved?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You see it was not much Peter did; he cried to Jesus; he did not cry to his shipmates, he did not try to swim. Peter could swim, but he gave up all hope of being saved that way. He saw his Master; he believed in His power; in his extremity, he cried to Him; and he was saved. And you have read about the thief on the cross too?”

“Yes, sir.”

“The thief had no doubt been a great sinner; but he believed that Being, who was dying with Him, had power to save him, and he cried, ‘Lord remember *me* when thou comest into thy Kingdom, and he was saved. You see there was not much either of them did, only they believed in His power to save, and they cried to Him; you see how it was?’

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, now, my young friend, you do as they did; you go to your room; cry to Jesus for salvation; cast yourself upon Him; give yourself to Him, body and soul; and all the powers of hell cannot keep you from salvation. Will you do that?”

“I will, sir!” and Edward grasped his hand. “Oh sir, I thank you so much! And that was what you meant when you asked me the other day to give my heart to God?”

“Yes, that was what I meant. And as to my seeing that young man, I will go this very day.”

When Edward reached his home, the family was at dinner; he knew it, but he did not care for food; he retired at once to his room. A little while after dinner, Mrs. Bascom, somewhat anxious about him as he had returned for answer to the servant, who had been sent to call him, “that he did not wish any dinner, went to his room; he was sitting by the window and looking out upon the beautiful prospect.

“Edward, my dear, are you not well?”

“Oh, yes, mamma, I am very well; how very lovely everything looks! I cannot keep my eyes from looking at the trees and the grass and the water. I never noticed before what a splendid view we have from this window.”

“Yes, my son, the prospect is a very fine one; but we are so used to it is no doubt the reason we do not oftener notice it.”

“I never, I am sure, noticed it before; how good God must be to have made everything so beautiful!”

“Yes; certainly, God is very good.”

“It is so strange, mamma, that I never thought of it before.”

“That God was good?”

“Yes; I know He is good, but I never felt it.”

“But you have often read in the Psaltery, and you know there is a great deal said there about the goodness of the Lord.”

“Yes, I know I have, and it is a wonder I never thought of it; I wonder if we do not read the Bible many times without thinking what we read?”

“Have you been reading your Bible now? I see it lying on the window-sill by you.”

“Yes, ma’am, I have been reading about the thief on the cross. How wonderful that was!”

“What part of the story do you allude to, my son?”

“Why, it is so wonderful to think that all the thief did, was to ask Christ to remember him when He came into His kingdom; it was so strange! Christ said nothing to him about his past sins, and he must have been very wicked, for he said to the other thief himself, ‘We are reaping the just reward of our deeds;’ but Jesus tells him at once, ‘To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ How kind and forgiving Christ must be! how —” but his feelings had become too much excited to say more.

“My dear Edward,” said his mother, taking his hand, “you are greatly excited; what has troubled you so?”

“Dear mamma, I am not troubled! I am happy; I never was so happy in my life.”

“You think so?”

“I know it, mamma. I never knew what it was to be happy before — no I don’t mean that, for I have never known what it was to be unhappy. I have been happy, I know I have; but I can hardly tell you what I mean. It seems as if God was everywhere about me, and he is so good!”

His mother was deeply affected; she saw the bright face of her boy as he uttered the last sentence, so radiant with joy, it seemed as if an unearthly glory was upon it. She could not speak; she pressed his hand to her lips a moment, and then threw her arms about him and pressed him to her bosom and wept.

“Tell me, dear Edward, tell me what has brought about this?”

what has made you feel so? I would give all the world to feel as you do. Tell me, my dear son, how you obtained such a state of mind?"

"I cannot tell you, mamma; it has come of itself, or Jesus has done it; dear mamma, I have given myself to Him."

Again she pressed him to her; there was not a word uttered, while tears were flowing freely — tears of joy. For although the mother was conscious of an agonizing want in her own heart, and did not really comprehend the true idea of a change of heart, yet she could not but sympathize in the happiness of her son; he had found the pearl of great price, and she could bless God for that.

The berrying party was to take place the next day, and invitations were extended to one or two families of more intimate friends so as to make up an agreeable company.

It proved a lovely day, and as the party consisted entirely of youth, with the exception of Mrs. Bascom, who for reasons of her own decided upon going with them, there was no lack of sprightly converse and joyous hilarity, and no one seemed to be more full of glee than Edward; riding his pony, he would join one wagon and then another, keeping up a lively chat with the two circles, but the most of the way attached himself to that in which Maggie was riding; his highest pleasure seemed to be in drawing her attention to objects of interest, or eliciting a merry laugh from her by some remark of his own. Maggie, too, seemed very happy; it had been a long, long time since any opportunity for a pleasure excursion had been afforded her, and without care or thought of her precarious and dependent situation, drank in full draughts of unsullied happiness. Blest season of young life! who can have the heart to damp your buoyant spirits or scowl at your merry laugh! let it ring out its peal and echo from the forest or upon the shining river; it is but in harmony with God's beautiful creation.

Not only was Mrs. Thompson ready to receive them with a bright smile upon her face, but her husband was there also, ready to take charge of their horses; he was a good-looking young man, and quite decently dressed for a farmer, and seemed as ready as his wife to bid them welcome.

"Susie told me," he said to Edward as he was pointing him the way to the barn shed, "that mebbly you might like to take a sail, so I've cleaned out my boat and gin you want her, she lays down there close by that hedge."

"Oh, thank you, thank you; you are very kind; we should

like it dearly; Tom," he said to one of the youths, "this gentleman has been so good as to say we can have his boat for a sail."

"Good, good — thank you, sir, very much."

"And if you wish," said Thompson, quite cheered by the respectful behavior of the boys, "gin I can find time this afternoon, — my work is got a little behind hand, but I guess I'll fetch her up, — but if you like, I'll go and lend a hand."

"Good, good!" again responded from several voices; "we should like it first rate; it will be a great favor."

"And I guess mamma will feel a little easier to have you with us, and the girls too," said Edward; "that is, if you can spare the time; but you must not put yourself to inconvenience; it is only play with us, you know."

"I guess I'll find time."

Mrs. Thompson was ready to lead the way to the more pleasant spots for picking, and the little party scattered about in groups just as it happened; sometimes two or three would keep together for a time, and then as if tempted by a thicker cluster of bushes, one would wander off, and another, and then draw together again, or join other groups, intermingling, picking, comparing baskets, to see who had the most, calling to each other from distant companies, laughing, shouting, and making the forest resound with a continual burst of merriment.

"I think, mother," said Edward, "now would be a good time for us to make the call you wished; they are all so engaged they will not miss us, and here we are close by the path that leads to his house."

"Well, my son, perhaps we had better; it will be an hour yet before they propose to lunch; let us go at once, then."

As they passed the garden, Mr. Blydenburg, who was at work there, noticed them, and at once proceeded to the house, in order to receive them, and by the time they reached the front gate, was at the door of his house, and leaving the stoop, advanced to meet them.

"My mother, Mr. Blydenburg."

The gentleman made a respectful obeisance, and took the offered hand of the lady, but as he did so, their eyes were for a moment fixed on each other as in utter amazement.

"Can it be?" said Mrs. Bascom; "am I mistaken?"

"We have met before," replied the gentleman. "I feel very confident that I am holding a hand I once held amid the splendor and gayety of the ball-room; Lucy Benson has not changed as much as John Blydenburg."

"You are changed, but not so much but I can easily recognize your look; but how strange we should meet thus!"

"Strange to you, no doubt, but please walk in; my abode, you see, is a very modest one, but it answers every purpose, and I have no doubt is a much better one than often sheltered our Saviour when He was here upon earth. I hope you as well as myself have found out that this world cannot satisfy the cravings of the soul."

"I believe I can say that," replied Mrs. Bascom.

"And yet, from what I have heard, you are surrounded with abundance and can command every luxury?"

"That is true, but —"

"It don't meet the full desire — is not that what you would say — it cannot fill the void; you have found, I hope, what can fill it — to fulness — to its utmost capacity of enjoyment?"

Mrs. Bascom shook her head.

"No, no; I have not."

"And yet when I had the pleasure of conversing with this dear boy yesterday, I did not imagine indeed that he was the son of Lucy Benson, but I felt assured he had been nurtured in the knowledge of the truth; he seemed so well acquainted with the scripture references, and of course concluded he had a faithful Christian mother."

"No, no, not so; I have not been faithful as I ought. What religious knowledge he has must have been derived from his catechism, and the regular reading of the Scriptures in our liturgy; I confess with shame my part has not been performed — and I have come this morning to thank you for the instruction you gave him which has led him to —"

Mrs. Bascom could proceed no further; she put her handkerchief to her face and sat in silence.

The gentleman then turned to Edward, and taking him a little one side, asked him a few questions in a low voice; and as Edward answered, with his bright eye fixed upon him as in confirmation of the hope he enjoyed — he looked a moment at the beaming countenance of the youth.

"To God be all the praise!" Saying this, he returned to Mrs. Bascom.

"What you tell me of the way in which your son has received his knowledge of the Scriptures, is another proof to me of the value of your form of public worship; the church thereby does its part in making up for the neglect of parents and guardians; children must of necessity in that way get a knowl-

edge of all the essential truths of the gospel, but knowledge of truth is one thing — a very important thing — its acceptance by the heart is altogether another. Devils know, but they do not love; it is one thing to believe that Christ died to save sinners; the important thing is to receive him with all our heart, as our Saviour."

"I see! I *feel* the difference," said Mrs. Bascom, looking at him in a very earnest manner; "but how to obtain that state of mind!" and she pressed her hands together, casting her eyes down as in deep thought.

"Ah! that is a great question. I cannot give it you, nor any other human being — man is helpless here — the Holy Spirit alone can do that; and He is the gift of the risen Saviour. *Go to Jesus*, my dear friend — He has promised, and His word is sure. Plead with Him; no poor hungry sinner ever went to Him in vain."

As if he had now said all that was necessary, and all he had to say on the subject, he turned again to Edward.

"I have been thinking much, Master Edward, since I saw you yesterday, how happy it will be for you, and for many you may come across in life, if you are enabled to exercise the same benevolent disposition that you have manifested in your treatment of that Sanders family. I verily believe your persevering kindness toward them, under circumstances of peculiar harshness on their part, has been the means of lifting them out of a state that was as near ruin as need be. I do not allude merely to the act of your giving money — that was a great help and has had its effect; often, indeed, the destruction of the poor is their poverty, — but I allude more particularly to your kind manner, your gentlemanly deportment. Mrs. Sanders has told me all about it — I never saw a woman more ashamed of having been rude than she is; and the idea that Mrs. Bascom's son, the highest in the place, for wealth and respectability, should pay so much attention to her poor, almost outcast boy, has melted her all down, and more than that, in some way it has given a new tone to the character of the family — things are in a promising state there now, and Thompson and his wife have taken a new tack too; you have great reason to bless God who has given you a mother who has instilled into your mind the true principles of a gentleman: a true gentleman cannot be a bad man."

Mrs. Bascom now rose, and giving her hand to the gentleman, —

"I thank you most heartily for all the advice, and instruction you have given to my son and to me too. I trust it will not be lost; I mean to act upon it—but may I not hope to see you at my house? there are so many things I have to talk about."

"Yes, no doubt there are many things we could talk about, and many questions you would have to ask. It must seem very strange to you to meet me under present circumstances; but I believe God has brought me here by a way I never should have chosen myself. But the world and I have parted and I am content. I live here alone, and yet I am not alone. As to your kind invitation—on some accounts it would be gratifying to me, but I fear would result in pain rather than pleasure. I have no wish to recall the past. I have taken my lot among the poor and outcast. I do some good here. My wants are few, and I have enough to sustain myself in comfort. Thank you much for your invitation, and if I do not accept it, it need be no obstacle to your coming to see me, whenever you have the wish to do so, and your son too."

"I think Edward will hardly be willing to stay away from you long at a time, if not disagreeable to you."

"I should be glad to see him every day, and yourself too, as often as you may find it convenient."

As Edward took the gentleman's hand to say good-by, he looked up at him with great earnestness. "I do so want you to visit us!"

"I believe you do, my dear boy; but you can come here, and I promise you always a hearty welcome, and more than that—I wish you would come."

"Then, mamma," said Edward, after they had left the house, "you used to be intimate with Mr. Blydenburg?"

"Yes, my dear. He was a gay young man and was engaged to be married to an acquaintance of mine. She belonged to a wealthy family, and I believe, through the interference of friends, the match was broken off—it was after I removed to the country. I believe he was very fond of her, and perhaps his disappointment has been the cause of the great change in his life."

And now for the lunch! The stragglers are coming in, throwing themselves on the shawls that Mrs. Thompson has spread for them around the improvised table, which has been arranged out of boards raised a few inches from the ground, covered with a neat white cloth. Their bright eyes glisten with pleas-

ure, as the various good things are produced from the baskets and placed on the table. Never can food taste so good as under the free and easy circumstances of a lunch in a forest, after the excitement and exercise of a joyous ride, and the walking and talking and speaking and laughing of the merry outgush of pure young hearts, and the active movement of limbs untrammelled by conventional proprieties. Dresses are torn, hands are scratched, shoes have ripped, and locks of hair in a tangle; but each disaster only excites the merriment of all.

Mrs. Thompson has been very busy, and seems as full of life and enjoyment as any of them; it is a holiday for her too. But when all is arranged and the eating commences, Mary Bascom calls out,—

"Come, Mrs. Thompson, here is a place for you!"

"Oh! no, thank you. I'll just step to the house a moment. I'll be back soon to see if you want more water, or anything."

Edward, sprang up, and one of the boys with him, and taking her each by a hand, in spite of her opposition compelled her to take a station at the table.

"I am glad," said Mrs. Bascom, "to see that our boys have so much gallantry; it would be a fine business indeed, after all the trouble you have taken for *us*, that you should not share with us the good things you have arranged so nicely"

The young woman did not seem at all out of place, although she felt so; her pretty face none the less pleasing for the blushes that suffused it, made no unpleasant contrast with the best looking among them. Her confusion, however, was soon lost in the general good cheer, and the care taken by all that her plate was supplied with the best on the table. This mark of their kind feelings was little to them, but it was a great deal to her; it was another lift from her low estate, an addition to the stimulus her young heart had already received, and which she had so much needed. The prejudice derived from education was taken away; "circumstances alone made any distinction between herself and the favored children of fortune, and for that they were not to blame—their hearts were just as kindly as her own"

And now for the sail! Mrs. Bascom declined going with them, as she found Mr. Thompson was on hand to take charge of the boat.

"And remember," she said to him, "I appoint you captain over these young folks; you must keep them in order and bring them back within two hours."

"I'll obey you, madam, about the bringing on 'em back in time, but about t'other part, I guess there wont be no 'casion for my services."

Mrs. Bascom had taken quite an interest in the young woman. She seemed so very young to be married—not older than her Mary, and she had manifested such a desire to please, with no disposition to intrude or take liberties.

It took some time to clear up things, and stow away plates and cups and the et cetera that had been brought from home; all but the sandwiches and pies and cake that remained beyond what was needed—these she compelled Mrs. Thompson to carry home.

"And I am going with you," she said, "to rest a while until they return"

"Oh! I'm so glad," was the reply.

"I guess you ain't much used," Mrs. Thompson said, as she handed a chair to her guest, "to see things lookin' so; but I'm in hopes we shall do better after a while. Thompson has left the ferry, and he ain't touched a drop of anything since; and he's to work like anything on the farm now, and he seems as chirp again and good-natured as he was when he worked to the ferry; and he's promised Daddy Jack that he wont never drink another drop of liquor, and he says home seems as pleasant agin to him as it ever did. You see that money Mr. Edward gi'n me—bless his dear soul—I took and bought ever so many things with it. I got a nice cloth to cover the table, and some nice cups and saucers, and a pretty teapot, and that pair of handirons—we hadn't only bricks afore to put the wood on. And those shoes, too, I bought. And Thompson was real pleased when he come home and see how things looked. But there's many things I mean to git yet, just as soon as I can earn the money."

"What way have you of earning money?"

"Why, mostly by knittin'; but I'm going to look for some sewin'."

"Can you show me some of your sewing?"

"Yes, ma'am; here's the table-cloth I told you about," opening a drawer and taking it out.

"Very neatly done, very neatly, indeed. I have some work of this kind I should like to have done."

"Oh, dear, how glad I should be to do it. I'd do my very best, and I wouldn't charge a cent for it—you have been so good to us."

"I am sure, my child, I don't know what I have done for you only to cause you a good deal of trouble—I and my company to-day."

"Oh, yes, you have *done* for me. Ain't Mr. Edward given me ever so much, and then ain't you come here, and all of 'em treated me jist as if we were *as good as other folks*, and"—The tears had come; she wiped them away with her apron, but her feelings were so wrought up she could not speak. Mrs. Bascom was silent a moment—a new lesson was being taught to her; she now saw what she had never thought of before—that the position in which under the Providence of God she had been placed, was in *itself a power*. Her independent circumstances, her education, her standing in society, all combined to invest her with an influence of greater moment than the mere imparting of physical aid. This young woman was more deeply touched by the attention she had received; by the *fellow-feeling* manifested for her by those in a higher sphere of life, than by the material aid which had been afforded.

"Well, my child," said Mrs. Bascom after some moments' silence, "I should have been ashamed of my young folks if they had been remiss in their attention to you, after all the civility you manifested and the pains you have taken to make things pleasant for them; but I am very glad an opportunity has been afforded me of becoming acquainted with you; and it may be we can help one another. You are just begining life, and are ambitious, I see, to have things comfortable about you; and it is right you should, for your husband's sake as well as your own. Now perhaps I can find many things in my house that are of no use to me, but may be to you—such as carpets which have been used, but are whole, and chairs and other things; and if you would not feel hurt by my offering them to you, I would gladly let you have them."

"Oh, dear! you are too good! and I'll sew for you or do anything."

"You know sometimes people do not like to receive presents from those who are supposed to have more means than themselves."

"Yes, ma'am, I know that; but it's more in the way it's gi'n. Now I wouldn't never have touched that money Mr. Edward gi'n me, if it had been some people; but he wasn't proud and distant like—he was pleasant mannered and spoke so feelin'. Why the tears was 'most in his eyes; he had a true feelin', jist as if I were one of his kind, and as good as

any one. I could have kissed the shoes on his feet. It ain't the money—it's the treatment, what goes to the heart," and again the tears had to be wiped.

"I can enter into your feelings, my child, and am very glad to have this conversation with you; and if you will let me be your friend, perhaps there are many ways in which I can help you, and it will make me very happy to do so."

The young woman looked at her while she was thus offering her friendship.

"Oh!" said she, "it's too good! I've never had a living soul to speak so to me. Ma'am was always blaming me, and finding fault about everything, and never told me what was right to do. I'm sure I want to do right! but it's too much to ask such as you to take the trouble to tell me; but, oh! I would take it so to heart.

"I believe you are ambitious to do the best you can; you must keep up a good heart. I can get you as much sewing as you can do; and when you go to see your mother, run up to my house, and we will try to treat you as civilly as you have treated us; and if you want any advice or any help that I can give you, speak freely always as to a friend."

"Oh! it's too good! it makes me so happy, I can't tell it. This is the blessedest day I've ever seen in all my life. I'll pray the good Lord to bless you every night and morning, so I will."

"I shall be glad of your prayers, my child, for I need them; and it rejoices me to hear that you do pray."

"Oh! yes, ma'am, I do try to; but sometimes it doesn't seem to do any good; things have been so bad, it didn't seem no use a-trying to be good. But oh, dear, I feel so chirp now—it will be right good to do it."

"And now you must let me make a little compensation to you for all the trouble you have taken for us to-day, and for your time, also."

"Oh, please don't," seeing Mrs. Bascom take out her purse; "please don't speak about sich a thing; I am paid a'ready ten times over."

"You know, though, that I am to be your friend; and you are to let me help you. And besides, I shall feel that I have not dealt justly by you. I am well assured you have not done what you have for pay you have done it out of good-will; and you must take this as a token of good-will from me—we will say nothing about its being for pay. And now I must say

good-by, for I see the young folks are coming," and Mrs. Bascom extended her hand. The young girl seized it, and pressed it to her lips; and as Mrs. Bascom felt the warm tears dripping on it, she was deeply affected. She leaned forward and pressed her own lips on the fair forehead of her companion. It was something beyond all that the good lady had done yet; the girl caught her arm, hugged it close, pressing kiss after kiss upon it.

"Oh, dear! I wish I could be with you always. Mayn't I love you?"

"Oh, yes; as much as you can."

Mrs. Bascom had seen many happy days; but never had she experienced such lightness of heart as during that ride home; and well she might, for she has thrown light and comfort into the heart of a young child of sorrow—lifted her out of her low estate, given a spring to her whole being, and left the blooming flower *hope* there, to cheer and stimulate her efforts amid life's hard tasks. Oh, dear reader! if fortune has smiled upon you, amid the rich pleasures in which your heart is revelling, think of the many around whom unfavorable circumstances have built a hedge that is shutting them from all the pleasant things of life, pining for human sympathy and obliged to plod on without means and without hope. They are not far from you; a little searching will find them; a little aid will cheer them; a look, a word of kindness, may reach their chilled heart, and warm it into gladness and give energy and life to their now hopeless efforts. Go—go, quickly, and do likewise.

"Oh, Maggie, here is a letter for you," said Edward, as he rode up to the piazza on which the girls were assembled after their return.

"Thank you, thank you! where did you get it?"

"Why, you know I left you at the cross-roads; I thought I would run down and see how William was to-day, and Mrs. Sanders handed me this letter."

Maggie looked at it a moment, pressed it to her lips, and then ran into her room. She knew it was from her brother, and she wished to be alone when she read it; and although much of the information it gave is already known to the reader, yet it may be well for other reasons to unfold its contents.

"MY DEAREST MAGGIE:

"I cannot tell you how very sad I felt when I parted from

you and left you among strangers, but I saw no help for it. I dared not take you with me to the city, which plan I had in my mind when we left uncle's. I knew it might be difficult for me to find a situation in the city, and the board there would be high, and if I should fail in getting a place, my money would soon be gone, and then what should we do! I was glad, however, that I had paid your board for two months, and was able to leave you enough to pay for two months more; it did not leave me much, however, to sustain me in the city, and I had out of it to pay the expense of getting my trunk to the city from the place where I had been living; and as it was an out-of-the-way place, it cost me over two dollars; that was the reason I did not take you there—it was so far from the city, and no stage nor any other direct communication with New York; but where you now are I can get to you and you can get to me direct by boat or stage.

“Well now, for the news. I have got an excellent place. I get my board free and one hundred dollars besides, a year; and if I suit, shall get more next year. I live in the gentleman's family—a Mr. Chauncey. They are excellent people, and I have a nice room and every comfort I can desire, and I do my best to please; that is, I try my best to do what is right. I feel as if I was working under God. I feel that if I do what is pleasing to Him, He will take care of me and you too. It seems to me that God provided this place for me. The night before I got it, I felt clear down; I had tried for three weeks, but to no purpose. I had but five dollars left; in my trouble I threw myself upon God and asked what should I do—should I go to sea or go back and work on a farm? I thought maybe the first would be best; but how could I leave my dear Maggie! So I concluded I would go up and see you, and perhaps could get a place on a farm near you. Well, the next day, when on my way to inquire when the boat sailed for your place, it come into my head all at once, as I heard a man asking some negroes to help him do a job and they declining, I asked could not I serve his turn; he looked at me a moment and then said, ‘You don't look as if you'd been used to work; you look more as if you should be at a desk.’ I told him I had been looking in vain for such a place, but would be glad of anything to do to get a living. ‘Come along,’ he said, ‘then I'll give you a job.’ After the work was done, I was called into the office; and after many questions were asked, the gentleman offered me the place on the terms I have mentioned. Wasn't I happy then!

“Now all that troubles me is, that you, dear Maggie, are not as comfortable as I am, and at present I can do nothing as to getting you boarded here. How is it with you? write to me at once and let me know. They seemed to be decent people; but I had some suspicion that the man took more liquor than was good for him. I did not notice it until after I had paid the money in advance for your board. Oh, it is a sad thing to be left as we have been! but let us trust in God; maybe all will be best for us in the end. If you, dear, was only comfortable, I should not care for myself. I hope you read the books I left you, especially that history, and your Bible; and that you write every day to improve your hand; keep on with your grammar and arithmetic. Take some of the money I left you, dear, to get clothes. I have made a close calculation how we are to get along, and I know I can make out to pay your board, and a little over. I shall not want any clothes for a good while. Oh, is it not good to feel that we can pay our own way, and that no friends can twit us for being dependent on them! and you never shall be, dear Maggie, if God gives me strength to work; all I want is to make you comfortable, and see you growing up as our dear parents could have wished. But I want to hear from you at once, all about how you are situated. Direct to John Street

“Good-by, my dear, dear Maggie. God bless you.

“From your loving brother,

“JAMES BELLFIELD.”

After Maggie had read this letter, she was sitting thinking over its contents, shedding a few tears over the fact that she must for some time yet be separated from her dear James, and yet happy in the thought that he had procured a good situation, when a gentle tap at the door aroused her and she sprang at once to open it.

“I heard, my dear,” said Mrs. Bascom, “that you had received a letter from your brother, and I felt anxious to know whether he had succeeded in getting a situation.”

“Oh, yes, ma'am. Please read the letter, and then you will know all about him.”

“Do you really wish that I should read it, dear?”

“By all means; I have nothing but I wish you to know.”

“All your heart too, Maggie!” at the same time kissing the sweet girl as she looked up at her with such perfect confidence imprinted on her countenance.

"Yes, all my heart, if I could show it to you."

"Thank you, dear; well, I will read it, since it is your wish."

As Mrs. Bascom perused the precious document — precious to the dear girl beside her — she was deeply interested and even much affected. The simple out-breathing of brotherly love touched her heart; and then the fact of these two young orphans, thus struggling together to maintain themselves independently of foreign aid, together with the manly bearing of the brother, who joyfully would take the whole burden on himself, and seemed to regard his sister's comfort as of paramount importance to his own, excited in her breast strong emotions of respect and sympathy. After she had carefully read it through, she said,—

"Maggie, my dear, this brother of yours is a noble fellow. I do not wonder that you love him so."

Maggie threw her arms around the neck of Mrs. Bascom, and leaned her head upon the shoulder of her kind friend.

"I only wish you could see him; I wish you knew him," she said.

"I think I know him, dear; this letter has unfolded his character, and a beautiful one it is, and I shall hope yet to see him likewise."

A few moments neither spoke.

"Take a seat here by me, Maggie," at length Mrs. Bascom said. "I want to have a talk with you. You know, my dear, that both my daughters, Mary and Julia, are soon to leave me for their boarding-school; Edward, too, will be away, and I shall be entirely alone; now how would you like it if I propose to you to remain here with me, and be my little companion; would it be too lonely for you?"

"What, lonely with you! Oh, dear, I could never be lonely where you was, if there wasn't anybody else in the world only you and James too, but —"

As Maggie seemed to hesitate, Mrs. Bascom asked,—

"Are you thinking, my dear, how Mrs. Sanders might like your leaving there?"

"Well, I don't know how that might be; I was not thinking about that, but I suppose I ought to have thought about it; but you know I must try and save all I can, and if I board here it would cost a good deal more."

Mrs. Bascom smiled as she made answer,—

"But, my dear, while I am glad to know that you wish to pay your own way, yet my proposition is made to you with-

out any idea of your paying anything. I want you to be my little companion, or rather my little daughter; I think we could be quite happy together; do you not?"

"And would you let me help you, just as Mary does, and would you tell me when I did anything wrong, just as you do Mary and Julia?"

"Yes, my dear," and Mrs. Bascom put her arm around and drew her close to her breast; "yes, I will, and I will watch over you, and care for you just as I do for them; and please God we may live long together and never part until you go to some home of your own that God may appoint for you. You once told me I reminded you of your own dear mother, and you asked if you might love me! and my heart embraced you then, dear Maggie, and I will try to do for you as your own dear mother would."

Maggie could not speak, but her silent tears and the utter abandonment with which she yielded to the embrace of her loving friend was a sufficient testimony that this covenant was ratified by her whole heart.

This act on the part of Mrs. Bascom was not a sudden impulse. It is true that she was suddenly drawn to the child at their interview in the garden, but since then she had been considering the subject in all its relations, both in regard to the object of her interest and her own duty. This young girl was at an age when a mother's care was greatly needed; no one seemed so called upon to take this place as herself, her independent circumstances, her love for her, and the attachment of Maggie to herself, all combined to influence her in making the proposal, and in addition to these, were the new views which had within a short time opened to her, and the new feelings which had been aroused to action. She had as yet only lived for herself; as a wife and mother she had been faithful and affectionate; not doing all she now saw that she ought to have done, even in that circle of interest; but never reaching beyond it for objects of care or love. She now began to feel the responsibility of her station in life, and the experience of that very day had shown her how much she might do, and how much there was to be done, and that beyond the confines of home there was a wide field for the exercise of that charity "which suffereth long and is kind," and that her responsibility was as unbounded as the want and suffering of humanity and her power to alleviate. "How knowest thou but thou hast

come to the kingdom for such a time as this!" had now a voice that sounded in her ear with deep emphasis.

This motherless orphan thus providentially thrown in her way, with her loving, confiding heart, not only interested the warm maternal feelings, but those kindred sensibilities called into action by the incipient working of divine grace.

CHAPTER XVII.

SAMUEL TINKHAM was a good-looking young man — rather a soft expression to his countenance, a sort of feminine affability of manner, and an apparent desire to have you think well of him. This had been his peculiarity from a boy, apparently an inordinate desire to please.

While living in the family of Mr. Chauncey no one could have been more attentive to all the rules of the family nor more ready to comply with every request; and in the office he manifested unwearied zeal in all the details of business, and untiring efforts to make himself useful.

These qualities were such as took a strong hold of the unsuspecting mind of his employer; and as his assiduous attention to all the details of business was a great relief to the former, it is not surprising that he should have soon after the young man had reached maturity associated him as a partner.

Mr. Chauncey was a good business man, thoroughly acquainted with the trade in which he was engaged, which was more particularly that of the West India traffic. The business was not large as estimated by the gauge of the present day; but was safe and steady, and as the gentleman lived in a plain, unostentatious way, he had at the time our story embraces, accumulated what was then esteemed an independent fortune. He had no notes out, and always a good balance in bank.

He was not, however, a shrewd man in estimating character; he did not pretend to look deeper than the surface; if a man was up to his engagements, prompt at his work, and of regular, prudent habits, that was enough; he estimated diligence and prudence as marks of a reliable character.

Having made his own way in life, he had acquired a strong

confidence in his own opinion and judgment. Somewhat tenacious and sensitive on those points, and rather too open to flattery on their account, and yet by no means prejudiced unreasonably against those who might differ with him, still very likely to think too highly of one who appeared to consider his views as right and wise, he was kind-hearted and forbearing, and very much disposed to help forward those who were new beginners, provided that he saw in them what he thought to be elements of success.

Young Tinkham had from the first laid himself out to please — not from a sense of gratitude to the man who had given him a berth in his office, and a home under his roof, nor from a principle of duty; his mind was intent alone on his own interest. "Do your best to please your employer, humor his prejudices — get the right side of him, and you will make your fortune," were the instructions he received from his father on leaving his home in the country to enter the service of Mr. Chauncey. And he had throughout his course hitherto acted upon this principle. And thus far he had prospered — he did gain the good-will of his employer and of his wife also, and was now in a situation that warranted an expectation of the fortune he had been laboring to win.

But his desire to please went not beyond his own personal interest; to outsiders he was civil, but not too ready to suffer any inconvenience for their sake; and as all base passions (and no meaner one can be named than selfishness) are indulged, their intensity is increased — so had the subject in review become not only sensibly alive to every influence that might possibly interfere with his present interest, but reaching forward to grasp all future possibilities.

Poor Tom Hendricks had not indeed acted wisely, and was not far wrong when he called himself a "darned fool," and he had lost the confidence of his uncle; but this was no cause of regret on the part of his uncle's business associate; it must rather be said, it was a gratification; nor was any pains taken to mitigate his peculiarities, or sway the mind of Mr. Chauncey in his favor.

Tom in some things was not a fool — he had formed a just estimate of Mr. Tinkham, and could have given James such proofs of the peculiarities of the junior partner as would have startled him, if James had not positively forbidden him to canvass in his presence the character of one under whom he was serving. He had indeed thrown out strong hints, but they

were lost upon his listener as merely the effect of prejudices aroused by disappointed expectations.

Tom had also a whim in his head that had originated from some few straws in the wind which had of late attracted his notice, and it was nothing less than this, — that Tinkham was intent upon getting himself into a nearer relation to his uncle than that of junior partner; and it is not at all unlikely that Tom's whim was a correct idea. Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey, as the reader may remember, had now an only child, a daughter. She was at present and had been for some time, except for short intervals, away from home at school. She was a fine girl, and would from all appearance make not only a very handsome woman, but from the qualities of heart and mind which she exhibited, gave promise of future excellence. In addition to all this, she was an only child, the darling of her parents, and peculiarly dear to them now since the death of their son had left them but this one object upon which they could rest their affection and their hopes. She would be an heiress too, of no small amount of wealth. It would therefore be a very nice thing for a junior partner to ally himself to his senior, by a tie that would not only secure an extension of the term of partnership, which was limited, but absorb in the end the whole business and its large accumulations.

The young lady was at present only in her fifteenth year, and of course no serious advances could be made beyond little friendly attentions and the manifestation of such interest in a child of parents who had done so much for him, and of whose confidence he was so well assured.

Tom had noticed that when his cousin Leonora was last at home, the junior partner was a very frequent visitor at his uncle's, and was very solicitous to make her vacation pleasant by waiting upon her to places of amusement, and in many little ways manifesting a desire to add his mite to her enjoyment of home. He had also overheard some conversation between his uncle and the said junior, in which the latter earnestly argued in favor of letting the young lady have the privilege of a year more at least of being at boarding-school; her father anxious for the society of his daughter, being of opinion that home was the best place for her. And Tom readily believed, so suspicious was he, that motives of self-interest alone could operate in any advice Mr. Tinkham gave — that the latter wished to keep her away from the circle of youngsters who were but

too ready to wait upon their sisters in their calls at Mr. Chauncey's when she was there.

Tom probably was not far out of the way in his surmise.

One day, while James was writing at his desk, a servant entered the office with a request from Mrs. Chauncey, that if he could be spared, a lady at her house wished to see him.

At hearing the request, James at once looked at Mr. Chauncey, as if awaiting a reply to the message.

"Yes, go, my boy, by all means."

On entering the parlor, Mrs. Chauncey arose, and taking his hand led him to a lady by whom she had been seated.

"This lady is Mrs. Bascom, James, with whom you have been corresponding. She is an old friend of mine."

The lady received him most cordially.

"You cannot think," she said, "how much pleasure it gives me to see you and take you by the hand; your letters have given me a very high opinion of you, and the report of you by my friend here, I am happy to say, confirms me in my judgment. Please be seated, for I have come to town on purpose to have a talk with you."

As James took a seat he replied, —

"I have been much afraid, Mrs. Bascom, that I must appear very ungrateful to you. It may seem so; but if you knew all that I have suffered from a condition of dependence, you would not wonder that I wish to keep my little sister free from any reliance but on my own exertions."

"I do not wonder, my dear boy; excuse my familiarity, but you have made me love you — your noble feeling in wishing to support yourself and your dear sister excites my warmest admiration, and I would not, for any consideration, do anything to blunt that feeling; but I have sought this interview for the purpose of unfolding more fully than I could by letter my own feelings, and also some reasons that may set your mind at rest on the subject; and moreover, I had a suspicion that Mrs. Chauncey here, of whom you speak so highly in your letters to your sister, was one with whom I was once intimate, and if so, you would no doubt feel more assured if she could speak a good word for me."

"Oh, Mrs. Bascom, I assure you I have perfect confidence in your kindness; you are very kind; it was not that —"

James paused; his feelings were beginning to be much excited.

"I will tell you, James," interposed Mrs. Chauncey. "I have

had a long talk with Mrs. Bascom; we both admire the manly views you have, and we enter into your feelings; but we both know as you cannot, how very desirable it is that your dear sister should have a *mother*, and I am sure I feel as if it was a most merciful dispensation of Divine providence that the heart of this dear good lady has been so drawn towards your sister, that she wants to protect and guide her with the same care and love she exercises towards her own children. She really loves your sister, and your sister loves her."

James had been sitting with covered face, while Mrs. Chauncey had been speaking; the moment she paused he rose and presented his hand to Mrs. Bascom.

"You will forgive the apparent coldness of my letters. I am grateful to you. I feel that it is a great mercy that you are willing to —" but he could go no further. Mrs. Bascom rose and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"My dear boy, I have nothing to forgive; and here in the presence of this good friend of yours, and in the presence of our Great Friend above, I pledge myself to be a true friend to your dear sister, and to you, if you will let me, and I will try as far as in me lies to take the place of the mother you have lost."

"I thank you from my heart, and I thank God too."

"Let us, then, seal this covenant with a kiss," she said, embracing him. "And I may tell Maggie that we have your hearty assent."

"Yes, and my ardent wish that she will be an obedient, loving child, and prove her gratitude to so great a benefactor. I *do* feel your kindness — I *do* thank you; I had not thought of it before, but it will be a great thing, I know it will, for Maggie to have a m——" he could not speak the word so precious to his memory.

"And I know well," Mrs. Bascom responded, "yours has been one of no ordinary character. Cherish her memory, my dear boy, and may her mantle fall on me;" and after a moment's pause, "and you will come up and spend your vacation with us, whenever that may be?"

"I have not thought about any vacation —"

"Oh, yes, James," interposed Mrs. Chauncey, "Mr. Chauncey always gives his clerks a vacation; that will be delightful for you."

"It would be very pleasant, indeed!" James replied, and then with both hands grasping the hands of Mrs. Bascom, and

looking full in her face with an expression of gratitude and confidence, without speaking, took his leave.

"No common youth that," said Mrs. Bascom, after James had left. "What an expressive eye! I could read his heart as he grasped my hand to say good-by; words were not needed to tell what he felt."

"We think a great deal of him; and Mr. Chauncey thinks he has in some way had a most happy influence on a young man a nephew of ours, who is in the office; he was not very promising, and Mr. Chauncey thought at times he must turn him off, but he seems of late to be very much changed for the better."

"Such a brother as that will be a blessing in any relation of life; 'a good brother and a good son,' you know what the saying is."

"Yes, I know, and I believe in it."

Mrs. Chauncey thought lightly of the question at the time, and of the reply she made to it — the time may come when her faith in the proverb may be tested.

"Mr. James," said Tim O'Connor one morning as he came into the office and took a seat (Tim never ventured on such a liberty except when James happened to be alone), "can you tell me what's come over Mr. Tom of late?"

"In what way, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Well, faith, in many ways. You know I got him a new boarding place?"

"I knew he had a new boarding place, but I was not aware you had procured it for him."

"Faith and I did, and I'll jist tell you how it was. It was jist as Mr. Tom was a-goin' out towards eve, and he comes to where I was sitting on a sugar hogshead. 'Tim,' says he, 'do you know of a nice dacint place I could git to board in a private house?' — Says I, 'Mr. Tom, what fur do you lave the place you've got; sure it's dacint as can be.' — 'Yes,' says he, 'I know that, but I want to get where the fellows can't be running after me.' — 'What fellows?' says I. — 'Why,' says he, 'darn it all, Tim, I've been a great fool.' — 'Well, asking your pardon,' says I, and it's my opinion you bean't far out of the way about that, but how is changing the place to be any betterment?' — 'Tim,' says he, 'I tell you I want to cover my tracks, and git away from the fellows; if I don't, they'll lead me to the deil altogether.' — 'Ah, ah!' says I, if they're a-doin' the like a' that, then sure as my name's Tim O'Connor, I'll be after helpin' you,

my boy.' And so I spake to the folks, and he's there now, but what's brought it about, that he should take such a turn, is a mystery to me; and don't you remark he's no that grum and jerky as he used to be? Faith and it's been a wonderment to me how the boss had the patience to bear with him; but Mr. Tom has a bitter grudge agin' the young boss, and its my opinion there'll be trouble on that score yet; do you no think Mr. James, that there's some folks as has two sides to 'em?"

"I believe there are such people."

"Yes, and it's my guess there's them that ain't far off that can be blarney enough to them that they think can be of sarvice to them, and grouty and ill-mannered and overbearing to them as they have the upper hand on."

"You don't think Mr. Tom has two sides to him?"

"Mr. Tom! no, no, he ain't no cunning to do that; he's outspoken maybe, and rarein' at times, but he's no double-faced, is Mr. Tom, and his ways is wusser as his heart. No, no, I ain't nothin' agin' Mr. Tom, only awhile since I was feared he was goin' to the bad as I telled you, but gin he's comed round and like to do well, it's real glad I am; it's no of him I was thinkin'."

As Mr. O'Connor found that James did not seem by any means anxious to know who it was he had in his mind, and as James began to busy himself at his desk, he thought best to drop the subject, and with a "God bless you, my boy!" he rose and left the office.

We must now pass over to the latter part of the month of July. Nora was coming home, and the day she was expected appeared to be a jubilee in the family, and great preparations had been made in the way of cake and flowers for her reception. Mr. Tinkham had called in the morning and left a beautiful bouquet with a little note of welcome attached to it. Mr. Chauncey was more than usually restless and seemed to have something peculiarly hard to chew upon all day.

James sympathized in the happiness of the family, but it was no special matter of interest to him personally; if they had been expecting a son instead of a daughter, he would perhaps have had his curiosity more excited, and perhaps indulged a hope of forming a pleasant acquaintance; he had not since he had been in the city manifested any particular interest in young ladies' society, and Miss Louise often rallied him on the subject. To her he was very polite, and ever ready to wait upon her; and she seemed very happy in his

company, and would evidently have been pleased to feel that he was happy in hers. James had never forgotten the little friend of his, with whom he had passed keepsakes. Since he had come to the city he had kept his safely wrapped up in his trunk, not even wearing it on Sundays; once alone he put it on, and, that was when he accompanied Miss Louise to an evening party. Louise noticed it and asked him why he did not wear it always.

"Why, because," was his reply, "I do not wish to wear trinkets in the office; and besides, in working I might injure or destroy it."

"You value it highly, then?"

"I do; it was given me as a token of friendship."

Whether he should ever see the giver again he doubted; she was to be two years away at school, and he knew that two years might be long enough to erase from her mind all thoughts of him. Still her image was never for long absent from his mind, and every word she had spoken and every kind look she had given him were at times fondly dwelt upon.

He had looked into the directory but could find no name of Chauncey as, living in the street she had named to him, and once he asked Mrs. Chauncey,—

"Have you relatives living in the city of the same name?"

"No," was the reply; "there are a good many of the same name, but not related to us; Mr. Chauncey is from Connecticut; his relatives are there."

Mr. Tinkham came into the office that morning with more than usual animation and an unusually pleasant manner, and even addressed Tom.

"Well, Tom, how are you?"

Tom looked at him a moment before replying.

"I am well—what makes you ask?"

"Oh, I suppose there is no harm in a civil question?"

"No harm, but rather unusual."

As Mr. Chauncey entered and took his seat to look over the paper, the junior partner remarked,—

"I am commissioned by Mrs. Chauncey to wait upon Miss Nora up from the boat; I feel quite honored."

"Oh, well, I was going for her myself, but it makes no difference; you can go, if it's Mrs. Chauncey's wish."

It was not any special request on the part of Mrs. Chauncey either, but as Mr. Tinkham had been so kind as to bring a bouquet in honor of the occasion, and as he made the request

that he might have a part in contributing to their pleasure by escorting her to her home, of course Mrs. Chauncey could not but consent that he should do so, and thus gratify his desire to please his benefactors.

When Mr. Tinkham thus made known his commission to his senior partner, Tom turned an expressive glance at James, as much as to say,—

“Remember what I told you — darn him!”

The boat was to arrive at about six o'clock, and Mr. Tinkham was on the dock with a carriage in waiting a full half-hour before her arrival. Never did he appear in such a happy frame of mind as when he entered the house with this treasure of her parents' hearts; he was all complaisance, and seemed overflowing with sympathetic joy.

“Sammy, you'll stay to tea with us to-night,” said Mr. Chauncey.

And Sammy was very willing to stay, and to spend the evening too; but in the midst of all Sammy's glee there would at times come a cloud over his mind, and it might have been witnessed in his countenance had any one noticed it. Nora had not only grown a little in stature, but her beauty was developing. She would attract notice; admirers would be flocking round; when a year or two older, he could not expect to pluck this flower without an effort; and then again the cloud would pass off. “I have the confidence of her parents; they like me; and surely she can't object to my looks! and I mean to get her good-will at any rate before she goes back to school again. I am almost sorry, though, she is so good looking.”

“I wonder why James don't come to supper,” said Mr. Chauncey.

“He will be here soon, I guess,” replied Mrs. Chauncey, “he is generally so punctual — there he has come now.”

As James entered the room he made a slight obeisance to the company, who, some standing, and some seated, had arisen from the table.

“I must introduce you to our daughter,” said Mrs. Chauncey, taking James by the arm, and leading him up towards her. She was at the time occupied in admiring the bouquet which Mr. Tinkham had called her attention to. Hearing her name mentioned she turned suddenly round, and approaching James and looking intently at him a moment, put out her hand, which he took, saying as he saw her smile,—

“I cannot be mistaken! — Miss Lucy, is it not?”

“Have I changed so much?” replied Lucy.

“Oh, no, but the name!” turning to Mrs. Chauncey. “I understood you expected your daughter Nora.”

“You must know, mamma, that the girls at school at C—— would call me Lucy, and I went by that name all the time I was there.”

“Her name,” said Mrs. Chauncey “is Lucy Leonora. We prefer for special reasons the last name, and have abridged that.”

The effect of this scene was different on the several persons present; that both parties were deeply moved, all could see. James taking his seat at the table and Mrs. Chauncey after pouring out his tea, turning her eye occasionally at her daughter, and then at James; what were her thoughts it would be hard to guess. That something affected Nora, she could plainly perceive, and James was remarkably silent, with an expression of seriousness on his countenance; he was generally bright and cheerful. Miss Louise was quite restless; she did not know what to think of things. Sammy was very still and seemed absorbed in thought; while Mr. Chauncey, without noticing anybody, was busy with the “Evening Post.”

After James had finished his supper, which was a very light one that evening, he stepped up to Mrs. Chauncey, who was just then in another part of the room, about to ring for the servant.

“Have you any errand this evening, Mrs. Chauncey?”

“No, James, nothing that I think of; you are not going away?”

“I will apologize to Miss Nora; but if you will excuse me a while, I should like to go down to the office again.”

“Certainly; but come back as soon as you can.”

James then stepped up to Miss Nora.

“I must ask you to pardon my apparent incivility in not congratulating you on your return to your home. I was so utterly surprised, my senses seemed to have left me, but I do most heartily sympathize with you and your friends in this happy meeting.”

“I was full as much surprised as yourself, and ought to ask pardon of you for not telling you how very very glad I was to find you had got *such a place* ;” and she smiled as she emphasized in a marked manner the last word; but I want to know all about it; it seems so strange.”

“I shall be happy to tell you at some future time. Is there anything I can do for you this evening?” turning to Louise,

who was sitting close beside her cousin, holding one of her hands upon her lap.

"Yes, there is. Just get a chair and come sit down here, and let me hear all about things — where you two have met, and all about it."

"Miss Lucy — excuse me, Miss Nora, I mean, can tell you all about it; and that reminds me that I have to apologize to you for leaving this evening. You will excuse me?" bowing to Nora.

"Certainly, if you *must* go."

James could not honestly say that there was an imperative necessity for his going, so he made no reply other than a slight obeisance, and then left the room.

"Mamma," said Nora, "how strange it is!"

"What, my dear?" Mrs. Chauncey was then talking to Sammy, who, as James left the room, had hitched his seat nearer the sofa.

"Why you will remember my telling you last winter when I was home about an accident that happened while I was visiting at Mrs. Lansing's; how the carriage and horses were thrown down a precipice and the young gentleman who was riding with us seized the reins of the horses, when the driver got frightened and jumped out, and how at the risk of his own life he held the horses up until we all got out, and how he was carried down with them when they fell. Oh, dear, it makes me shudder now, when I think of it; it is such a wonder he was not killed!"

"You don't tell me, my dear, it was James!"

"Yes!" Poor Nora was so excited at recalling the scene, she could say nothing further.

"I don't wonder, my dear," said her mother, "that you and James seemed to feel so much when you met this evening; that explains it; and his seeing you has recalled that scene, and made him look so sober. I shall think more of him than ever."

"Please, mamma, you will not say anything to him about it; I fear he may not like that I have mentioned it. He wouldn't let Mrs. Lansing speak of it; he said any one in his place would have done the same thing, rather than let us be hurt; and then you know the next day I left and did not know that I should ever see him again; only he told me he intended coming to the city to look for a place."

"I should have thought you would have told him where we lived."

"I did, mamma, but only think! we lived in Liberty Street then. I directed him to Liberty Street; I wonder if she has inquired there!"

"I should not be surprised if he had; I remember one day he asked me if we had relatives living in the city of the same name. I wondered then what made him ask; our calling you always Nora when we spoke of you, has of course made him think you belonged to some other family of the same name; I have no doubt he has been trying to find you."

James had no special business to call him away that evening, but he wanted to be alone, and thought it would not answer to retire to his room, as his absence then might give occasion for remark; and yet when he stepped up to Nora to make his apology for leaving, her manner was so cordial, and the look she fixed upon him so reminded him of past scenes between them, that he almost regretted he had said anything about leaving. And when he reached the office it was as impossible to do anything with his thoughts as if he had remained in the company. The poor fellow had been troubled with an idea — and perhaps more than one — that came upon him while he was holding the hand of Nora, and getting assured of the fact that the Lucy who had never been out of his mind for many hours of any twenty-four he had lived since their first parting and Nora were one; and he thought he saw reasons why it would be best for his peace of mind, and his interest too, that the fancy he had indulged for her and which by indulgence had become something more than fancy, must be put away — killed at once — and she must be to him nothing nearer than any other member of that family, or any other young lady of his acquaintance. But he soon found that reason was one thing, and love was another; and the latter by no means ready to yield her sway to reason, or anything else; and for once he found his strength of resolution, which had carried him through many tough places, deficient here. It would be a useless chase to attempt following his round of arguments; he landed just where he started, only a little more confused in his thoughts, and his resolution — nowhere. He was about starting for John Street again, when who should come in but Mr. Thomas Hendricks, looking very much mystified.

"What are you doing here, old chap!"

"Nothing just now; I was about going up to the house."

"Well, all I can say is you're a queer chick! What under the moon are you doing here in this old office all alone, when they are all as lively as crickets up at the house? all but Tinkham, and he's clear down in the mouth about something."

"Have you been there?"

"Yes, I thought I must call and see Nora — and a pretty little coz she is; but why, old boy, have you never told me that you knew her? I begin to think you are a little on the sly."

"How could I have known that Miss Lucy Chauncey and your Cousin Nora were the same?"

"And you never told me about that head-over-heels scrape of yours down that hill!"

"Pshaw! have they been telling that?"

"Yes, and I tell you what, my boy, it seems to stick in Nora's crop; her face was as red as a turkey's comb when aunt was telling me about it. Why, Jem, you and Nora would make a grand match, come to think of it; you'd cut out Tinkham; he wouldn't stand a chance alongside of you; but there would be the old Sancho to pay."

"Mr. Hendricks, please stop; if you have any regard for me you will never mention such a thing again."

"Why not, old fellow? you needn't look so glum about it; she's A No. 1, and you are as good as she is any day; you just pitch in, I'll back you up — but where are you going?"

"Going home."

"No, you don't!" catching him by the arm, "not looking mad as you do now! Come, sit down, I want to tell you something; come here on purpose — you see they told me you was down here, and so I got off as soon as I could. What do you think! Uncle is going to send me to St. Croix!"

"Oh, I am so glad!"

"Want to get rid of me, hey!"

"You know better than that; but it is just what I knew your uncle wanted to do for you."

"Well, I may thank you for it; that was a hard dose you prescribed for me, but I took it, and I tell you what, if I didn't see the tears in uncle's eyes! Bellfield, I shall feel to you as I never felt towards any one in my life? you've done more for me than father or mother, or —"

"Don't talk so."

"You must let me talk, I can't hold in; when you first came to this office, I was as near going to the — going to ruin, body and soul, as a young man ever was. I almost hated you at

first, but I soon began to see into you; it's no matter what you did, or what you said, but as there is truth in me I say it now to your face, and I have told uncle of it, too, that you have been the means of changing my whole life; and I don't tell it to flatter you, but it is right you should know it."

James could make no reply, his heart was full; he did not feel flattered, nor in anywise lifted up; but the idea that he had been made an instrument of good to one human being filled him not only with joy, but with a feeling of gratitude to God — it was too good!

"And now," Tom continued, "I will tell you what I set out to do. Uncle wishes me now to take hold of outdoor business, to see to the buying of outward bound cargoes, and also to make myself acquainted with the different grades of sugars and molasses, and keep well posted about the markets, and I mean to; I'm going to throw my soul into it. I tell you, Bellfield, I never felt as I do now; I feel as if I was two men in one, and I am going to let that good old soul see that his kindness has not been thrown away."

"But how about the books?"

"There is another story about that; you see I am not going until January; you know I have been showing you about book-keeping, and you have written some in the journal; uncle saw what you had done, and he was mightily pleased. "Keep him at it," he says; "Tom, let him go ahead, get him into the ledger as soon as you please, and like as not before you go he will be able to go alone; if not, Tinkham can help him."

"Did he say that?"

"Yes, and more than that; I ain't agoing to tell you all he said, to have you pooh-poohing at me; but I'll tell you this much: as soon as you can keep the books, you are to have a good round salary, but he is not going to have you poking forever over the books, as I have been; he says there is business talent in you, you was made for something better than book-keeping. So, my boy, study away at your French and Spanish; you will have use for them yet. By the way — I wish you could have seen uncle's jaws agoing the other day while you was translating the French letter that poor fellow brought in here; I thought the old grizzle would have been chewed to mince-meat — but come, let's be tramping."

"But do you think Mr. Tinkham will like my being put to the books?"

"There is no telling what he really likes or dislikes; one

thing is certain, so long as he thinks you are not in his way all will be smooth enough; the fact is, Bellfield, you must let me talk now; I have no thought of slandering, but truth is truth. Uncle Chauncey has been *Tinkham's god*; he has had one steady aim ever since he came here as a boy—just to please him, and he has done it; he has got the right side of uncle and means if he can to keep it. What uncle likes he likes, or pretends to; you just keep that in mind; but you or I may get a sly thrust; an innuendo, you know, will sometimes have more power than an out-and-out charge; one thing is certain, it will not please him, and you will see it, that I am to do any buying or selling—some dollars will be taken from that young crony of his, Parker, the broker—and the sending me abroad wont sit well in his crop; not that he cares for my company here, but you see if I should happen to make a hit, and things went to suit, why you see it leads to something higher. Tinkham's term expires in three years from January next, a good many things may take place before that time—before then—” what Tom said was whispered close in James's ear.

“Oh, you are crazy,” was the reply, as James jumped up; “it is time to go.”

“Yes, you may well say so; you'll get a hatchelling, my boy; you will have Nora about your ears.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is a dangerous thing to indulge a wrong passion; to lay our plans for success in any business of life upon a false foundation. Self-interest, as a motive, is not in all its bearings to be utterly discarded; it has its part in all our incentives to action, but when it is the *sole idea*, the *ruling* principle within, no more dangerous foe to our peace or to our character can be harbored in the breast; it narrows the mind, it deadens the affections, it weakens the moral sense, it isolates the individual from the common brotherhood of humanity.

It was well enough for Samuel Tinkham as a boy to do his best to please his employer, and the more so as the latter required nothing of him but what was right; but when the sole

motive which incited him was the benefit he would derive from the good will of his employer, every act became tainted with meanness and duplicity.

He had now arrived at manhood; he had become a partner in business with the man he had served from his boyhood, he was trusted by him as a friend, he was looked upon as a model for any youth to imitate, so regular had been his habits, so untiring his zeal. Hitherto everything had gone smoothly with him; even death itself had proved a stepping-stone to his advancement, and the tears he shed over the grave of young Chauncey, although tears of joy, had sealed the bond that united him to the heart of the father, and mother, too, as they thought forever.

But is Samuel Tinkham happy? is he satisfied? has Self, whose interest he has been so untiringly seeking and serving, ceased calling for “more”? Far from it—nor will the cry abate one jot in its demand while there is more to be obtained. And there is something beyond all that has as yet been gained; his eye has been upon it now for some two years; he has thought of it by day and by night, until it has become an absorbing passion; it could not be love, for the object of it was, when first thought of, too young to have inspired a man of his years; but it would be a most desirable acquisition for him; a marriage with Nora Chauncey would complete the reach of his ambition.

Do we need any further insight to his present state of mind to decide the question, “Is he happy?” The past and the present of his condition are as though they were not. “All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.” Poor, covetous, envious, discontented Haman! how many suffer from indulging the same unhallowed passions, although they may escape your tragic end!

The morning of that day on which Nora reached her home, so fraught with exhilaration to Samuel Tinkham, did not by its brightness truly prefigure its closing hours. A shadow, dark and foreboding, had come over the mind so elate with confidence; nor does it matter that the spectre that haunts is only a shadow, it is sufficient to harrow the feelings to intensity; and when he retired to his room that night, it was not to peaceful rest—the young man, whom, perhaps, many envied for his present position and future prospects, was lying awake, restless, agitating, planning, surmising, fearing.

It seems that while James was away that evening, his

name was brought up, and his character quite freely canvassed. It was a family circle; none but dear friends were there—Sammy was one of them, interested in all that interested them! Nora had many questions to answer, for Mrs. Chauncey was very curious to learn particulars, James being generally reticent as to all personal matters; and Louise seemed no less anxious than her aunt to find out all about him, and how Nora had become acquainted with him. Nora, however, manifested much sensitiveness on the subject. More than once Louise rallied her for blushing when answering a question. All this was of no moment to any one present except Tinkham—he saw, he comprehended, he was annoyed, and it is very likely his imagination magnified trifles into threatening dangers; it was enough, however, to cause much anxiety and a restless night.

The next morning an additional drop or two was added to his cup of unrest.

"Sammy," said Mr. Chauncey, after James and Tom had gone out on various matters of business, "if you have a little leisure, now the boys are out, I wish you would take a seat by me. I want to talk over matters a little, that concern us both."

Sammy could spare the time as well as not, so he took a seat as requested.

"I want to tell you what I have been thinking about Tom—you have noticed, no doubt, what a great change has taken place in Tom of late?"

As Sammy did not reply, except by a look of astonishment, Mr. Chauncey continued,—

"Haven't you noticed it?"

"Well, sir, I cannot say that I have noticed anything particular."

Mr. Chauncey was a little nettled by this reply, and answered rather quickly,—

"Well, I have; and I know for very good reasons that he is very much changed for the better—very much, indeed—and all his friends ought to be very glad of it."

"I am sure," Tinkham replied, quite alarmed, "I most heartily rejoice to hear it—most heartily."

"Yes; I think you might have seen it, too; but no matter for that now! 'tis matter of great joy. But maybe I was a little too quick! for you couldn't know all about it as I do, that's true! You see, Sammy,—now, this is in strict confi-

dence,—Tom and I have had a long talk together, a full, open, frank confidence. I won't enter into particulars. He feels that he has been going wrong—he acknowledges it—and now he wants to do right—he wants to be a man, and I want to help him, and so do you, I have no doubt."

"Why, my dear sir, there isn't anything I wouldn't —"

"I know it, Sammy, I know it; you needn't say a word; I know it. You and I both feel alike about it. We want to help him, and we can help him, and we will help him! And now, this is what I am going to do—I've told Tom already—I am going to set him at outdoor work, buying and selling, and attending to shipments, etc., and we will in this way let him get his hand in, and then I am going to send him to St. Croix. You understand, now, what's to be done!"

Sammy did understand, and he could look as far into the future, where his own interest was concerned, as his senior partner could, any day, and he saw very clearly where all this was going to lead; but the announcement was so astounding, that for the moment he was at a loss for a response.

Mr. Chauncey kept his eye upon him, and finally repeated:

"You understand it now?"

"Oh, yes, sir; perfectly."

"And you approve of the plan?"

"How could I do otherwise, sir?"

"True, true; I knew you would; and now we will both try to get Tom on his legs—we will make a man of him. And about the books, that is another thing I must speak about. That James is a smart fellow, and full of ambition; he writes a fine hand, too. Tom has been now for some time initiating him into the principles of book-keeping. You see Tom—and no wonder—that this young fellow has been the means of saving him, Tom says, from going to the d——I—I use his own words; and Tom says that anything he can do to give James a lift, he would do at the risk of his own life, even; and I must say I feel a strong desire myself to help him ahead. He has talents for business, he has energy—a real go-ahead young man, and his character seems without a blemish."

As Mr. Chauncey paused a moment, Tinkham could not withstand the impulse to put in a word of caution.

"Yes, sir; *seems* fair, as you say; it takes some years to be sure, however.

"Yes, yes; to be *sure*, as you say." This remark, somehow,

seemed to throw a damper on the ardor of Mr. Chauncey, and for a few moments he was silent. At length he resumed:

"Yes, that is true; we cannot, as you say, be sure; it takes time to establish a character; but we must always hope for the best. You haven't as yet seen anything, have you, that looks wrong?"

"Oh, no — nothing to speak of; he is rather *still* — I have feared sometimes he was not open; you know what I mean — frank, open-mouthed? Boys, you know, generally let themselves out; there ain't quite enough of the boy about him. He has talent, as you say; but when boys put on so much of the man, I am disposed to feel that there is something not quite natural about them. I like to see boys boys."

"That's true; I know he is not like most boys of his age, but he is getting on to nigh eighteen. La, Sammy, when I was eighteen I did the work of a man, I felt I was a man; and this young fellow, you see, has had to shift for himself — why, Nora tells me, or she has told her mother, that he has kept school, and was thought a great deal of in the country."

"Oh, I have no doubt he is smart, and maybe it is only my fancy, but when any one of his age keeps things so to themselves — so close-mouthed — and seems to walk so straight and careful, it always looks to me as if they were looking ahead, in fact, were thinking of their own interest, and watching every chance to further their own interest; and you know, what you want is one who will throw his whole soul into the interest of his employer. I wouldn't for the world say a word to prejudice your mind, and hope he may prove just what you want, and what I wish; but it is well, you know, not to be too confident in any one until they have been thoroughly tried."

"I know, I know; but hang it all! Sammy, you mustn't think all boys or young men can come up to your notch — I don't expect it. But when a young fellow is doing his best to get a foothold in the world, and shows a fair character, and has a tact for business, and ain't afraid to put his hand to anything. I feel bound to give him a boost. What would the world come to if those who have got up should never put their hands out to give a lift to the new beginners? Your head is getting too old, Sammy — let's hope for the best!"

As Sammy thought, no doubt, he had gone as far at present as was prudent, he dropped that part of the subject, and Mr. Chauncey went on explaining his design in reference to the

books; and as no plausible objection occurred to him, he, as usual, acquiesced, and apparently with great willingness.

But the whole thing nettled him; hitherto his track had not been crossed; a new phase was being put on the aspect of affairs, that indicated no especial advantage to him, and made things ahead appear precarious. Whether conscious of it or not, he had no real talent for business; the details he was familiar with, and it was by close attention to them he had so far succeeded. Mr. Chauncey was himself the soul of the concern, and Tinkham knew it. When others should become as useful as himself — others in whom the head might feel a deeper interest than in him, what might then happen?

It is painful to follow the track of an evil mind, to listen to its unhallowed surmises, or its iniquitous designs. We will not trouble the reader by an exposition of a heart set on mischief, but will go on with our story, and, in doing so, will let a year slip by, with but one short episode.

James had formed a resolution, after much reasoning and counter-reasoning, to be wary in all his intercourse with Nora; he could not, with all his reasoning, put her out of his mind, he could not be indifferent towards her, but he determined there should be no manifestation of regard on his part beyond that polite attention which to the daughter of his employer he was bound to pay.

Nora had no trouble on her part as to how she should behave towards him. The fact of his being her father's clerk, and, as she knew, poor, and with nothing in prospect beyond what might in time be attained by talents and energy, had no weight with her; whatever feeling she had for him she felt no desire to conceal, beyond that natural reticence which all girls of her age possess. She would as lief as not her mother should notice her regard for him, and therefore felt no necessity for constraint; for instance, she came up to her mother one day, a few weeks after her return:

"Mamma," said she, "don't you think papa could spare James this afternoon to go with Louise and me to Hoboken?"

"I cannot tell you, my dear; you will have to ask your papa. Perhaps, if he cannot be spared, Sammy would go with you — he has spoken about taking you there. I suppose that would do just as well, would it not?"

"Not quite as well," smiling. The mother, smiling in return, said, —

"Beginning to have your preferences, hey?"

"How can one help it, mamma? I suppose you had a choice, when a girl, as to whom you wished to wait on you."

"I suppose so; it is so long ago I have almost forgotten. Well, if you wish to go this afternoon, you had better run down to the office and see about it at once; but how do you know that James will care to go?"

"Oh, I will risk that."

"Have you said anything to him about going?"

"Not yet; I am not afraid but he will go; he is too polite, you know, to refuse anything I should ask of him."

"But you surely would not ask him to do what might not be agreeable to him?"

"Oh, but you see I know, mamma, just as well as anything, it would be very agreeable to him."

"Well, indeed, you have a pretty good share of confidence in your own attractions, I must say."

"Oh, mamma, it is not that, but you see we are old friends — has he never shown you the keepsake I gave him?"

"Keepsake? no."

"Oh, well, sure enough; he did not know until I came home that I was Lucy — no wonder he has never said anything about it."

"And did he give you a keepsake too?"

"Of course he did, and I will show it to you some time — they are not either of them of much value, only, you know, as keepsakes. Well, I will run down to the office and see about things at once."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Chauncey to herself, after Nora had left the room, "I don't know as I can blame her; young ones must have a choice as well as older ones."

When Nora entered the office there was much surprise on the part of all present. Sammy immediately stepped from his desk to receive her.

"A most unexpected pleasure! What can we do for you? 'Even unto the half of the kingdom.'"

"Oh, thank you, I don't ask for so much as that. Papa, may I speak with you a moment?" The father, who had been looking at her, immediately rose and followed her outside the office.

"I have come to ask you, papa, if you could spare James this afternoon. Louise and I want to go to Hoboken."

"Certainly, my dear — that is, I don't know, I must ask

Sammy — I will see," and Mr. Chauncey stepped back into the office.

"How will it be about sparing James this afternoon?"

"Sparing him? — oh, I suppose so — he has a pretty long account current to make out, though. Does Nora want him?"

"Well, the girls wish to take a sail to Hoboken this afternoon. How is it, James? could you not make the account out as well in the evening?"

"I could, sir, certainly."

"I don't like in general to have young men leaving their business for the sake of waiting upon ladies; but you have not had a single holiday yet. If you think you can do the thing in the evening, you had better step out and tell Nora you can go."

In the meantime Tinkham had stepped there, and was holding converse with the young lady; but as James came up he left — looking not over and above pleased.

"You see, I have taken for granted that if you could be spared you would be glad to go. Have I done wrong in not asking you first?" said Nora.

"You have done perfectly right, and I thank you for your confidence in my readiness to oblige."

"Oh, but that was not what I meant. I thought it would be a pleasure."

"It is a pleasure — a very great pleasure — I assure you it is."

"Then we will go right after dinner."

James was very happy, but no one could have surmised as much from his looks. His face was flushed and its aspect very sedate; he almost looked troubled. Nora's sweet, confiding look, her pleasant voice and pleasant words, had waked up, or rather stirred up, the tender interest for her that for prudential reasons he had been trying to allay.

Tinkham's face was very sober, too; but for very different reasons.

Nora left again in September for school. It was to be her last term. During all her vacation she noticed that James had never worn his breastpin. She was curious to know the reason, and yet when on the point of asking, her resolution had hitherto failed her.

It was the evening before her departure; they had recurred to some scenes at previous interviews, when she, in a sort of careless way, asked,

"You don't wear your breastpin any more."

"I have not since you came. I wore it on one occasion previously, I believe."

"But why not at all since I came?" She manifested much emotion as she asked this question.

It was his turn now to feel the blood fly to his face — he was evidently much embarrassed.

"I did not know — I thought — you remember it was given under peculiar circumstances — I thought — perhaps you might not care to be reminded of them —"

She had been looking at him. Suddenly her eyes drooped. He saw at the instant that something was wrong.

"Pardon me — perhaps I was mistaken! If you still wish me to keep it, I shall value it more than ever. May I still look upon it as in my possession by your consent?"

"If you value it as you say you do, I have no objections to your keeping it; but your suspicion hardly does me justice."

"Will you not pardon me? I am very sorry for saying what I did, and for feeling as I have."

"Yes; and until I ask you to return it, you may keep it. Wear it or not, just as you please."

In the course of that same evening Nora noticed the little pledge of friendship on his breast. She smiled as she perceived her notice had attracted his attention; but very soon went by herself, and had to wipe away some tears. Why they had come she did not know — probably in anticipation of leaving home again.

If James had regulated his daily life upon the principle of merely trying to please, he would have had but little encouragement to stimulate his endeavors. He saw clearly that he was not in favor with the junior partner, and as the latter was almost sole director of the details of business, and especially of all office work, very little that he did was commended, and every blunder noticed, even if the offence was of trifling moment. Many long accounts current had to be made over after having taken extra pains — they did not quite please the very critical taste of Mr. Tinkham, although James was conscious of having seen many go from the office, even from the hands of the gentleman himself, that were no better, and not quite so well executed. He never murmured or made objections to these unreasonable demands; but he became more and more convinced that his berth there was held by a very precarious tenure; for he well knew that neither he nor any

other young man could retain his situation long where one of the partners of the concern was opposed and ready to magnify deficiencies. Tom was away, having sailed early in January. James, therefore, had no one to whom he could even lisp a hint as to the danger he foresaw. To Mr. or Mrs. Chauncey his good sense and natural pride prevented his ever speaking a word that might convey the idea that Mr. Tinkham did not favor his being in the office. His only resource was that on which he had thrown himself, when, at his first effort to procure a situation in the city, he had been brought to extremities — the care of his Heavenly Protector. The firm trust he had in Almighty Power enabled him to pursue, day by day, his steady course; conscious of a sincere desire to do his whole duty to those who employed him, as under the eye of a greater than any earthly master. His spirit never for any length of time drooped in despondency, nor did he allow his sense of injustice to lead him to an outbreak. His proud spirit was with great difficulty kept in restraint; but he was enabled to hold a strong curb on the rising passion, and to bear his annoyance in patience. It was not from any desire to retain his situation, at all events, for the sake of prospective advantage. But he believed a Divine hand had placed him there, and until something occurred more than petty annoyances, he did not feel justified in throwing himself out of his place into the state of uncertainty and dependence from which he had been rescued.

Energy and perseverance, too, were accomplishing much for him. He was daily getting the mastery of books and business in general; and he began to find, as the winter wore away, that the difficulties of his situation, in many respects, had been surmounted; and although there was, he had reason to think, the same disposition to give him trouble, his proficiency prevented the opportunity.

The month of July had again come round. Nora's school term was about closing, and as she was to complete her course of education, her parents concluded to be at the closing exercises, and then take her with them to Saratoga to spend some weeks.

James was not by any means indifferent to the prospect of again seeing Nora at her home, although he did not allow himself to anticipate the happiness which some in his situation might. He was too much of a man now to build strong hopes on the few tokens of interest he had received from her. He

knew how he felt himself; but he also knew that Nora was now a year older than when they last parted. She was a young lady now, and might have very different feelings from those which had been indulged as a girl — and yet he had so much faith in the stability of her character that he did allow his feelings considerable play in the prospect of meeting her so soon as perhaps a month's time.

But against all the anticipation of pleasure was a strange apprehension of evil. His reason did not justify it; but reason could not drive away the phantom. It came over him as soon as he heard that Mr. Chauncey was to be absent five or six weeks. The presence of that gentleman had always been to him as a safeguard; he was glad when he was in the office; he never felt under any restraint when he was by. It was, perhaps, not a manly feeling, but the morning on which he took leave of him and Mrs. Chauncey, at their home, he felt a depression of spirits that did not leave him until well engaged in the business of the day. Nothing occurred to give him any trouble through that day, nor through many succeeding days, until about a week after the departure of his friend, when, on his return to the office from attending to some outdoor errand, and about to resume his place at the desk, Mr. Tinkham pointed to a letter lying there, saying, —

“A young woman has brought that letter here for you, and she wishes you to call at this number, Cherry Street, this evening.” As Tinkham handed James the strip of paper on which the address was written, and which he had taken down from the messenger, he fixed his eye upon James with a peculiar look, which, together with the circumstances, caused James some excitement, and his face became quite flushed. Nothing, however, was said by either. James opened the letter, and on reading it, not only lost his color, but seemed disturbed. He put the letter in his pocket and went on with his writing.

As he was about to go to the bank, he asked Mr. Tinkham if he would please draw him a check for one hundred dollars, for his own account.

“Certainly; you can have more, if you want it.”

“Thank you, sir; that will answer.”

The check was drawn, and James left the office.

“I think I have got him now,” said the wretch — we can give him no better title — to himself. “Number — Cherry Street — hey! One hundred dollars, too! That looks encouraging!”

He then took a seat, and after thinking a few minutes, left the office, telling Tim, as he passed through the store, that he would be back in a short time.

“Parker,” said he, as he encountered that gentleman, about to enter his own place of business, “are you engaged this evening?”

“Not particularly.”

“Then will you put yourself under my charge for an hour or two?”

“Certainly. Where to go?”

“I will tell you after we have started.”

“Call for me?”

“Yes; at seven o'clock.”

“I'll be ready.”

Number — Cherry Street was not a reputable place. The only sign over the door was, “J. Simmons.” No especial business was advertised, nor were any goods exhibited. The door was generally open; but a green blind screen was placed a few feet within, which effectually secluded its inmates from observation by passers along the street. There was on one side a bar, having on its shelves a plentiful supply of decanters, and on the other side a row of tables, some of them standing out free to view, and others within enclosures. At the former might be seen men of various ages, from youths of eighteen to old men of sixty, playing dominos. At the enclosed tables it would not be so easy to see what was going on; but the rolling of dice could be heard, and more or less profanity.

But this did not comprise the whole of the business carried on there. There was, in the rear of the building, an establishment more private still, where gambling was carried on by those who feared exposure. In addition, a boarding and lodging house was kept above stairs, although no sign indicated that such accommodations could be obtained. An entrance to the upper part of the house could be had through a narrow alley and up a covered stairway, or through that part of the establishment already described.

It was not much after seven that Tinkham and his associate reached that part of the city in the vicinity of what was once called George's Street, and took a position a few doors south of Mr. Simmons's establishment.

James usually took his supper at six o'clock, and then returned to the office and closed up — sometimes at half-past seven, or later, according to his own pleasure. This evening

he no doubt closed at the earlier hour, for it was nearly eight o'clock when he reached Cherry Street.

Tinkham had begun to fear that his prey in some way had escaped his notice, when suddenly he touched the arm of his companion: —

"Joe, Joe, you see that young fellow — there, just passing the lamp at the corner?"

"I see him."

"Do you know him?"

"Why, it is your clerk, is it not?"

"Keep your eye on him — watch where he goes — let's walk along — don't lose sight of him."

"I see — what! you don't say! Whew! that's the game, is it? By George, who would ever have thought it? Simmons has hooked him, hey? and that is what you wanted of me?"

"I thought I wouldn't say anything to you beforehand, so that you might be an unprejudiced witness."

"Tinkham, you ought to talk to that young fellow at once. He is a ruined man, if he is in the habit of going there!"

"You saw that he went in as if he knew the place."

"Yes, I saw that. By George, Tinkham, something ought to be done! Hadn't we better go in? it may alarm him at any rate; and let us both get him out, and by talking to him and letting him know that he will lose his character, it might put a stop to it."

"As to talking to him, it would do about as much good as talking to the wind. He is full of pride and self-conceit; but if you have a mind we will go in; although I don't like very much being seen in such a place."

So they went in and stood a moment by the bar, Parker looking round the room while Tinkham asked for some segars.

"I don't see him here," whispered Mr. Parker; "he may be in one of the boxes."

"The young man that came in here last, Mr. Simmons, said Tinkham — "did you notice where he went?"

"He went upstairs."

"Ah! he did, hey? In here pretty often?"

"Well, as to that, I can't say. I don't keep the run of matters upstairs; I leave that for the women folks; I guess he knows the way, though."

"That's enough for me," said Tinkham to his companion, as soon as they got into the street.

"I am sorry," replied Parker; "I should have a good talk

with him at once, and let him know that a stop must be put to such proceedings right off. It's a thousand pities; he's a smart fellow. But you must head him off here, Tinkham, or he'll go to the dogs."

"I'll do it, I tell you."

"And keep it from Chauncey. The old man, you know, is quick sometimes; he might rear up and turn him off in a jiffy; and you have a hold upon him in that way by telling him you would say nothing to Mr. Chauncey about it, if he will promise never to go into any such den again."

Tinkham made no reply to these remarks, except a general one about the character of young men nowadays.

Mr. Tinkham knew well enough that the advice his companion was giving as to the course to be pursued was the proper one — the course of mercy — the course which any right-minded man would have pursued. But such a course did not suit the views of Mr. Tinkham; it would very likely frustrate his main object. He had been long watching for some opportunity such as the present afforded. The truth is, he believed that James was in the way of his interest, and that if he could be got rid of, no obstacle would then interpose to the accomplishment of his wishes. This idea had become a possession with him, and like most unhallowed passions, had rendered him callous in feeling, as well as reckless of consequences. He believed the time and the circumstances were now in happy conjunction, and he was firmly resolved to embrace the favored moment.

As James entered the office the next morning, and pleasantly bade "Good-morning," there was no response from Mr. Tinkham in the way of salutation, but in somewhat of a sterner tone than he had ever used before, he said, —

"Take down the ledger, and turn to your account."

James, without reply, did as requested.

"Make up your account to this date."

In a few moments James handed him a slip of paper with the required estimate.

Mr. Tinkham then took the check-book from his own desk and wrote a draft for the amount.

"There," said he, "is a check for the balance due you; and you are at liberty to go as soon as you please, and the sooner the better; your services are no longer needed."

James was stunned, but he neither lost his presence of mind nor his temper. He merely bowed in acquiescence to the mandate, took down his hat, and left the office.

The affair was so sudden, so unexpected, that he had no time to get up much feeling on the subject, nor to dwell upon the consequences.

As he left the store, he saw Tim O'Connor coming from breakfast. He stopped him; giving his hand, he said,—

"Good-by, Mr. O'Connor."

Tim, holding on his hand and looking much amazed,—

"Good-by! and for what? Where be ye goin'?"

"I do not know. But I am dismissed from the concern."

"Dismissed! and for what? Have ye had words wid the young boss?"

"Not a word."

"What raison did he give you?"

"No reason at all. He may have reasons of his own, but he gave me none."

"Jist sent you off, and no raison whereby ye might know what your offence may be?"

"This just as I tell you."

"There'll be jist the divel to pay, then, when the old boss comes home. That's jist it. The old man sets store by you."

"I think it has not been done without Mr. Chauncey's consent. Mr. Tinkham is careful to do nothing that might displease Mr. Chauncey. But do you think I could get board for a short time at the place where Mr. Hendricks last stopped?"

"There is not a doubt of it. But shall I spake for you?"

"Thank you; there will be no need of that. I know the lady."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear! It's all too bad, too bad! It's all bad luck in the boss going away. But God bless you. I ain't a goin' to say good-by. It's my opinion there is a divel behind the bush somewhere, and you'll see it's no the boss's doin's. He's a bit fractious at times, but he's no unjust, or unraisonable. It's past my comprehension. But there's a divel hid somewhere. Oh, dear, oh, dear! Bad luck to them as has treated you ill. But I'll be stoppin' to see you, my boy."

Mr Tinkham had accomplished his purpose. He had got rid of James, and he well knew it was a final riddance, and that the proud spirit of the young man would prevent their ever being under the same relation again. His treatment was designed for that end. He meant to insult him as far as was in his power.

But Mr. Chauncey might not be satisfied? This must be

attended to, and without delay. So the first business he turned his mind upon was the writing of a letter. And it required all his ingenuity so to frame it, that the mind of that gentleman should be satisfied that the act he had accomplished was one that could not be avoided. The following is a true copy:

"NEW YORK, July 20th, 18—.

"JAMES CHAUNCEY, Esq.:

"*Respected and dear Sir*,—I take my pen in hand to write you about a very unpleasant subject, and one that has given me much pain. I have been compelled to dismiss our clerk, James Bellfield; and in doing so I am very sure I have done what you would have done yourself if you had been here. And I am on the whole glad that you was not here, for your kindness of heart is so great, that however unworthy the person might be, it would, I know, have been a trial to you to send him away.

"I believe you are aware that my confidence in that young man was not so great as yours; but still I was not quite prepared to find out, as I have, how corrupt he was. And even now it pains me to mention it.

"I found out quite accidentally that he was in the habit of visiting a well-known establishment in Cherry Street, where gambling and other vices are daily and nightly practised—a vile place. In order to satisfy myself more perfectly in regard to the matter, I was determined to watch near the place, and to be more sure, I took with me a confidential friend, and one who knew the young man well, so that there should be no mistake. One thing which determined me to watch on a particular evening, was the fact of his asking me that day for a check for one hundred dollars, which you yourself, sir, I have no doubt, would have been surprised at.

"Well, about eight o'clock we sighted him, and behold he walked along and entered the place with as much readiness as if he was entering the store, or your house in John Street. And it makes my blood boil to think how he has abused the hospitality of that most pleasant home, and dared to place himself in contact with the lovely members of your family. I felt so indignant at the time, and ever since, that I have had hard work to keep my hands off from him, and chastising him for his insolence in thrusting himself even into the company of your dear daughter.

"To make matters more sure, we ventured into the place, and I questioned the keeper of the den. He, of course, was

not very communicative, but I found out enough to satisfy me that he was in the habit of visiting there.

"Now, my dear sir, what else could I do under these circumstances than to dismiss him? I hesitated much, but at length concluded that it would save you and your family the pain of seeing him again, by discharging him before your return, and I believe you will, on reflection, agree that I have done right.

"This unpleasant affair need not by any means hasten your return; I can get along well enough — you know what I can do upon a pinch — and Tom is expected now every day. If I come across a good book-keeper I shall hire him, but after this I think we ought not to take one who is not well-known in the city. With my kindest regards to Mrs. Chauncey and Miss Nora, I am as ever,

"Your faithful and ever-obliged humble servant,
"S. TINKHAM."

This letter was immediately despatched to Saratoga, and we must follow it there.

After Mr. Chauncey had carefully perused it, he called Mrs. Chauncey aside, and showed it to her.

A while they sat in silence — they were perfectly astounded. Mrs. Chauncey was the first to speak.

"Can there not, dear husband, be a possibility of mistake? It is too dreadful! It seems to me if ever there was virtue and truth in a young man, James possessed them."

"So I thought."

"Had we not better return at once?"

"No; it will do no good now, and, as Sammy says, I am glad we were not there."

"Nora will feel dreadfully."

"Why so, any more than the rest of us?"

"Well, of course she is so young that if his character is really bad, she would get over it."

"Why, what do you mean, my dear? Get over it! Why, you don't mean to say that Nora has any partiality for him! My heavens! that is worse than all!"

"There is no use in getting excited, my dear; we may as well look at things as they are. To be sure, Nora has always spoken in a playful way about it, and I have treated it in the same manner, but I can see plainly that she thinks more of him than of any other of the young gentlemen of her ac-

quaintance; how much she feels, of course, no one can tell; probably she has no idea herself."

"Well, of course that subject is not worth a moment's thought; his name must never be mentioned in the family again. Sammy is right, and he has shown proper regard to our feelings by sending the fellow off before we returned."

"I cannot, dear husband, feel as you seem to. I feel so sorry for the poor young man; only to think — he has had no father or mother to watch over him! I wish I could see him — but the more I think of it the more I believe there is some great mistake — it cannot be that James has deceived us!" And Mrs. Chauncey had to give way to tears, while her husband, deeply grieved as she could possibly be — for he had become very fond of James — arose and walked the room in silence.

"Ah, mamma," said Nora, coming in with haste, "what a beautiful afternoon to ride to the lake!" And then pausing a moment, as she looked first at one and then at the other —

"Mamma, what is it? Anything happened? Tell me, papa!"

"Your mamma will tell you."

Nora went up to her mother.

"What is it, mamma?"

"James has been dismissed."

"That is no more than I have anticipated ever since I was home last winter."

"But why should you have anticipated it? Did you discover anything wrong in him?"

"No; nothing wrong in him, but something very wrong in others."

"Tell me what you mean, my dear?"

"Samuel Tinkham dislikes him; I only wonder he has dared to do it without papa's consent."

And as she said this she looked at her father, as if asking whether she was right in her conjecture that it had been done without his knowledge.

"It was done indeed without my knowledge, but was done to spare me pain. I am sorry to say it, but James has disappointed us all sadly — he has proved to be a worthless character."

"Who says so, papa?"

"Your papa," answered the mother, "has just received a letter from Mr. Tinkham."

"Nora," said Mr. Chauncey, "I wish no more said about it — I do not wish ever to hear his name mentioned again."

Nora sprang to her father and embraced his arm, while she fixed her eye steadily up at his face.

"Dear papa, do not say so! If you say you *know* James to be a worthless character, I must believe you; but if you only know by what Samuel Tinkham says, I will *not believe it!* He is a *false* man, he is a deceitful man, he is artful and —"

"Nora, Nora, stop, my dear!" exclaimed her mother.

"Dear papa, will you not grant me one favor — let us go home at once — will you not, papa? There is some great mistake, or some dreadful falsehood, and you will repent it all your life if you do not go at once and see to it."

"I think Nora is right there, my dear; you ought to go; and I am sure we shall not enjoy anything here after this."

"I am willing to go as you are both so anxious for it, but it gives me great pain to have my dear Nora speak so rashly. We have known Samuel from a boy, and we have never found a flaw in him. I would trust him —"

"Dear papa, don't say it! I know him better than you do!"

"Nora, Nora!" replied her father, in almost a stern voice.

The poor girl, now greatly excited, burst into tears. Both parents were alarmed; they could hardly remember seeing her in tears since she was a little child.

"Ma," said Mr. Chauncey to his wife, who, with her arm around Nora, was trying to soothe her distress, "we will say nothing more on this subject at present, and to-morrow morning we will start for home."

Mr. Chauncey passed a restless night on the way down from Albany; his mind disturbed not a little on Nora's account. The idea that she should be so deeply interested for one who, he truly feared, had proved recreant to virtue, created no little uneasiness. And then, too, the harsh epithets bestowed by her on his partner, kept haunting him in spite of every attempt to discard them as the result of prejudice — the effect of the influence of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Kendrick, whom he knew always disliked Tinkham.

They reached home about seven o'clock in the morning, to the surprise of all the members of the family, who were not expecting them for some weeks.

Almost the first person to meet them was Tom. He had arrived on the last evening, and it was a great relief to his uncle

that he had come just at that time. He knew how Tom felt towards James, and he believed Tom would know better than any one else whether the habits of James might in any measure confirm the opinion Tinkham had formed of him.

"I suppose your mother has told you the news?" said his uncle, as soon as their first salutations were over.

"You mean about James' dismissal? Yes; and it has taken away all my pleasure at reaching home."

"Has she told you the reason?"

"She does not know the reason. She says James came here for his trunk, and when she asked why he was wanting his trunk, he said he had been dismissed from the office. She asked him for what reason. He said he could not tell her; that Mr. Tinkham had not given him the least hint as to the nature of his offence."

"Is that so?"

"That is what mother told me."

"There, Tom, read that," handing him the letter he had received from Tinkham.

Tom read it, and, handing it back to his uncle, threw his head back and looked up towards the ceiling — a way he had when anything puzzled him. As he made no reply, his uncle asked, —

"Could you have suspected James would ever have sunk so low?"

"James sunk so low, uncle? No, never! not he. If there was ever honor and truth and virtue in any man, young or old, they are in him! I'll stake my life this moment upon the purity — yes, the spotless purity of his character!"

At once Nora sprang up to Tom and threw her arms about his neck.

"You dear, good cousin Tom! Oh, I am so glad to hear you speak so," and then kissed him.

Mr. Chauncey made no remark at this exhibition of passion on the part of Nora, as he was getting more and more confused and uncertain about things. Tom's remarks had staggered him.

"Can you" — turning to Tom — "explain in any satisfactory manner how the circumstances mentioned in that letter can be construed so as not to imply guilt?"

"No, I cannot; but I have no doubt James can. I think, uncle, I have heard you say there are always two sides to a story, and that it was never best to decide until we had the two stories together."

Mr. Chauncey felt the point of this homethrust on the part of Tom. He ought, indeed, to hear both sides before he threw away from his heart this unfortunate youth.

"I wish I could see James. Does any of the family know where he is?"

Tom ran up to his mother's room, and soon returned with the tidings that she did not know, but that two or three days since Sarah saw him ride past there in the gig with Dr. R——.

"Dr. R——?" said Mr. Chauncey. "Tom, you run round to Cortlandt Street, and see if you can get any information about him."

Tom was off at the instant; but stayed so long that breakfast was over, and Mr. Chauncey became rather impatient to get to his office. He came at last, rushing into the house and into the room under great excitement.

"O uncle! uncle! James is all right!" and then his feelings overpowered him, and bursting into tears, he sat down and covered his face. All in the room were deeply affected; but no word escaped their lips. Nora sat with her hands clasped upon her lap, her countenance lighted with an expression of holy joy, her eye brilliant with the dew-drops of intense emotion; Louise and Mrs. Chauncey both weeping, and Mr. Chauncey walking the room with a moderate pace, deeply engrossed in thought.

It was some time before Tom could recover himself so as to speak. At length he broke out, —

"Uncle, I knew it — James is an angel, if ever God sent one upon earth. He has been an angel of mercy to me," and again he broke down and left the room.

After the violence of his feelings had subsided he came back and began his story:

"I asked the Doctor if he had seen James Bellfield within a few days. 'Yes,' said he, 'he and I have had quite a time together; and, by the way, Hendricks,' said he, 'that is a noble young fellow'" — Tom had like to have broken down again. "He is going to make a splendid man; I have got fairly in love with him. You see, he came to me to ask what he should do. Mr. Chauncey, he said, was out of town, and he had no one that he liked to mention the matter to, and he also wished to have me, if I was willing to go to the place — it was a very disreputable place up in Cherry Street; but he had a relative, a cousin, there, who was very sick — he had been taken with hemorrhage of the lungs — he did not like to go there; but

he could not bear to have the young man lying there with no one to see to him but the wretched inmates of the place. "I will go with you, my boy," I said. "When do you wish to go?" He said he could only go in the evening. "That will be more convenient for me," I replied, "than the daytime, and we will go at once, if you wish." So I ordered my gig and off we went. On the way I found out by questioning him that he had done all he could to persuade his cousin to change his course of life, but instead of following his advice, the last time he had an interview with him he abused him, and told him to mind his own business; but when he got taken sick there, it seems he sent for James. Well, when we got there we found him miserable enough. He has a rapid consumption, and must die soon. The question, then, was, what should be done with him — should we take him to the hospital? No; he would not hear of that; he wanted to go home; he wanted to die there; he could go in the sloop. James at once said, "I will go with you and take care of you, if I can get leave of absence for a day or two." I saw the young fellow felt that, for the tears started. But in a few moments another difficulty was started. He was in debt there. How much, he could not tell — probably about fifty dollars. "I will pay that — don't worry yourself about that;" but James found, when they sent the bill down to him the next day, that it was pretty near one hundred — "

"Stop, Tom; I don't want to hear any more. Where does the Doctor say he is?" interposed Mr. Chauncey, with much earnestness.

"He does not know. And when I told him he had been dismissed he was utterly amazed. He supposed he was still living here."

"Come, Tom, we will now go to the office. I suppose you have not seen Tinkham yet?"

"No, sir," and was about to add, "I don't wish to;" but Tom had learned prudence.

"By the way, Tom, you must make this your home now. Your old uncle wants you near him."

"But do you not intend to have James back?"

"Intend! he shall be back here before night, if I have to search every boarding-house in the city."

"Dear papa," said Nora, running up and throwing her arms about him, "let me kiss you."

Not only one, but several were given and returned. The

father said nothing, but he pressed her to him and patted her head; and if she had looked up at him she might have seen a redness of the eyes not very usual with him.

Whether Tinkham had repented his hasty act, it is impossible to say. There was no manifestation of it.

The truth is, that he had so long been accustomed to indulge his passion of self-interest, it had become his master. The drunkard, who has by his continued use of ardent spirits destroyed the integrity of his system, is not a more pitiable object than the man who has lost his moral integrity in the inordinate pursuit of his own selfish ends. Mr. Tinkham had, in his blindness, overrated his influence with his senior partner and the estimation in which he was held by the family. He had made a great mistake.

As Mr. Chauncey and Tom entered the office there was an outburst of feeling on the part of the junior partner. Tom was received with an exuberance of joy.

"My dear fellow, how you have improved! I am so happy to see you, sir," turning to Mr. Chauncey; "but I hope my letter did not hasten your return!"

"I should not have come certainly for some weeks but for that."

"I am so sorry. Why, I think I mentioned in it that you need not shorten your stay at the Springs. I get along very well."

"Tom, you had better see to that errand I wished you to attend to."

Tom took the hint. He knew his uncle wished to be alone with Mr. Tinkham, so he went in pursuit of Tim. He thought possibly he could from him get intelligence of James.

"Mr. Tinkham," said Mr. Chauncey, as soon as Tom had left the office. Tinkham started and grew pale at once; never did Mr. Chauncey thus address him when alone. "Sammy" was now dropped. A most ominous token!

"Mr. Tinkham, I wish you would sit down and give me the particulars of this affair about James; I don't altogether understand it, and it has troubled me very much."

"Not more, sir, than it has me, I assure you — it has given me a great deal of pain."

"Well, now, let me have the particulars."

And Tinkham, as well as he could, did give the particulars — although he found the naked facts when relating did look rather different from the same facts as embellished by writing.

"You say you knew that the house to which James was going, or which you had reason to think he was going, was in bad repute?"

"Yes, I know it to be so — Simmons' house is notorious — a terrible gambling hole."

"Knowing this, did you say anything by way of caution?"

"No, sir; I did not, I knew it would do no good."

"We cannot always be certain about that; a word of advice sometimes has its effect, especially from a partner to a clerk."

"I don't think it would upon him."

"I wish you had done it, though; I should if I had been in your place; it would have looked better at any rate. We should always do what is plainly our duty, and we owe to those under us a certain amount of paternal care. I suppose you told James the reason why you felt compelled to dismiss him?"

Tinkham colored deeply at this question; he began to see how the thing looked; he hesitated and stammered as he attempted to reply.

"Well, as to that, I don't remember that I stated my reason in so many words; but he knew, there is no doubt, the reason, for he made no remark whatever; he evidently felt guilty."

"He did not make any remark then — said nothing?"

"Not a word, sir."

"Then it seems there were no explanations between you of any kind. I must say it was pretty short-hand dealing."

"Why, Mr. Chauncey, there was no other way to deal with such a person; he has a great idea of his importance, he is very high-spirited, and the way in which he has been put forward in the office, and the manner in which he has been treated in your family has made him feel that he is as good as anybody and a little better; I have no doubt from what I have seen that he feels quite on a par with Miss Nora even."

"As to that matter, one side of any bad habits you think he has acquired — one side of his moral character, he is on a par with you or me or any one; perhaps you do not know that he is a grandson of old Benjamin Ransom, one of the first men in the city of his day. But that is neither here nor there — if his character is bad, his family standing is of little consequence."

"You say, Mr. Chauncey," Tinkham replied, "if his character is bad as I think, how can there be any doubt of it; would

any young man of decent character be in the habit of visiting such a place as Simmons'?"

"No, he would not; the only thing in question is, was he in the habit of going there? Now I want proof of that."

"I saw him go there and the person who was with me saw him."

"Let me ask you who it was that accompanied you?"

"Why it was one we both know, and I thought you would be better satisfied than if my single testimony was given — it was Parker."

"But why to satisfy me? I have always taken your word. Do you think if James had been your brother you would then have run the risk of making his error notorious; would you not rather have kept the matter to yourself and tried to prevent his going, or if not, to have talked with him afterwards and endeavored to save him?"

"He was not my brother by a good deal, and I didn't feel bound particularly to act as his guardian."

Mr. Chauncey was silent after this. This last remark stunned him. The tone of voice was in strong contrast with the usual address of his young partner; but *the bold expression of selfishness* revealed to him the *true character* of the man he had nurtured and favored as few young men had been. It threw light, too, upon the whole affair. The design evidently had been to entrap and ruin, not to save, either the deluded youth or protect the good name of the firm he served; it was *cold-blooded heartlessness*. From that moment Mr. Chauncey cast him from his heart. A mistake he could have looked over; an act under the influence of passion or excitement of any kind, he could have pardoned, but *heartless selfishness never*.

As he seemed to have nothing more to say, Tinkham arose and went to his desk, his mind irritated and confused; many fond expectations had dropped from his vision during the last half-hour and a spirit of bravado was beginning to work; he began to throw himself upon his rights as a partner, and was vexed with himself that he had submitted to a catechizing on a matter where he had as much right as his questioner to independent action; "he would never submit to it again!"

Mr. Chauncey very soon left the office; he was calm and self-possessed and determined. But he would examine all points before taking any positive step. He was now on his way to see Parker; he found that gentleman in his office and received an unusually earnest reception.

"Mr. Chauncey, I don't know any one I could welcome so heartily as yourself; I have been so wishing you were in town or had not left it."

"I have been myself regretting I had left town, but why are you regretting it?"

"Well, sir, it is not my business to be meddling with other people's concerns, but as I have been unwittingly mixed up with the affair of discharging your clerk, I have felt anxious to see you; there has been a terrible mistake made.

"Nothing very terrible is it, the mere sending off a worthless fellow?"

"Mr. Chauncey!" said Mr. Parker, much excited, "you have been most egregiously deceived. I don't know who has done it, but that young man is not worthless! He is a fine young fellow; as Heaven is my witness, I believe him to be as pure and virtuous as yourself, and if you knew the truth, sir, as I do, you would feel that your house has done a dishonorable act in discharging him off-hand, with no reason given, no chance for explanation, a young unprotected fellow with a bad mark upon his name! By all that is sacred, had he been a brother of mine I would have cowhided the man that served him so, within an inch of his life."

"Parker, give me your hand; come, sit down." The gentleman in his excitement had risen, and was gesticulating violently and letting off some words he was not in the habit of using. I have generally liked you as a business man, but your true nobility of character was never so manifest to me before; your views and mine exactly coincide, if that will be any relief to you."

"It is a great relief to me, I assure you, for I have always had such confidence in your justness and honor and wisdom, too, that, knowing, as I do, the whole affair, I could not understand how you could indorse the proceedings."

"I do not indorse them; far from it; but I want to move with caution and judge understandingly; so please tell me all about it; you went with Tinkham to watch, I believe."

"Yes, sir; he made a cat's-paw of me, but for the last time."

Mr. Parker then gave an account of all he saw and heard, and then added, "I urged Tinkham at the time to have a talk with James and to warn him of his danger and try to save him, for he was a smart fellow and worth trying to keep from going to the dogs; but he did not do it, and I verily believe he did

not want to do that; and James feels confident that he has been wishing to get rid of him."

"Did James tell you that?"

"Yes, sir; the next morning, as James was passing my store, I was at the door and called him in. I felt as if I must say something to him; as he came in he said —

"Mr. Parker, if you wish to see me about business, I must tell you I have nothing further to do with the store."

"Why so?" I said.

"I have just been dismissed," he answered.

"By Tinkham?" I said, "and for what reason?"

"He gave no reason," he replied.

"Have you no idea?" I asked.

"I can surmise," he said "but for peculiar reasons I cannot name the thing; but I am very sure he has for some time been wanting to get rid of me."

"And he said nothing why he sent you off?"

"Not a word."

"Are you conscious, Bellfield," I said, "that you was last evening in a very disreputable house?"

"Certainly I am," he said.

"And do you not know that for a young man, or a man of any age, to visit at such a place is certain ruin to his character?"

"I am fully aware of that," he said; "but if you had a relative — one whom you was trying to save from destruction, who, when sick and helpless and in debt, should send in his distress for you to come to try and help him to get away to some place where he could die in peace, would you hesitate to go?"

"And was that the only reason you was there?" I asked.

"For no other reason — as God is my witness!"

"Stop, Parker — stop! There is no use in saying any more. His statement only confirms what I have already learned from Doctor R——, our family physician, who went there with him. But can you tell me where he is? I must see him and take him straight back to his desk again."

"I do not know where he is; I made him promise to come to me if he wanted help, money, or anything else I could do for him. But he will never go back to that office again. You see, when I found out the truth about things, I wanted him to go with me, and I promised he should be reinstated in ten minutes; that Tinkham would injure himself not to do it. 'Mr. Parker,' said he, 'before I would ever work under Mr. Tinkham again, I would take out a porter's license and make my living

by rolling a wheelbarrow.' Tinkham, Mr. Chauncey, must certainly be wrong in his head."

"He is wrong here, Parker," said Mr. Chauncey, laying his hand on his heart; "here, sir, is the ailment. I have discovered that at last, and Parker, let me say to you, I feel that you and I know one another as we have never done before. I wish you to come to my house this evening. I wish to have some private conversation with you, and we can be sure there of no interruption."

As Mr. Chauncey returned to his office and was about being seated, Tinkham asked, —

"I suppose you have been to talk with Parker?"

"I have, sir — any objections?"

"I have objections to Parker; he insulted me yesterday, and he will get no more commissions with my consent at least; and I think, Mr. Chauncey, that it is not treating me with due respect as a partner, to make such an ado about so small a matter as turning away a clerk whom I, at least, have no confidence in — I don't wish any more said to me about it, at any rate."

"I will say no more to you, as you request, but only this — if you had acted as a man in this matter, you might without the least difficulty have learned that this young man was worthy of your highest respect, instead of rude and ungentlemanly conduct, and have saved me and my family a great deal of needless suffering. That is the last you will hear from me on the subject."

Tinkham made no reply; he understood from Mr. Chauncey's calm and studied manner, that he was in earnest — he was not to be brow-beaten. He little thought, however, what was coming.

Mr. Chauncey left his seat, and after writing a few moments at his own desk, he handed a slip of paper to Mr. Tinkham, the purport of it as follows:

"The partnership heretofore existing between James Chauncey and Samuel Tinkham, under the firm of James Chauncey & Co., is this day dissolved by mutual consent. The business will be continued by James Chauncey on his own account.

NEW YORK, July 24, 18—."

"If that form does not suit you, I can alter it."

Tinkham was so surprised, that for a few moments he could not speak. He saw as by a lightning-stroke the fabric he had

been rearing with such assiduous zeal, and which he hoped was near completion, tumbling into ruins, and all by an undue indulgence of his ruling passion. Self had been his idol, and had caused the ruin of his hopes.

Recovering a little from the shock, he finally remarked, —

“I believe our articles of agreement specified five years as the term of partnership — only two have expired.”

Mr. Chauncey turned to his private desk, and drew forth the document in his possession, and handed him to read.

“You have a copy in your possession — see if they do not agree; if they do, you will see that the term depended upon my option — its limit was five years. I have worded the advertisement with reference to your own feelings. If more agreeable, I can change it for one more literally true. One way or the other, it must go at once, to be in time for the evening paper.”

“If it is to be so, you may as well put in that as any — you have got the power; use it as you please. It is the old story, ‘*Might makes right.*’”

“Now, sir, give me the balance to your credit on the ledger, and what may be your estimate of your share of profits since January last, and write a receipt in full of all demands.”

The account was rendered, a check drawn, the receipt signed, and Samuel Tinkham left the place where he had labored and thrived but by a principle that had no higher motive than *self*. It had betrayed him at last! He goes forth, to be sure, with a few thousand dollars in his pocket, but with the knowledge that he has lost the confidence of those who had been his most valuable friends. He may yet thrive, but unless he works with a higher aim in the future than he has hitherto, he can never be happy nor truly loved.

Tom came in soon after Tinkham had left; he looked very sad.

“Can you learn nothing of James?” said his uncle, who was busy talking with Tim O’Connor.

“Yes, sir, I have found him; but there is no use in trying to get him back here; he has been so strangely treated, he will never place himself under the power of Tinkham again.”

“Yes, I know that; Parker has told me how he feels.”

“I am glad you have seen Parker. Why, uncle, Parker has proved himself a noble fellow. James says he offered him money, or to help him get a place, or do anything for him in his power.”

“Parker has acted like a man — a man that has a heart and soul in him.”

“One thing has troubled James very much, uncle, and that is, he has got an idea that you, for some reason, had given Tinkham liberty to dismiss him, and it has worked upon him so that he has been looking for a berth on board a ship.

“Hoot-toot! why should he think I had anything to do with it?”

“Because he says Mr. Tinkham seemed so careful not to do anything to displease you.”

“You have convinced him to the contrary, of course?”

“Yes, I have tried to; but I wish you could see him; he thinks so much of you, one word from you would do more than all my talking.”

“Well, tell me where to find him, or you can go with me; I have news to tell you both. Tim will take care of things until we return.”

As they entered the room, James rose to meet his old employer, and as they clasped hands, Mr. Chauncey alone spoke.

“I have not come, my boy, to talk about the past. I have settled that matter, forever. After this you are to be my son, and I am to be your father — do you agree to it?” As he said this, he laid his hand kindly on the young man’s shoulder, and drew him to his breast.

James yielded at once to the pressure, and his tears told the rest.

“Now that is settled, we will go home and put their minds at rest. Tom, you must go to the store and see to things there until I come down. Mr. Tinkham and I have settled up our affairs, square and forever. He is no longer my partner.”

“Oh uncle!” exclaimed Tom, “it is the happiest hour I have ever seen.”

“I hope, sir,” said James, “I have not been the cause of this; I should wish I had never come to the city.”

“Be perfectly easy on that score. You have not been the cause, only incidentally. He has, indeed, in the explanation to me in regard to your dismissal, exposed in such an open manner the utter selfishness of his heart, that to be any longer associated with him was too abhorrent to my feelings. He is gone, and we will let his name pass unmentioned. You two are to be my dependence for the present. In a few days I shall hope to have an assistant that you will both be pleased

with. Come, Tom, you have cut capers enough for the present, let us be going."

We will pass over the scene which again introduced James to the family he loved so well. It at once set his mind at rest — he felt, indeed, at home and happy.

"My dear," said Mr. Chauncey, "will you please step with me into our room; I wish to see you alone; I have something serious to talk about."

This was said after the scene which took place at the meeting between James and the family on returning to his old quarters.

As they entered the room, Mrs. Chauncey took her usual seat in her rocking-chair. The gentleman, however, was too much excited just then to be seated, so he walked about the room, "chawing" rather vigorously upon the grizzle. Mrs. Chauncey said nothing; she could not imagine the cause of disturbance nor what new trouble was about to be revealed. But her fears were beginning to be aroused, when suddenly he stopped near her.

"You noticed the meeting between those children — babies I call them?"

"You mean James and Nora?"

"Yes — what makes you smile? It is no laughing matter. I do believe, Sally, you are rather pleased; to me it appears perfectly ridiculous."

Mrs. Chauncey could not help it — she laughed outright. Somewhat nettled, and yet perhaps secretly pleased that his wife did not see things to be so serious as they had appeared to him, he asked, —

"Do you think it was all right? and there is no danger of anything?"

"Of what, my dear?"

"Of what! Why don't you see — why — why, it looked to me just as if they had been two lovers. I thought every moment Nora would throw her arms about his neck."

"But she did not, dear husband. It seems to me they both behaved with great propriety. No doubt their feelings were greatly excited."

"Yes, but that is the very thing I want to talk about. I believe they are fond of each other, and something has got to be done. But I see there is no use in talking to you; I believe you are at heart glad of it. But what are you going to do about it. I should like to know that."

After Mrs. Chauncey had relieved herself by another laugh, she said, —

"Why, really I do not see any necessity for doing anything. They both have behaved with so much propriety hitherto, as to their being fond of one another, I don't see well how we can help that or they either."

"Has Nora told you that she loves him?"

"Not directly. But you noticed how she acted at Saratoga, and I have no doubt if we should ask her she would tell us the truth."

"I wish you would call her."

In a few moments Mrs. Chauncey returned leading Nora by the hand. As they entered the room, seeing her father walking about and apparently agitated, Nora went immediately up to him, and fixing her fine, clear eyes full upon him, as she took his hand, she asked —

"Dear papa, what troubles you?"

"Oh nothing troubles me very seriously; but your mamma and I have been talking about you, and I want to know a little how things stand between you and James."

"In what way, papa?"

"Oh well, you know you have manifested a good deal of interest in his case; you have shown a good deal of feeling."

"Not more than any of the rest, papa."

"I know we have all felt a good deal, but that is another thing. Now I want you to tell me, Nora dear, just how you feel — I mean towards James."

"I think very highly of him."

"I suppose you think you love him."

"Would there be any harm in it, papa? would it be displeasing to you?"

This question rather puzzled her father. So instead of answering it, he asked —

"And do you think he loves you?"

"I do not know, but I think he does."

"Has he told you so?"

"Oh, no, papa! never. But you know, I suppose mamma has told you I gave him a keepsake some years ago, and he gave me one. We didn't know then we should ever see one another again, and when I came home and found him here, I noticed he did not wear it; and so one day when we were talking about things that occurred when I was at Mrs. Lansing's, I happened to ask him why he did not wear his breastpin."

He said he did not know but it might be displeasing to me to be reminded of the past—”

Nora had become quite excited and could go no further.

“And what did you tell him—that he might still keep it?”

She threw herself upon her father’s breast, and burst into tears.

“Yes, papa, I did.”

The mother now came to her help. It was so unusual for Nora to cry, that when she did, it was as though a torrent had burst its barriers.

“Dear papa,” said Mrs. Chauncey, “we must leave this to Nora’s discretion. She will never do anything that you or I disapprove.”

The two parents now united their efforts to appease the disturbed feelings of the dear child they loved so much. And Mr. Chauncey, before he got through, realized as he had never done before, that it was a very delicate matter to meddle with the sacred sensibilities of the female heart. A very different matter from business in general.

But being a man of business, he could not rest satisfied until, as he said, “things were all straightened out.” So he had an interview with James before the day was out; the particulars of it not being divulged by either party, can only be conjectured. But towards evening he got the two parties alone in his wife’s room—she being present, and he thus addressed them:

“Now you two babies no doubt think that you love one another very much, and I don’t know but you do, and more than that, I don’t care. I have no fault to find with either of you on the score of behavior, one to the other. Continue to act as you have done—you may talk together, and walk together, and ride together. But there must be no talking about love or anything of that kind. No making of any promises or anything like an engagement. You are both too young to know your own minds, or to be under any sort of bond. James has to bend his whole mind to business, and you, Nora, to improvement. You may both, in three years from now, feel very different. Nora may very likely find that she loves some one else better than she does you; and you may meet with some one more agreeable than Nora. You may shake your heads, but I tell you from experience that it is very likely to be the case; and each is to be at perfect liberty in that respect. If, in three years from now you both are so disposed, you can

then be at liberty to make what arrangements you please. But until then you understand there is to be nothing beyond the pleasant interchange of attention common between ladies and gentlemen.

“Now do you agree to this? If so, each of you give me a hand—

“Now, then, I feel at rest; and shall trust you with perfect confidence.”

“I will never abuse your confidence in this matter, sir, let what will happen to me,” said James.

“I shall not say anything, papa, only give me one of your sweetest kisses.”

“And now I turn you over to mamma; she must look after you both. And what has passed between us here must be kept a sacred secret until some final arrangement is made if it should ever come to that.”

The next morning, just after breakfast, Mr. Chauncey remarked—“I propose, mamma, that as you and Nora have been cheated out of your visit at Saratoga, and James has been through some unpleasant scenes and ought to have a change, I therefore suggest that you three make Mrs. Bascom a visit.”

“Oh, good, good!” exclaimed Nora and her mother.

“Oh, James, will you not be so happy to see Maggie?” exclaimed Nora.

“But, Mr. Chauncey,” said James, “there will be so much to do in the office; Mr. Hendricks will be all alone.”

“At your old tricks, my boy. I don’t want any Hendrixing me; my name is Tom; but, as to being alone, I can work like putting out fire when my mind is easy, and nobody round to stir up the bile. You go along, and leave me to keep the mill going.”

“As to that, boy,” said Mr. Chauncey, “I have made an arrangement for a new hand, who will be with us in a day or two.”

“Who is it, uncle?”

“Our friend Parker; I think you will both like him.”

“Oh, dear!” said James, “is not that good?”

“I say it’s more than good: it’s better and best—that’s enough for me; I am off now, so good-by all.”

Exit Tom.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. CHAUNCEY had, as he supposed, "straightened things out" between James and Nora; but like all attempts to regulate such a delicate matter as the affections by mechanical laws, his plan proved a decided failure.

The *babies*, as he called them, had been doing well enough hitherto; their interest for each other had originated in a mutual liking, and had, as they advanced in years, grown into a strong attachment, and might, no doubt, if let alone, have been a source of rich enjoyment to them both, and a stimulus of mighty power to the unfolding of their spiritual nature in its more beautiful form.

But the sensitive plant had been touched by rough hands. It was done in kindness, no doubt, but none the less did it trouble what it designed to benefit.

Mrs. Chauncey's views were undoubtedly the more correct ones. She had not been blind to the exhibition of feeling on the part of Nora or James either; but as their conduct had been marked with so much propriety, and whatever feeling had been manifested had been open and in the presence of the parents themselves, and on occasions of peculiar interest, and had been drawn forth without any design, as it were forced from them by the natural excitement of circumstances; and as there was no reason that she could perceive why the matter should be meddled with, it was better to do nothing about it. If they were fond of each other, she did not see how they, the parents, could help it, or the parties themselves either.

Mr. Chauncey had, by his manoeuvre to prevent a premature engagement, virtually accomplished the very thing he designed to hinder. He had brought them into a relation with each other by a cold, business-like method, which ought and probably would in time have been brought about by the delicate and heart stirring influence of the ethereal heavenly flame.

James, in the ardor of his feelings, did indeed thank the gentleman for his confidence, and for his consent to love Nora, but at the time thought little about the pledge exacted in return. He meant faithfully to keep it, of course; but how love was to fare, with no manifestation on either side beyond the common

courtesies of life, he did not think, nor could he, with his young experience, realize.

Nor was Nora any wiser in this respect. She also gave the pledge and sealed it with a kiss, and meant to keep it too, and was very happy.

Those, however, who may read this story, and have a knowledge of life, can very easily comprehend what a very difficult task has been assigned them.

They may love as much as they please, but there must be no manifestation of it! Nora may listen to the whisperings of love from others, but the mouth of her present lover must be shut!

Can love exist on no richer food than mere civility, especially in its tender age? It has no doubt in maturer years survived through cold neglect and harsh treatment; but such cases even are rare, and perhaps what seems the holy affection, may after all be nothing beyond a principle of duty acting on a tender conscience.

Why should there be such aching of the heart until there comes the free interchange of fond expressions? Eye meeting eye in tender glance, hand clasping hand in warm embrace, soft whispering tones breathing forth the pent-up emotions of the heart! Take these away, the flame becomes a consuming fire or expires for want of air.

Take away from the husband and wife all endearing epithets, all gentle attentions, all manifestation of tender emotion — the tear at separation, and the smile of joy at meeting, and the fond caress — and what is there to distinguish that blessed union from a partnership for business?

Love is not a fancy or a dream; it is a vital power — Heaven's choicest gift! It has survived the Fall — tainted, indeed, but enough of original purity and power left to proclaim its heavenly origin; and to those who cherish it with tender care, and realize its quickening power, a talisman it proves, to mollify the ills, and brighten to its close the path of life. But its sensitive emotions must be nurtured, and the cold blasts of indifference shut out, and its atmosphere warm with demonstrative sympathy, or it will droop and die.

James and Nora very soon began to realize what they had done, or rather what had been done to them; and it seemed as if a drop of bitterness had been thrown into their cup that became more and more palpable as days and months passed on.

James determined most religiously to keep his part of the

pledge, and like the man who, attempting to carry himself very erect, bent over backwards, so, in his effort to avoid a breach of promise, he became less attentive to Nora than was by any means required. And as the secret of their situation was known only to the parents and themselves, it is not strange that when one was at hand who looked upon James with quite as much favor as was compatible with female delicacy, under the fact that there had been no demonstration of special regard on his part, noticing an apparent coldness between her cousin and him, should be very ready to take every fair advantage of this state of things.

Louise was not handsome, but she had an agreeable countenance and very sprightly manners, and although not so well educated as Nora, nor possessing a mind of such character, yet of pleasant temperament and a ready flow of words, and very ready at all times to oblige. She had from the first manifested a kindly disposition towards James, and being of the same age, the two had gone on very pleasantly together, although James had never manifested any special interest, for the reason that he never felt any. Of late, the change in her brother Tom, and the strong regard he felt for James, had brought the latter and herself into a more intimate relation. "James," she often said, "seemed very near to her—more like a relative." This was all well enough,—the mere expression of grateful feelings for the benefit he had been to her brother; but when what seemed at one time a decided case of love between James and Nora had relaxed into merely studied politeness, she saw no reason why she might not resume the old free-and-easy intimacy she had enjoyed before Nora returned.

But who cannot anticipate the complicated trials to which the youthful lovers must be exposed under the circumstances in which they were placed. Nora, surrounded by youths eagerly seeking her favor, receiving attentions from those whom James knew to be far above him in the estimation of the world, and, for all he knew, in the estimation of Nora's parents; and Nora seeing little of James, except during meal-time; or if occasionally he spent an hour at home in the evening, his attention mostly engrossed by the ready tongue and playful sallies of her cousin Louise.

The result was, that at the expiration of the first year they were apparently in a state of estrangement from each other, and what intercourse they had, especially if alone, rather pain-

ful and embarrassing. A word from either might have removed the difficulty, but that word could not be spoken.

CHAPTER XX.

THE new hand whom Mr. Chauncey had engaged at his dissolution with Tinkham proved indeed a great acquisition. Mr. Parker, although a young man, was a complete master of business, and especially of that branch in which Mr. Chauncey was engaged. New life was imparted to the concern, a more extended field opened for commissions from abroad, and more caution exercised in importations on their own account.

Tom had done very well on some accounts, but there were reasons why a different agent should be sent to represent the house,—one whose manners were more engaging, and whose capacity for business was more enlarged; and besides that, Tom himself did not like the climate, and was never in health during the spring and summer months. James was very ready to take his place, and, in Mr. Parker's judgment, was just the one to make his mark abroad, and, in time, to become of material advantage to the concern.

James was to sail the first of December. Nora was from home, having gone to make a visit at Mrs. Lansing's, but was expected home the last week in November.

"I am sure she will be here," said Mrs. Chauncey to James but two days before the time appointed for sailing, and while she was overhauling his wardrobe, and arranging things in his trunk, "for I mentioned particularly to her in my last letter the day you were to sail."

James made no reply—he had made up his mind that her delay was intentional. Rumors of late had reached him, through whom we need not say, which made her prolonged stay at this particular time especially ominous.

The morning of the first of December had come, and no tidings from Nora.

After breakfast, as Mr. Chauncey arose from the table, he said to James,—

"Parker and I will accompany you to the vessel, so I will not say good-by. Will you call at the office?"

"Oh, yes, sir, by all means."

"Papa," said Mrs. Chauncey, "I want to see you a moment." And following her to her room, she thus began,—

"My dear husband, I feel so sorry, I don't know what to do!"

"About what?"

"Why, that Nora has not returned. James, I fear, is almost broken-hearted."

"Pooh, pooh! nonsense!"

"Only think, dear husband, how these two children have been situated! Have you forgotten all about our early days? You know in your heart that you love James, and that you had rather give our dear Nora to him than to any one we have ever seen."

"Well, haven't I said as much as that, and don't he know it?"

"Yes; but, dear, only consider how they have been situated—just think of it! The arrangement you made them come under was well enough if they had no true love for each other, but feeling as they have, with no opportunity for expression, nor even at times for explanation, it has been hard indeed—very hard!"

"Well, my dear wife, what can I do about it? The thing has got to work its own way, for all I see."

"Yes; husband, if we had only let the thing, as you call it, entirely alone, it would no doubt have gone on well enough; but now just think a moment how matters stand—there is really an estrangement between them. Yet they love one another,—I know they do. And now here is James about to go away, feeling most wretchedly, and Nora staying away, I have no doubt, because she dreads taking leave; and there is no telling when they may see each other again—perhaps never!" And Mrs. Chauncey began to wipe away the tears her sympathizing heart had started.

Mr. Chauncey had now become worked up too, and was walking back and forth, and "chawing hard."

"Tell me what I'm to do, then?" his voice now quite earnest. "I can't fly to C—and bring Nora here before 12 o'clock, and if she were here what could I do with things then? It must somehow work its own way; hang it all, it's a bother all round; I wish I'd never meddled with the thing any way."

"Why not just say to James that you take off the restrictions laid upon their intercourse, and let them at least write to one another what they please, or let me tell him."

"Tell him what you please, only let me get rid of the thing; botheration to it! a man might better play with fire than meddle with such things; he'll get his fingers burnt any way—anything more?"

"No, only a kiss."

Mr. Chauncey walked off, muttering as he went, "Confusion, botheration, fiddlesticks."

A short time after Mr. Chauncey had left the house James came down from his room and entered the sitting room where Mrs. Chauncey was. She seemed much agitated, for she was walking about, her hands clasped and her eyes filled with tears. As soon as she saw James her feelings overpowered her and she sat down and gave full vent to her grief.

James walked the room in silence a few moments and then stepped up to Mrs. Chauncey. She looked up at him.

"Must you go so soon! the vessel will not sail before 12 o'clock!"

"I must leave before long; I have some few things to arrange yet; but I wish to place in your hand this little token (handing her the breastpin, which of late he had constantly worn), that when Miss Nora returns you may give it to her. I think my keeping it may not be any longer in accordance with her wishes, and yet it may trouble her to make a personal request for it."

Mrs. Chauncey took it; she did not at the moment comprehend his meaning. She had been told once by Nora that she had given James a keepsake and had received one from him; but that was some three years ago, and had not been treasured in her memory as anything beyond children's play, and was now entirely forgotten; and her mind at the time intent upon communicating what she considered very important intelligence, this matter seemed of little consequence.

"I am very sorry," she replied, "that Nora has not been able to get home in time; I know she will feel very bad, but, you must write to each other; and my husband has given me leave to say to you that you need not consider those restrictions which he laid upon your intercourse any longer binding; you are both at liberty to communicate as you please."

James took her hand.

"Mr. Chauncey is very kind and you are very kind. I

cannot tell you all I feel; you have indeed been father and mother to me, and if ever I fail in duty or love to you both, I shall have fallen so low that my regard will be worth nothing to any one. I fear, though, that you will find when Nora returns that she will not care for a fuller and freer interchange of views and feelings than we have hitherto enjoyed."

James was greatly excited; it was with difficulty he spoke; the thought indeed had been in his mind, and he had suffered intensely from it; but when he attempted to bring out in words the terrible idea that Nora no longer loved him, his manly heart gave way, and he hastened to his room that he might give vent to his feelings in secret.

Mrs. Chauncey saw how deeply he was affected, and most truly did she feel for him. She believed still that Nora loved him; but that she had failed to return in time to bid him farewell or had not sent a line to that effect, looked ominous! And if separated under present circumstances how could a correspondence be commenced or carried on?

While thus reflecting in bitterness of spirit she was suddenly aroused by hearing a carriage drive swiftly to their door. She ran to the window, and then to the street door, and as she opened it Nora flew into her arms.

"Has he gone yet? am I too late?"

"No, my darling; but come in quick: I want to speak with you."

It did not take long to make necessary explanations. Nora had been unavoidably detained, first by missing the regular stage from C——, which put her back two days, and then by an accident to the steamer from Hartford.

Other matters were then dwelt upon, and although of a delicate nature yet perfectly proper between a loving mother and confiding child.

"Has he gone to the office? has he bid you good-by?" Nora asked.

"No; shall I call him?"

"Yes, I must see him — I must see him alone."

In a few moments James entered the room. Nora arose to meet him; their hands were clasped, not a word spoken; their eyes alone told the deep feeling that stirred their hearts. If there had been doubts in the mind of James, that look of Nora's must have scattered them at once.

He raised the hand he held and pressed it to his lips; she

made no resistance; gently he drew her to his breast and whispered —

"Mine now forever."

"Yes, dear, forever."

A while they stood entranced in the bliss which true lovers alone can ever comprehend or enjoy; and then Nora took the little token of their early friendship which her mother had placed in her hands and deliberately fastened it on his breast.

"It was a token of kind and tender interest once — now a pledge of my warmest love."

"My dear children!" exclaimed Mrs. Chauncey as she now entered the room. A glance at them was all-sufficient. She saw how it was, and throwing her arms around them both —

"How happy you have made me!"

"How unspeakably happy you have made me!" said James.

"And me, too, dear mother," said Nora, kissing her again and again.

"Hoity toity! what's all this? what's to pay now?"

"Dear papa!" said Nora, running up and embracing him,

"Oh, how good you are! James and I will bless you all our lives."

James tried to say something as Mr. Chauncey grasped his hand, but his feelings were too highly wrought up. Words however were not needed.

"Well, well, well," said Mr. Chauncey "I see, I see; I hope the thing is all fixed to your minds; it's off my shoulders at any rate."

"But what brought you home, my dear?" said Mrs. Chauncey.

"Why Parker told me he had met Nora riding in a hack in Pearl Street and the driver going it like Jehu. So I thought I would run up and try to help a little to get things 'straightened out like,' but it's all the same; so long as the botheration is done with; and now, my boy, it's time to be making tracks for the vessel."

Partings between dear friends, even under favorable circumstances, are not agreeable, so we will not dwell upon the scene, and will pass to our closing chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO years and more have slipped by, and on a beautiful day in July, a carriage, with four persons besides the driver, was passing the village of Rye, on the stage road to New Haven. The travellers seemed very happy — conversation was lively — the country around them pleasant to look at, and each of them in the hey-day of life. When a few miles had been gone over, after leaving the above-named village, one of the young men within the carriage spoke to the driver,—

“Please take the next road that turns to the right.”

“How is it, Edward,” said the other gentleman, “that you should know where to turn off? I had almost forgotten it myself.”

The young man blushed a little, but answered after a moment’s hesitation,—

“Your sister Maggie pointed it out to me as we came down.”

“I remembered it, brother James, by the old button-ball tree that stands at the corner. Now, Nora, look; you can see the house!”

“I see—I see,” was the reply. And then taking the hand of him who sat beside her, “I almost fear it will make you feel badly, dear James, to see your old home in possession of strangers.”

“I hardly know how I shall feel,” was the reply. “If things have been altered much or suffered to go to ruin, I shall feel sad, no doubt. But God has led both me and Maggie so graciously, and with this hand in mine, too, I should be very ungrateful to allow very sad feelings. I do indeed love the old place, and although I have never been there, it has never been long out of my mind since the day dear Maggie and I and little Tom were torn from each other. Come, no tears now, sister!”

That the reader may the better understand matters, we will relate a few circumstances as to this journey. Edward Bascom had won the heart of Maggie, and had accompanied her to New York the week that James was expected—not only to welcome him, but also that Edward might obtain the sanction of her brother to their union. A fortnight had been spent

at Mr. Chauncey’s, and they, in company with Nora and James are on their way to Mrs. Bascom’s, where the wedding of Edward and Maggie is to be celebrated; and soon after the same ceremony is to be witnessed in New York between James and Nora, immediately after which both parties are to sail for Europe. At Edward’s suggestion, they were to make a call at the old homestead so dear to Maggie and James.

They had now turned into the road, and were drawing near the premises. Edward seemed rather restless, but James and Maggie were silent and motionless—their eyes fixed on passing objects that no doubt recalled their days of childhood.

As the carriage stopped before the door, James spoke,—

“Not a thing altered! even the fence, although new, is of the same pattern!”

Then James looked over into the garden.

“I declare! look, dear Maggie: would you not think that was old Jerry?”

“Why, yes! can it be! do let us get out.”

They soon alighted, and while James and Maggie hastened across the lawn into the garden, Edward and Nora walked about the grounds, admiring their neatness and the beautiful prospect from them.

“Can I be mistaken! is this Uncle Jerry?”

“Jerry’s my name, your honor.”

“And you have forgotten us!”

“Ye’ll pardon me: my eyesight is none the best. May I ax the name?”

“Surely you have not forgotten me, Uncle Jerry,—you have not forgotten little Maggie?” and Maggie laid her hand on his arm.

“Bless my soul! it’s—no—can it be! are you the very childer? and is this Master James?”

“The very same, Uncle Jerry!” giving his hand and shaking it heartily.

“Who would have thought of your making sich a man. Ye’re taller, I think, as the ould captain—rest his soul. Aha! aha! could I ever have thought to see your faces agin!”

A call from Edward now compelled them to leave the old man.

“We will see you again before we go,” said James.

“I suppose,” said Edward, “we ought to speak to the people of the house pretty soon, or they may think strangely of our intrusion.”

“You are right. I did not think.”

"You and Maggie had better go in first, as you are the ones particularly interested in seeing the place."

The door was opened by a young girl.

"Is the gentleman or lady of the house at home?"

"Walk in, if you please. I will call her."

They entered the parlor, and looking about a moment, —

"What does it mean, James? Why the furniture must have been sold with the house; the carpet alone is new — oh dear, how natural it looks!" and Maggie began to wipe away the tears that fond recollections had started, when the door was opened, and an elderly female entered. There was but a moment's pause, and then Maggie rushed toward her:

"Aunt Sophy! Dear Aunt Sophy!"

"My dear children!" and her arms were around them both.

"Tell me, Aunt Sophy, what it all means? how is it you are here? and the furniture all here?"

"Not all, dear! He got what he could of it, though."

"Who?" said James; "who got it?"

"This gentleman can explain it to you better than I can" — pointing to Edward Bascom, who had just entered the room with Nora leaning on his arm.

Edward smiled as he took the hand of James:

"Pardon me, dear brother, in acting a little underhanded in this matter; this place has been yours for some months, but I durst not reveal the secret until I had gained not only Maggie's consent to be mine, but your approval of our union; it is yours entirely; and all I ask in return is your consent to the arrangement I have made with Mrs. Hayes; and that is, that she is to be housekeeper here, and whether you ever make it a permanent home or not, that at least we meet here every summer and spend some months together; I think Aunt Sophy will not let things get far out of the way, and you and Maggie will feel happier for knowing that one you love so much has a home and a permanent support for life."

"My dear, dear Edward!" exclaimed Maggie, as she grasped his hand and pressed it to her lips.

"He deserves a warmer embrace than that, dear Maggie," said James; "the heart that could devise such a plan of love and generosity is worthy of all the affection you can bestow."

"He knows he has all my heart."

"Yes," said Edward as he folded her in his embrace, "I do know it, and prize it beyond all other riches."

"And I may have a sister's share," said Nora, kissing them

both; "and I thank you for my dear James, as he seems to be unable to speak for himself."

"Words, you know, dear Nora, are not always needed to convey the feelings of the heart; he well knows how happy he has made us, and that is all his noble heart desires."

"And now, Aunt Sophy," said Edward, "do you think you can get us up a dinner that will satisfy some hungry folks?"

"That I can, and very soon, too; in the meantime, Maggie can take a run in the garden and look at her flowers that I have brought back, they are mostly slips, though, from the old plants, but they are thriving."

"Oh, do let me see them!"

"Uncle Jerry will show them to you."

"Now, Brother James," said Maggie, as they were all walking in the garden, "this is but a sample of what he has been doing ever since I first knew him; he cannot be easy without he is making somebody happy."

"But I have not always succeeded as well as I have in this case; but this is no gratuity on my part, only a personal gratification; for I expect to share in all the happiness enjoyed here."

Maggie was correct in her statement; the boy Ned who helped Bill Sanders with his bag of meal, and tried to help Sam Telfair by pasturing his cow, had not yet lost the impression so suddenly made upon his mind, "*that those who had money ought to aid those who had none.*" He has at times been disappointed in his efforts, but never quite discouraged; and many are blessing him not only for pecuniary aid, but for the gentleness of his heart that made his bounty a double blessing.

Sam Telfair is now living in a very pretty cottage, and the old fence has been removed so that no stray cows can intrude upon the mowing lot; and Sam is captain and in good part owner of a fine sloop that sails to and from New York; and his old grandmother is very proud of her home and of her boy, and thinks Sammy has done it all, and is "beholden" to no one.

Sam lets her enjoy her belief, because Edward admires the independent spirit of the old lady, and enjoys seeing her needles at work and listening to her praise of Sammy. Sam is doing well and needs no help now, but he and Edward are warm friends.

Bill Sanders has learned his father's trade and is a thrifty young carpenter; and, it is said, is about to put himself up a house; people think he is getting along rapidly for a young man, but he is industrious and saving, and has been employed a good

deal about Mrs. Bascom's premises, and is preparing materials for a handsome dwelling which young Bascom is expecting to erect in the next spring.

Mrs. Thompson and her husband are doing well on their farm, and are a great comfort to Daddy Jack, and help him much in his labors among the pines.

And there are many more who have arisen from a low estate in that vicinity, who seem to feel a strong attachment to Mr. Edward, as he is usually called.

And now let the shadows pass away, and what of substantial truth has been mingled with their airy forms remain a fixture on the heart.

FINIS.

P. S. — The story of little Tom has been purposely omitted, and left for a separate narrative. Causes beyond the control of his brother and sister had placed him out of their reach for the period to which their history extends.