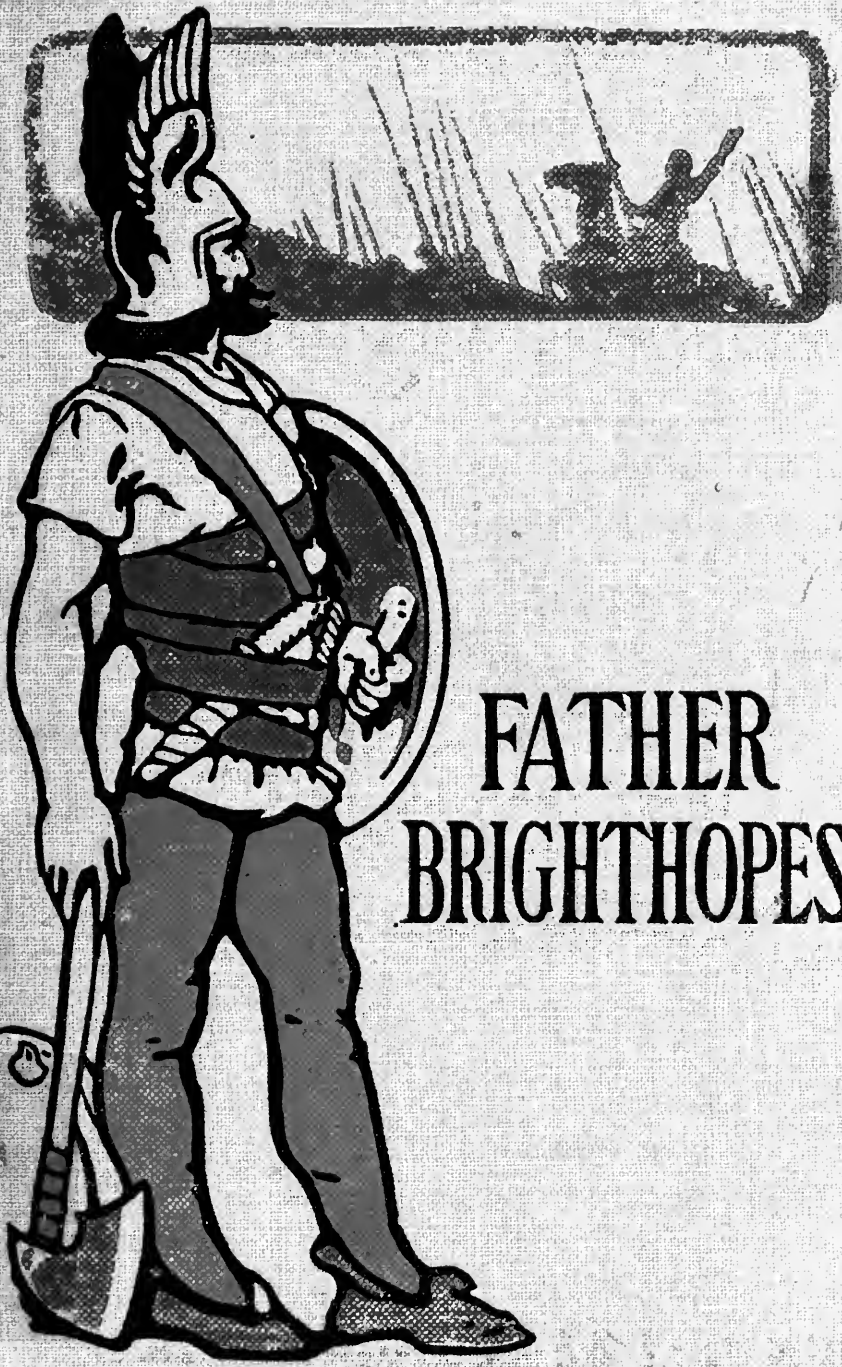

FATHER BRIGHTHOPES

Father Bright Hopes

OR

An Old Clergyman's Vacation

By

J. T. TROWBRIDGE

Author of

"Cudjo's Cave," "The Drummer Boy," Etc.

CHICAGO
M. A. DONOHUE & COMPANY

PREFACE.

"Go through the gate, children," said my aunt, "if you wish to see the garden."

I looked out upon half a dozen merry urchins scaling the garden fence. One had already jumped down into a blackberry-bush, which filled him with disgust and prickles. Another, having thrust his curly head between two rails, stuck fast, and began to cry out against the owner of the grounds—my benevolent uncle—as the author of his calamity.

Then it occurred to me that the prefatory leaf of a volume is like yonder wicket. The garden is not complete without it, although many reckless young people rush to the enclosure, creeping under and climbing over at any place, in order to plunge at once amid the fruits and flowers. But the wise always go through the gate; and the little fellow who leaps among the briers or hangs himself in the fence has only himself to blame for the misfortune.

So I resolved to put together this little wicket of a preface; and now, as I throw it open to my friends, let me say a few words about the garden-walks I have prepared.

That they contain some things beautiful, as well as useful, is my sincere trust. Yet I warn thee, ardent youth, and thee, romantic maid, that you will find no hothouse plants, no frail exotics, here. I may promise you some stout sunflowers, however,—pinks, pea-blossoms and peonies,—also a few fresh roses, born in the free country air.

Scorn not these homely scenes, my friends; for you may perchance find the morning-glory of Truth blooming at your side; the vine of Hope overarching your path like a rainbow; yea, and the tree of Life growing in the midst of the garden.

I hope no one will complain of the gay birds singing and fluttering among the boughs; for they can do but slight damage to the sober fruit, and the visitor may owe it to their cheerful strains if he is preserved from drowsiness amid the odors of the poppy-beds.

CONTENTS.

FATHER BRIGHTHOPES;

OR,

AN OLD CLERGYMAN'S VACATION.

CHAPTER I.

A "UNITED HAPPY FAMILY."

THERE was an unpleasant scowl on Mr. Royden's face, as he got out of his wagon in the yard, and walked, with a quick pace, towards the rear entrance of his house.

"Samuel!" said he, looking into the wood-shed, "what are you about?"

The sharp tone of voice gave Samuel quite a start. He was filling a small flour-sack with walnuts from a bushel-basket placed upon the work-bench, his left hand holding the mouth of the bag, while his right made industrious use of a tin dipper.

"O, nothing—nothing much!" he stammered, losing his hold of the sack, and making a hasty attempt to recover it. "There! blast it all!"

The sack had fallen down, and spilled its contents all over his feet.

"What *are* you doing with those nuts?" demanded Mr. Royden, impatiently.

"Why, you see," replied the lad, grinning sheepishly, as he began to gather up the spilled treasure, "I'm making—a piller."

"A what?"

"A piller,—to sleep on. There ain't but two feathers in the one on my bed, and they are so lean I can't feel 'em."

"What foolishness!" muttered Mr. Royden, smiling notwithstanding his ill-humor. "But let your *pillow* alone for the present, and take care of the horse."

"The bag won't stand up, if I leave it."

"Then let it fall down; or set it against the wood-pile. Go and do as I bid you."

Samuel reluctantly left his occupation, and went lazily to unharness the horse, while Mr. Royden entered the old-fashioned kitchen.

The appearance of her uncle was anything but agreeable to poor Hepsy Royden, who stood on a stool at the sink,—her deformed little body being very short,—engaged in preparing some vegetables for cooking. Tears were coursing down her sickly cheeks, and her hands being in the water, it was not convenient to wipe her eyes. But, knowing how Mr. Royden hated tears, she made a hasty

snatch at a towel to conceal them. He was just in time to observe the movement.

"Now, what is the matter?" he exclaimed, fretfully. "I never see you, lately, but you are crying."

Hepsy choked back her swelling grief, and pursued her work in silence.

"What ails you, child?"

"I can't tell. I—I wish I was different," she murmured, consulting the towel again; "but I am not very happy."

"Come, come! cheer up!" rejoined Mr. Royden, more kindly, feeling a slight moisture in his own eyes. "Don't be so down-hearted!"

His words sounded to him like mockery. It was easy to say to a poor, sickly, deformed girl, "Be cheerful!" but how could cheerfulness be expected of one in her condition?

He passed hastily into the adjoining room; and Hepsy sobbed audibly over the sink. She was even more miserable than he could conceive of. It was not her unattractive face and curved spine, in themselves, that caused her deep grief,—although she had longed, till her heart ached with longing, to be like her beautiful cousins,—but she felt that she was an unloved one, repulsive even to those who regarded her with friendly pity.

Mr. Royden had left the door unlatched behind him, and Hepsy heard him speak to his wife. Her heart swelled with thankfulness when he alluded

to herself; and the feeling with which he spoke surprised her, and made her almost happy.

"You should not put too much on the poor child," he said.

"O, la!" replied Mrs. Royden; "she don't hurt herself, I hope."

"She is very feeble and low-spirited," continued the other. "You shouldn't send her out there in the kitchen to work alone. Keep her more with you, and try to make her cheerful. Her lot would be a hard one enough, if she had all the luxuries of life at her command. Do be kind to her!"

Had Mr. Royden known what a comfort those few words, so easily spoken, proved to Hepsy's sensitive heart, he would have blessed the good angel that whispered them in his ear. She wept still; but now her tears were a relief, and she dried them soon. She felt happier than she had done in many days before; and when she heard his voice calling her in the other room, she ran cheerfully to learn what he wished of her.

"Sarah has got a letter from Chester, and he sends his love to you," said he. "Read what he writes, Sarah."

Sarah stood by a window, eagerly running her clear blue eye over her brother's letter. Hepsy, trembling with agitation, looked up at her rosy face, and shrank into the corner by the chimney to avoid observation. At first she had turned very pale, but now her cheeks burned with blushes.

"Why, he says he is coming home in a week!" cried Sarah.

Mrs Royden uttered an exclamation of surprise, looking up from her sewing; Hepsy shrank still further in the corner, and Mr. Royden asked, impatiently,

"What boyish freak is that?"

"He does not explain. There is some mystery about it," replied Sarah. "I warrant he has been getting into trouble."

"If he has, he shall stay at home and work on the farm!" exclaimed her father, in a tone of displeasure. "Read the letter aloud, now, so that we can all hear it."

Sarah commenced at the beginning, and went through with the four hastily-written pages. The listeners were very attentive; Hepsy especially. She fixed her expressive eyes on her cousin with a look of intense interest. When allusion was made to her, the poor girl's countenance lighted up with pleasure, and her tears gathered again, but did not fall.

"O, a letter!—who from?" cried a ringing voice.

The interruption was a relief to Hepsy. The children had returned from the fields; they entered the sitting-room like a little band of barbarians, with Lizzie—a girl some twelve years old—at their head, laughing, talking, screaming, in an almost frightful manner.

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed Mr. Royden, putting down his foot, impatiently.

"Children!" said Mrs. Royden, with contracted brows, "you don't know how your noise shoots through my poor old head! You drive me distracted!"

"Lizzie runned away from me!" bawled a little bareheaded fellow, with a face red as an Indian's, and not very clean. "The old thing! I'll strike her."

And the young hero, wiping his face with his sleeve, made a savage dash at his sister, with intent to scratch and bite. But Lizzie repelled the attack, holding him at a safe distance by the hair. Upon this, he shifted his mode of attack, and resorted to kicking, with even worse success; for, losing his balance, he fell, and came down upon the back of his head, with a jar which showed him many stars in the firmament of his cranium.

"I never saw such actions!" muttered Mrs. Royden, putting aside her sewing with an ominous gesture, and hastening to the scene of the disaster.

Lizzie dodged, but not in time to avoid several smart cuffs which her mother bestowed on her ears.

"I couldn't help it,—he threw himself down!" exclaimed the girl, angrily, and with flashing eyes.

"What did you run away from him for?"

"I didn't! He stopped to throw stones at the

birds, and wanted us to wait. Didn't he, Georgie?"

"Yes, he did," said Georgie. "And he said he'd tell that we ran away from him, if we didn't wait."

"I didn't!" exclaimed the boy on the floor, kicking at a furious rate.

"Stop that!" said Mr. Royden. "Willie, do you hear?"

Willie kicked harder than ever, and began to tear his collar with his dirty hands. Mrs. Royden could not stand and see that.

"Why don't you govern him, when you set out to?" she asked, rather sharply, of her husband.

"There! there! Willie will get up and be a good boy," he rejoined, coaxingly.

But Willie did not; and his mother, picking him up very suddenly, shook him till his teeth chattered and it seemed his head must fly off; then set him down in a little chair, so roughly that the dishes rattled in the pantry as if shaken by an earthquake.

"Mother! mother!" said Mr. Royden, hastily, "you'll injure that child's brain!"

"I believe in making children mind, when I set about it," replied his wife, winding up her treatment with a pair of well-balanced cuffs on Willie's ears. "There!—how does that set? Will you be so naughty again?"

The urchin was quite breathless and confused; but as soon as he had gathered strength, and col-

lected his senses, he set up a yell of rage, which might have been heard half a mile; upon which Mrs. Royden snatched him up, and landed him in a clothes-press, before he knew what new disaster was going to happen. His cries grew fainter and fainter to the ears of the family in the sitting room, until, the dungeon door being closed, they were muffled and smothered altogether.

His mother, having disposed of him, reappeared in one of her worst humors.

"Go about your work, Hepsy!" she cried. "Lizzie, go and wash George's face. Stop your sniveling! What are you running off for, Sarah?"

"To get out of the noise," said Sarah.

"I've as good a mind to box your ears as ever I had to eat!" exclaimed her mother. "Sit down and finish that seam, you saucy thing!"

Sarah sat down, with a very wry face, while Mr. Royden, looking melancholy and displeased, left the house.

By dinner-time the children had worn off their ill temper, and Mrs. Royden had recovered her equanimity.

"Come, now, let us see if we can't have peace in the family," said Mr. Royden, as he sat down at the table, addressing the children, but intending the words for his wife's ear as well.

"Sammy keeps making faces at me!" complained Willie, whose eyes were still red with crying.

"O, I didn't!" exclaimed Samuel, with great candor.

"I seen him!" said Georgie.

"I was only doing *so*,"—and Sam, throwing his head to one side, winked with his left eye and looked up at the ceiling with the other.

"What did you do that for?" asked Mr. Royden, beginning to feel irritated again.

"I was thinking how the old goose does when she thinks it's going to rain," replied Sam, performing the operation again, to the amusement of the children.

Mr. Royden smiled.

"Haven't you anything else to do but to watch the old goose?" he asked, pleasantly. "How about that pillow?"

"O, that's fixed! I'm going to sleep on it to-night, to try it."

"Hepsy,"—Mr. Royden seemed just to have discovered that she was not at the table,—"there's room for you. Why don't you sit down?"

"O, she'd just as lief wait and tend the baby," said Mrs. Royden.

"But the baby is still."

"She wants to read our Chester's letter," spoke up James, a lad of fifteen, so loud that Hepsy could hear him in the next room.

"Come, Hepsy! come and eat your dinner," cried Mr. Royden.

She said she was not hungry; but he insisted;

and she sat down at the table, looking very pale, and with really no appetite.

Mr. Royden then proceeded to disclose the news which had probably occasioned the unpleasant scowl on his features, at his return from the post-office, two hours before. He said he had received a letter from his cousin Rensford, the clergyman, who proposed to visit them in the course of one or two weeks.

"His health is feeble, and he wants a vacation in the country. He expects me to write, if it will be perfectly convenient for us to have him here a month or so."

"I don't know how we can, any way in the world," said Mrs. Royden.

"O, I hope he won't come!" cried James. "If he does, we can't have any fun,—with his long face."

"Ministers are so hateful!" added Lizzie.

"He shan't come!" cried Georgie, flourishing his knife.

"Hush, children!" said Mrs. Royden, petulantly. "Put down that knife, Georgie!"

"We want a good, respectable private chaplain, to keep the young ones still," quietly remarked Sarah.

"You used to be just like them," said her mother. "If you'd do half as much for them as I have done for you, there wouldn't be much trouble with them."

"How does that fit?" slyly asked James, pinching his sister's elbow.

"Samuel Cone!" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, sternly; "take your plate and go away from the table!"

"Why, what has he done now?" inquired her husband.

"He put a piece of potato in Willie's neck. Samuel, do you hear?"

"Yes'm," said Sam, giggling and preparing to obey.

Willie had laughed at first at the tickling sensation, but now he began to cry.

"It's gone clear down!" he whined, pressing his clothes tight to his breast. "You old ugly—"

He struck at Sam, just as the latter was removing from the table. The consequence was, Sam's plate was knocked out of his hand and broken in pieces on the floor. The lad saw Mrs. Royden starting from her chair, and ran as if for his life.

"Now, don't, mother! Let me manage," said Mr. Royden.

She sat down again, as if with a great effort.

"You are welcome to manage, if you choose to. Willie, stop kicking the table! Take that potato out of his clothes, Sarah. Hepsy, why don't you clean up the floor, without being told?"

"See how much mischief you do, with your fooling," said Mr. Royden, with a severe look at Sam.

The boy cast down his eyes, kicking the doorpost with his big toe.

"Come back, now, and eat your dinner. See if you can behave yourself."

"He don't deserve to have a mouthful," exclaimed Mrs. Royden. "What you ever took him to bring up for, I can't conceive; I should think we had children enough of our own, to make us trouble!"

"He's old enough to know better. Come and finish your dinner."

"I don't want no dinner!" muttered Sam.

But he did not require much urging. Half ashamed, and grinning from ear to ear, he took his place again at the table, Hepsy having brought a fresh plate. Meanwhile Sarah had pacified Willie, and recovered the fragments of potato that had wandered down into his trousers.

Peace being restored, the subject of the clergyman's visit was resumed by Mr. Royden.

"I don't know how we can refuse him; it will be disagreeable, on all sides, for him to be here"

"He will not suit us; and I am sure we shall not suit him," replied Mrs. Royden. "He will want to study and be quiet; and, unless he stays in his room all the time, and shuts out the children, I don't know what he will do. More than all that, I couldn't think of having him around the house, any way in the world."

"I wish I knew what to do about it," muttered Mr. Royden, scowling.

"I want you to do just as you think best, now that you have my opinion on the subject."

This was a way Mrs. Royden had of shirking responsibilities. Her husband smiled bitterly.

"If I decide for him to come," said he, "and his visit proves disagreeable, I shall be the only one to blame. But I suppose there is but one course to pursue. We cannot refuse the hospitality of our house; but I sincerely wish he had chosen any other place to spend his vacation."

"It is so strange he should think of coming among plain farmers, in the country!" observed Mrs. Royden.

"O, don't have him here!" cried the younger children, in chorus.

Although there was a large majority of voices against him, Mr. Royden concluded that Sarah might reply to the clergyman's letter, after dinner, telling him pretty plainly how he would be situated if he came; and say that, notwithstanding their circumstances, they would be glad to see him.

"After this," said he, "I should hardly think he would come. But, if he does, we must try and make the best of it."

CHAPTER II.

CHESTER.

It was on a warm and beautiful afternoon, several days subsequent to the scenes just described, when little Willie, who was catching flies on the sitting-room window, suddenly cried out, at the top of his voice,

"There comes Ches', full garlick! I guess the witches are after him!"

There was a general rush to the window. Willie had spoken truly. There, indeed, was Chester, riding down the road, *full gallop,* yet hardly with the aid of one pursued by hags. He sat the horse bravely, and waved his graceful hand to the faces at the window.

Scrambling and screaming with joy, the children ran to the door to meet their brother. Only Hepsy remained in the sitting-room. Her poor heart beat fearfully, her breath came very short, and she was pale, faint and trembling. She had neither strength nor courage to go forward and welcome her cousin. Samuel came from the garden, James from the barn, and the three younger children from the house, to meet Chester at the gate. The latter swung himself from the saddle and, catch-

ing up Willie, who had climbed the fence, tossed him playfully upon the horse's back.

"How are you, chuck?" he cried, kissing Lizzie. "Folks all well? Why, Jim, how you have grown!"

"O! O! O!" screamed Willie, afraid of falling, as Sam led the horse into the yard; "take me down!"

"Don't you want to ride?" asked Chester.

"No! I'll fall! O!"

Chester laughed, and took him off, kissing his tanned cheek, before he set him upon the turf.

"I want to ride!" cried Lizzie.

"Do you?" laughed her brother. He threw her up so suddenly that she found herself in a position rather more becoming to boys than girls. The children shouted while she hastily shifted sidewise on the saddle, and Chester put her foot in the stirrup-strap.

"I want to ride, too!" cried Georgie, clinging to his brother's legs.

"Well, we'll see if the pony will carry double. Hold him tight by the bridle, Sam."

Sam liked no better fun. He held the horse while Chester put up George behind Lizzie. The animal curled back his ears, but did not seem to mind it much.

George was so delighted with his position that Willie, who had abdicated his seat voluntarily, now began to cry with envy.

"Do you want to ride now?" said Chester. "Hold fast to Georgie, then."

He put him up, and the child laughed gleefully before his tears were dry.

James looked as if he would like to ride, too, but was too manly to speak of it.

"Hold tight, Willie!" said he.

"I will!" cried the urchin, hugging Georgie with all his might.

"O! you hurt!" roared Georgie. "There's a pop-gun in my jacket pocket, and you squeeze it right into my side."

Chester reached up and removed the pop-gun, much to Georgie's relief.

"Now lead on to the barn, Sam," said he,— "slowly. Don't let the young ones get hurt, when you take them off."

"Let me drive," cried Lizzie.

Sam looked up for Chester's approval, and abandoned the reins to the young lady. The horse moved on towards the barn, good-naturedly, as if he was used to such nonsense.

Chester could not help laughing to see Willie hug Georgie with all his might; his brown cheeks pressed close against his brother's jacket, and his little bare feet sticking out almost straight on each side, his legs being very short, and the animal's back very broad.

While the young man stood there laughing,

someone clasped him from behind, and kissed his cheek.

"Sarah! my dearest sister!" cried Chester, folding her in his arms; "I am glad to see you! How beautiful you grow!"

"You can well afford to say that," replied Sarah, gazing with undisguised admiration at his handsome face, and curling black whiskers. "O! I should hardly have known you!"

Chester laughed, well pleased with the praise implied, and, clasping her waist, was dancing with her towards the house, when the screams of little Willie attracted their attention.

Looking round, they saw the boy Sam, who had a rare genius for mischief, tickling the bottom of Willie's foot with a twig. The latter could not help himself; kicking was impracticable, considering his position, and to disengage a hand from George's waist would have endangered his neck by a fall. The little fellow was completely at the mercy of Sam, who walked by the horse, plying the twig, and laughing with infinite good-nature.

"Sam! you rascal!" cried Chester; "let that boy alone."

"I'm only keeping the flies off his foot," replied Sam, candidly.

"Well, if you don't take care, I'll keep the flies off your back with a larger stick than that! Why do you want to spoil the little shaver's ride in that way?"

By this time, Willie, feeling deeply injured, began to bellow, and Lizzie was obliged to drive twice around the big wood-pile, in the center of the yard, to pacify him.

Mrs. Royden met Chester in the doorway, and kissed him affectionately. She proposed half a dozen leading questions with regard to his conduct, his health and his designs, almost in a breath; all of which he answered equivocally, or postponed altogether.

"Where is Hepsy?" he asked, throwing himself on a chair, and wiping the sweat from his fine forehead with a perfumed handkerchief.

"She'll come soon enough," replied his mother, in a disagreeable tone. "Have *you* got to using *perfumes,* Chester?"

The young man flirted his handkerchief, smiling disdainfully, and said he "supposed he had."

"For my part, I think they are very nice," added the admiring Sarah.

"Do you, sis? Well, you shall have as much of them as you want, when my trunks come."

"Where are your trunks?" asked Mrs. Royden.

"At the tavern. I was in a hurry to come home; so I hired a saddle and galloped over the road. Let one of the boys harness up, and go for the luggage."

"Why, your father has gone to the village himself. Didn't you meet him?"

"No; he must have gone by the west road. I

wonder if he will stop at the tavern? If he does, the landlord will tell him my traps are there."

"I presume he will go to the tavern, child. We are expecting his cousin Rensford, the clergyman, to-day, and your father went as much to bring him over as anything."

"Pshaw! the old minister?" cried Chester. "How long is he going to stay?"

"I hope not a great while," said Sarah. "Anything but a minister—out of the pulpit."

"He'll just spoil my visit," rejoined her brother. "He has been here, hasn't he? I think I remember seeing him, when I was about so high," measuring off the door-post.

"He spent the night here, several years ago; but we don't know much about him, only by hearsay. He's a very good man, we are told," said Mrs. Royden, with a sigh; "but how we are going to have him in the family, I don't know."

Chester changed the topic of conversation by once more inquiring for Hepsy. The girl did not make her appearance; and he expressed a desire to "see a basin of water and a hair-brush."

"You shall have the parlor bedroom," said Sarah.

"But if Mr. Rensford comes—" suggested her mother.

"O, he can go up-stairs."

"I won't hear to that!" cried Chester. "Give

the old man the luxuries. I want to see the inside of my old room again."

"But Hepsy and the children have that room now."

"Never mind; I want to look into it. So bring up a basin of water, Sis."

The young man went up-stairs. He heard a flutter as he was about entering his old room. He went in; and Hepsy, pale, palpitating, speechless, caught in the act of arranging her brown hair,—which, like her eyes, was really beautiful,—shrank from his sight behind the door.

"Hillo! so I've found you!" he exclaimed, heartily. "I've been hunting the house through for you. Are you afraid of your cousin?"

The blood rushed into the poor girl's face, as she gave him her quivering hand. He did not kiss her, as he had kissed his sisters; but he pressed her hand kindly, and spoke to her in a very brotherly tone, inquiring how she was, and expressing delight at seeing her again.

As soon as she had recovered her self-possession, her eyes began to beam with pleasure, and her tongue found words. When Sarah came up, the two were sitting side by side upon a trunk; and Chester was rattling away at a great rate, telling his poor cousin of his adventures.

He went into another room to perform his ablutions, and Hepsy was left alone, her veins thrilling, her head dizzy, and all her nerves unstrung. The

meeting, the surprise, the agitation and the joy, had been too much for her sensitive nature; and she sought relief in a flood of tears.

Chester was very restless. Scarcely was he seated again in the sitting-room, with his cravat freshly-tied, and his hair and whiskers newly-curled, when he thought of a call he wished to make before night. His mother scolded him dreadfully for running off so soon; but he did not mind it, and ordered Sam to bring his horse to the door.

The children were all around him, begging him not to go; but Willie encouraged the idea, provided he could go too, and ride behind.

"O, you can't ride this time," said Chester.

"Yes, I can. Sam tickled my foot; I couldn't ride good before," whined the child.

But his brother did not acknowledge his claims to indemnification, and mounted the horse. Willie began to cry, and, seizing a hoe, charged upon Samuel furiously, as the author of all his woes.

Chester laughed; but his mother cried out from the doorway, "Do let him ride! Why can't you?" and he called Sam to put the little hero up. He took him over the pommel of the saddle, and galloped away in fine style, leaving George crying with envy.

Willie was delighted, feeling no fear in Chester's arms; and when the latter asked him, in a coaxing tone, if he would go back, the little fellow

said he would; and his brother swung him down by the arm from the saddle-bow. He went trudging through the sand, to meet the other children, and brag of his ride, while the young man galloped gayly over the hill.

CHAPTER III.

EVENING AT THE FARM-HOUSE.

It was dusk when Chester returned. Riding up to the barn-door, he found Sam trying to make the cat draw a basket of eggs by a twine harness. Sam jumped up quickly, having cast off the traces, and began to whistle very innocently. The cat in harness darted around the corner, and disappeared in the shadows; while the mischief-maker swung the eggs on his arm, and, appearing suddenly to have observed Chester, stopped whistling, out of respect.

"What are you doing to that cat?" cried the young man.

"What cat? O!" said Sam, candidly, "she's got tangled in a string somehow, and I was trying to get her out."

"What a talent you have for lying!" laughed Chester. "Now, do you think you can take this horse over to the village without getting into some kind of a scrape?"

"O, yes!"

"Will you ride slow?"

"I won't go out of a walk," exclaimed Sam, positively.

"O, you may trot him, or go on a slow gallop, if you like; but don't ride fast, for he is jaded. Leave him at the tavern, and come home as fast as you like."

Sam was delighted with the idea; and, having put the eggs in a safe place, mounted the horse from the block, and galloped him slowly down the road.

In a little while he began to look back, and touch the animal gently with the whip, when he thought he was out of sight. Racing appeared to Sam to be capital fun. Instead of taking the nearest way to the village, he turned at the first cross-road, along which he could pursue his harmless amusement in a quiet and unostentatious manner.

In a few minutes he had lashed the horse into what is familiarly termed a "keen jump." The fences, the stones, the grove, with its deepening shadows, seemed to be on a "keen jump" in the opposite direction. The boy screamed with delight, and still plied the whip. Suddenly his straw hat was taken off by the wind, and went fluttering over the animal's crupper.

This was an unforeseen catastrophe; and, fearing lest he should not be able to find the lost article on his return, Sam attempted to slacken speed. But the animal manifested a perfect indifference to all his efforts. He sawed on the bit, and cried *whoa,* in vain. Frank was not a horse to be whipped for nothing, and he now meant to have

his share of the fun. He seemed almost to fly. The rider became alarmed, and, to increase his fright, his left foot slipped out of the stirrup. In an instant he found himself bounding in a fearful manner over the pommel, then on the animal's neck. He cleared his right foot, abandoned the reins, and clung to saddle and mane with all his might. But he somehow lost his balance; he then experienced a disagreeable sensation of falling; and, after a confused series of disasters, of which he had but a numb and sickening consciousness, he made a discovery of himself, creeping out of a brier-bush, on the roadside.

The first object that attracted his attention was a riderless horse darting up the next hill, a quarter of a mile off; and here we must leave the bold adventurer, limping slowly, and with much trouble, over the road, in the dim hope of catching, at some future time, a fleet animal, going at the rate of fifteen miles an hour.

After sending Sam with the horse, Chester walked toward the house; but the family there assembled appearing to be in a sad state of confusion generally, he stopped before reaching the door. Willie was shrieking in the shed, and striking his cousin Hepsy, because she insisted on washing his feet before putting him to bed. Georgie was in the kitchen, blubbering sullenly; he had seen Sam trot Frank out of the yard, and was angry at losing the ride he had anticipated

on Chester's return. Lizzie was trying to get a book away from Sarah, with much ado, and Mrs. Royden was scolding promiscuously.

"What a home to cheer a fellow, after six months' absence!" murmured the young man, feeling sick at heart; "and it would seem so easy to make it cheerful and pleasant!"

He turned away, and, walking into the orchard, met his brother James.

"Hasn't father returned?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; two hours ago."

"Did he bring my trunks?"

"Yes," said James; "and a load he had of it. The old minister is come, with baggage enough of his own to last, I should think, a year or two."

Chester expressed some disagreeable sentiments touching the old clergyman's visit, and walked with James into the lane, behind the barn, to find his father.

Mr. Royden was rejoiced to meet his long-absent son.

"You milk the old red cow yet, I see," said Chester.

"Yes," replied his father, continuing the humble occupation; "I suppose I shall have to as long as we keep her."

"How many times that foot of hers has knocked over a frothing pail for me!" rejoined Chester.

"I don't know why it is, but nobody except me can do anything with her," said Mr. Royden.

"The hired men are as afraid of her foot as of a streak of lightning. Sometimes, when I am away, the boys try to milk her; but she thinks she has a perfect right to knock them around as she pleases. I believe it is because they are not gentle; they fool with her, and milk so slow that she gets out of patience; then, when she kicks, they whip her. That's no way, James. You see, I never have any trouble with her. I'd rather milk her than any cow in the yard; I never knew her to kick but once or twi—"

"This is the third time!" said Chester, laughing.

While his father was speaking the cow's foot had made one of its sudden and rapid evolutions. The pail was overturned; the milk was running along the ground, and the animal was running down the lane.

Mr. Royden got up from the stool, and looked at the mischief she had done, with a blank expression.

"You didn't get spattered, I hope?" said he.

"No, I think not;" and Chester passed his hand over his clothes.

"Shall I head her off?" asked James.

"No. I had just finished."

"That's just the time she always kicks, father."

"I know it; and I ought to have been on the lookout. She don't like to have any talking going

on during the business of milking. Come, let us go to the house."

The children had been put to bed; the candles were lighted, and the sitting-room looked quite cheerful.

"What made you stay so long, Chester?" asked Mrs. Royden. "You haven't had any supper, have you?"

"Yes; the Dustans invited me to tea."

"And did you walk home?"

"Walk! No, indeed, I rode."

"But you are not going to keep that horse over night, on expense, I hope," said Mrs. Royden.

Chester replied that he had sent Sam with him to the village.

"Now, that boy will do some mischief with him, you may depend! Why couldn't you walk over from the tavern in the first place, instead of hiring a horse? You shouldn't be so careless of expense, Chester."

The young man began to whistle. The entrance of Sarah seemed a relief to him; and he immediately proposed a game of whist. His mother opposed him strenuously, saying that she wanted him to talk, and tell all about his fortunes and prospects, that evening; but it was his object to avoid all conversation touching his own conduct, in presence of the family.

"Come, Jim," said he, "where are the cards? Will Hepsy play?"

"Hepsy is busy," replied Mrs. Royden, curtly. "If you must play, Lizzie will make up the set."

"But the minister?" suggested Lizzie.

"Yes," said her mother. "It will not do to play before him."

"He has gone to bed, I am pretty sure," cried Sarah. "He was very tired, and it is all still in his room."

"Let us have a little sport, then, when we can," said Chester.

The table was set out; the players took their places, and the cards were shuffled and dealt.

"They don't know one card from another over at Deacon Smith's," observed Sarah, sorting her hand. "I never knew such stupid people."

"What is that,—a knave or a king?" inquired Lizzie, holding up one of her cards.

"Don't you know better than to show your hand?" cried James, who was her partner. "It's a knave, of course. The king has no legs."

"You needn't be so cross about it!" murmured Lizzie.

"If you don't know how to play," retorted her brother, "you'd better let Hepsy take your place."

"Children!" cried Mrs. Royden, "if you can't get along without quarreling, I will burn every card I find in the house. Now, do you mark my word!"

To keep peace, Chester proposed to take Lizzie

for his partner; a new hand was dealt, and the play went on.

"I wish," said Mrs. Royden, as her husband entered the room, "I wish you would make the children give up their whist for this evening."

But Mr. Royden liked to have his family enjoy themselves; and, as long as cards kept them good-natured, he was glad to see them play. He sat down by the side-table, opened a fresh newspaper he had brought from the village, adjusted his glasses on his nose, and began to read.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD CLERGYMAN.

In a little while, Hepsy came in from the kitchen, having finished her work, and, timidly drawing a chair near the whist-table, sat down to watch the game.

"I don't want Hepsy looking over my shoulder!" exclaimed Lizzie, with an expression of disgust.

"If you would let her tell you a little about the game, you would get along full as well," observed James, sarcastically.

"I don't want *her* to tell me!"

"Hepsy," spoke up Mrs. Royden, "why don't you take your sewing? You won't do any good there."

"Do let her look on, if it interests her," said Mr. Royden, impatiently putting down his paper, and lifting his glasses. "Don't keep her at work all the time."

But Hepsy, the moment Lizzie spoke, had shrank away from the table, with an expression of intense pain on her unattractive face.

"Come here, Hepsy," said Chester, drawing a chair for her to his side; "you may look over my shoulder. Come!"

The girl hesitated, while the big tears gathered in her eyes; but he extended his hand, and, taking hers, made her sit down. After he had played his card, he laid his arm familiarly across the back of her chair. Her face burned, and seemed to dry up the tears which had glistened, but did not fall.

Mr. Royden took up his paper again with an air of satisfaction; his wife looked sternly reconciled, and plied her sewing vigorously. The play went on pleasantly; Lizzie feeling so thoroughly ashamed of her unkindness to Hepsy—which she would not have thought of but for Chester's rebuke—that she did not speak another disagreeable word during the evening.

"Put the cards under the table,—quick!" suddenly exclaimed James.

"What's the matter?" asked Sarah.

"The minister is coming!" he added, in a fearful whisper.

Footsteps were indeed heard approaching from the parlor. The young people were in a great flurry, and Sarah and Lizzie hastened to follow James' advice and example. But Chester would not give up his cards.

"Let him come," said he. "If he never saw a pack of cards, it is time he should see one. It is your play, Sarah."

Thus admonished, the children brought out their cards again, and recommenced playing, in a very confused manner. Chester's example was hardly

sufficient to give them courage in the eyes of the minister.

They heard the door open, and there was not a face at the table, except Chester's, but burned with consciousness of guilt.

"Ah, how do you feel, after your journey?" asked Mr. Royden. "Hepsy, place a chair for Mr. Rensford."

"No, no; do not trouble yourself, my child," said the old gentleman, smiling kindly upon the girl. "Let me help myself."

He sat down in the seat she had vacated, behind Lizzie's chair.

"I feel much rested," he added, cheerily. "That nice cup of tea, Sister Royden, has made a new man of me."

Mrs. Royden acknowledged the compliment with a smile, and Mr. Royden proceeded to give his venerable relative a formal introduction to his son Chester. The young man arose proudly, and, holding the cards in his left hand, advanced to offer the other to the clergyman.

"Ah! my young friend again!" cried the old gentleman, with a gleam of genuine sunshine on his face. "I hardly expected to meet you so soon."

Chester's manner changed oddly. He recoiled a step, and, although he maintained his proud bearing, his eye fell, and his cheeks tingled with sudden heat. But, recovering himself almost immedi-

ately, he accepted the proffered hand, and murmured,

"This is a surprise! My compliments to you, sir. I am glad to see you looking so well, after your tedious journey."

"You have met before, I take it?" suggested Mr. Royden.

"Only this morning, and that without knowing each other," replied the clergyman. He looked over Lizzie's shoulder. "What is this, my dear? Whist?"

"Yes, sir," murmured the girl, feebly, and with a blush of shame.

In her confusion she threw down the worst card she could have played. But James did not do much better; and the trick was Chester's. He smiled as he took it up, and gently admonished his sister to be more careful of the game.

The old gentleman entered into conversation with the parents, and the children gradually recovered their nerves. But all were now anxious that the play should be brought to a close. It so happened that the victory, to Chester and Lizzie, depended upon one trick. She played wrong, and they lost it; when, to the astonishment of all, Mr. Rensford exclaimed,

"Ah! that was a bad play, my dear! You should have led your ace, and drawn Sarah's queen, then your ten of trumps would have been good for the next trick. Don't you see?"

"Yes, sir," murmured Lizzie, submissively.

"One would say you were an old hand at the game," cried Chester.

"O, as to that, replied the clergyman, smiling, "I used to be considered a good whist-player in my younger days."

"Won't you take a hand now, sir?"

"No, I thank you," laughing good-humoredly; "I gave up the amusement twenty years ago. But let me take the cards, if you are done with them, and I will show this little girl a pleasant trick, if I have not forgotten it."

"Certainly, sir," said Chester.

The family began to like the old gentleman already. Lizzie gave him her seat at the table, and looked over his shoulder. He sorted the cards with his thin, white fingers, and gave a number of them historical names, telling her to remember them. He called the game "The Battle of Waterloo." It proved eminently interesting to the older children, as well as to Lizzie; and, in such a simple, beautiful manner did the old man go through with the evolutions, that all, even the proud Chester, afterwards knew more about the last days of Napoleon's power than they had learned in all their lives.

"There!" exclaimed the clergyman, "isn't that as good as whist?"

"I like it better," answered Lizzie, who found

herself already leaning fondly on his shoulder. "But what did they do with Napoleon?"

"Would you like to know?"

"O, yes! very much."

"Well, then, I will tell you. Or, since it is getting late, suppose I lend you a little book in the morning, that relates all about it?"

"I would like to read it," said Lizzie.

"Then I will teach you the game, and you can teach it to your little brothers, when they get older," continued the clergyman.

"Lizzie!" spoke up Mrs. Royden, "don't you know better than to lean upon your uncle's shoulder?"

"I didn't think," replied the girl, the smiles suddenly fading from her warm, bright face.

"O, I love to have her!" cried Mr. Rensford, putting his arm around her kindly.

"But I thought you must be very weary," said Mrs. Royden.

"It rests me to talk with happy children, at any time."

"You are not much like me, then; for when I am tired I never want them round."

"Ah! you lose a great deal of comfort, then!" softly observed the old gentleman, kissing Lizzie's cheek. "I had a little girl once, and her name was Lizzie, too," he added, his mild blue eyes beginning to glisten.

"Where is she now?" asked Lizzie.

"In heaven."

The clergyman's voice was scarcely raised above a whisper; but so deep was the silence in the room, that he was heard distinctly. Hepsy's eyes swam with tears; and the rest of the family were more or less affected by the pathetic reply.

"It is a comfort to think she is there, isn't it?" he continued, with a smile of happiness radiating his calm and hopeful countenance. "How good God is to us!" he exclaimed, fervently.

Afterwards, he engaged in cheerful conversation with the parents; but soon expressed a wish to retire, and, kissing Lizzie again and shaking hands with all the rest, with a pleasant word for each, he took his candle, and withdrew.

But he seemed to have left the warmth of his presence behind him. The family had never separated with happier faces and kinder words than on that night; and Sarah, James and Lizzie, went lovingly up-stairs together.

Chester remained with his parents, to have a little private conversation before going to bed. Mrs. Royden broke the silence.

"It is strange what has become of that boy, Samuel. It was time he was back, half an hour ago."

"I've been thinking about him," replied Chester, with an anxious look. "If he is riding that horse all over creation, I wouldn't give much for him, in the morning."

"I never knew the little rascal to do an errand without doing some mischief with it," added his father. "But he does not mean anything very bad. There's no danger of his doing much damage; so let us forget him for the present, Chester, and talk over your affairs."

CHAPTER V.

CHESTER'S CONFESSION.

CHESTER could no longer evade the leading question, "Why had he left the academy?" Much as he dreaded giving an account of his conduct, he could not put it off.

As he anticipated, his father was inexpressibly irritated, and his mother decidedly cross, when he confessed that he had been expelled.

"What did you do to bring such disgrace upon your name?" groaned Mr. Royden, more grieved than angry.

"Well," replied Chester, with a burning face, yet without descending from his proud demeanor, "I suppose I transgressed some of their old fogy laws."

"Broke their regulations! But it must have been something outrageous, to result in an expulsion. Tell the whole truth, Chester."

The young man hesitated no more, but made a "clean breast" of the affair. His expulsion had not been a public one, the daughter of the principal having been intimately concerned in his transgressions. Chester had met her clandestinely, won her affections, and brought about an engagement of

marriage between them, contrary to her father's will and commands.

When Mrs. Royden learned that the young lady was heiress to a comfortable fortune left by a near relative, she was quite ready to forgive her son's rashness. But his father reprimanded him severely.

"I hope you have given up the foolish idea of marrying the romantic girl," he said.

"No, sir,—never!" exclaimed Chester, fervently. "If I lose her, I shall never marry. I have her promise, and I can wait. It will not be long before she can marry without her father's consent as well as with it."

"But what do you intend to do, in the meantime?" asked Mr. Royden, in a rather bitter tone.

"I would like," replied Chester, more humbly, as if anxious to propitiate his father,—"I would like to commence with the next term at the L—— Institute."

"A beautiful way you have gone to work to encourage me in what I am doing for you!" interrupted Mr. Royden. "No, Chester! I shall not hear a word to your going to L——. You must stay at home now until you are of age."

The young man leaned his head upon his hand, and looked gloomily at the floor. His father broke the silence.

"A boy of your years to talk of marrying! Preposterous!"

"I have no idea of it, within a year or two," said Chester. "But let things take their course. Do you expect me now to stay at home?"

"Why not?"

"And work on the farm?"

"Are you getting too proud for that,—with your heiress in view?" asked Mr. Royden, with sarcasm.

"It seems as though I might be doing something more profitable, to prepare me for entering life."

"Yes! You might be at another academy, occupying your time in making love to another silly, romantic girl!"

"Nobody will say," rejoined Chester, biting his lips, and speaking with forced calmness,—"my worst enemy cannot say,—that I have not improved my opportunities of study. I hope you will believe me, when I say I have always stood at the head of my class."

Mr. Royden was considerably softened.

"Well, well!" said he, "I can make some allowance for your young blood. I will see what ought to be done. We will talk the matter over at another time."

"But while you do stay at home," added Mrs. Royden, who had remained silent for a length of time quite unusual with her, "you must take hold and help your father all you can. He has to hire a great deal, and sending you to school makes us feel the expense more than we should. James is

not worth much, and Samuel, you know, is worse than nothing."

"Speaking of Sam, I wish he would show his face. It's getting very late," observed Mr. Royden, looking at the clock.

"The *old gentleman* is always at the door when his name is spoken," said Mrs. Royden. "There he comes."

Sam was creeping into the kitchen as silently as possible.

"Young man!" cried Mr. Royden, opening the sitting-room door, "come in here."

"Yes, sir," said Sam, in a very feeble and weak tone of voice.

But he lingered a long time in the kitchen, and during the conversation, which was resumed, he was nearly forgotten. At length Mr. Royden thought he heard a strange noise, which sounded very much like a person crying.

"Do you hear, Samuel?" he cried. "Come in here, I say! What is the matter?"

"I'm—coming!" replied the boy, in a broken voice.

He made his appearance at the door in a piteous plight. He was covered with dirt, and with all his efforts he could not keep from crying.

"You have been flung from the horse!" suddenly exclaimed Chester. "Is that the trouble?"

"I haven't been flung from the horse, neither!" said Sam, doggedly.

"Did you leave him at the tavern?"

"Yes,—I *left him at the tavern.*"

"What did the landlord say?"

"He didn't say nothing."

"Sam, you're lying!" cried Chester.

"True as I live—" began Sam.

"I know what the trouble is," said Mrs. Royden, who was very much provoked at seeing the boy's soiled clothes. "He has been fighting. And, if he has, it is your duty, father, to take him out in the shed, and give him as good a dressing as he ever had in his life."

Sam was on the point of confessing to the charge, as the best explanation of the distressed condition he was in, when the added threat exerted its natural influence on his decision.

"No, I han't fit with nobody," he said. "The boys in the village throwed stones at me; but I didn't throw none back, nor sass 'em, nor do nothing but come as straight home as I could come."

"What is the matter then?" demanded Mr. Royden, impatiently, taking him by the shoulder and shaking him. "Speak out! What is it?"

"Fell down," mumbled Sam.

"Fell down?"

"Yes, sir, and hurt my ankle, so't I can't walk," he added, beginning to blubber.

"How did you do that?"

Sam began, and detailed the most outrageous falsehood of which his daring genius was capable.

He had met with the most dreadful mischances, by falling over a "big stun," which some villainous boys had rolled into the road, expressly to place his limbs in peril, as he passed in the dark.

"But how did the boys know how to lay the stone so exactly as to accomplish their purpose?" asked Chester, suspecting the untruth.

For a moment Sam was posed. But his genius did not desert him.

"Oh," said he, "I always walk jest in one track along there by Mr. Cobbett's, on the right-hand side, about a yard from the fence. I s'pose they knowed it, and so rolled the stone up there."

"You tell the most absurd stories in the world," replied Chester, indignantly. "Who do you expect is going to believe them? Now, let me tell you, if I find you have been lying about that horse, and if you have done him any mischief, I will tan you within an inch of your life!"

Sam hastened to declare that he had spoken gospel truth; at the same time feeling a dreadful twinge of conscience at the thought that, for aught he knew to the contrary, Frank might still be running, riderless, twenty miles away.

Mrs. Royden now usurped the conversation, to give him a severe scolding, in the midst of which he limped off to bed, to pass a sleepless, painful and unhappy night, with his bruised limbs, and in the fear of retribution, which was certain to

follow, when his sin and lies should all be found out.

"I wish," he said to himself, fifty times, "I wish I had told about the horse; for, like as not, they wouldn't have licked me, and, if I *am* to have a licking, I'd rather have it now, and done with, than to think about it a week."

CHAPTER VI.

MORNING AT THE FARM.

On the following day Samuel's ankle was so badly swollen as to make a frightful appearance. Mrs. Royden had to call him three times before he could summon courage to get up; and when, threatened with being whipped out of bed, he finally obeyed her summons, he discovered, to his dismay, that the lame foot would not bear his weight.

With great difficulty Sam succeeded in dressing himself, after a fashion, and went hopping down stairs.

"You good-for-nothing, lazy fellow!" began Mrs. Royden, the moment he made his appearance, "you deserve to go without eating for a week. The boys were all up, an hour ago. What is the matter? What do you hobble along so, for?"

"Can't walk," muttered Sam, sulkily.

'Can't walk!"—in a mocking tone,—"what is the reason you cannot?"

" 'Cause my ankle's hurt, where I fell down."

"There! now I suppose you'll be laid up a week!" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, with severe dis-

pleasure. "You are always getting into some difficulty. Let me look at your ankle."

Crying with pain, Sam dropped upon a chair, and pulled up the leg of his plantaloons.

When Mrs. Royden saw how bad the hurt was, her feelings began to soften; but such was her habit that it was impossible for her to refrain from upbraiding the little rogue, in her usual fault-finding tone.

"You never hurt that foot by falling over a stone, in this world!" said she. "Now, tell me the truth."

Sam was ready to take oath to the falsehood of the previous night; and Mrs. Royden, declaring that she never knew when to believe him, promised him a beautiful flogging, if it was afterwards discovered that he was telling an untruth. Meanwhile she had Hepsy bring the rocking-chair into the kitchen, where Sam was charged to "keep quiet, and not get into more mischief," during the preparation of some herbs, steeped in vinegar, for his ankle.

The vein of kindness visible under Mrs. Royden's habitual ill-temper affected him strangely. The consciousness of how little it was deserved added to his remorse. He was crying so with pain and unhappiness, that when Georgie and Willie came in from their morning play out-doors, they united in mocking him, and calling him a "big baby."

At this crisis the old clergyman entered. He was up and out at sunrise, and for the last half-hour he had been making the acquaintance of the two little boys, who were too cross to be seen the previous night.

"Excuse me," said he to Mrs. Royden, who looked dark at seeing him in the kitchen; "my little friends led me in this way."

"Oh, you are perfectly excusable," replied she; "but we look hardly fit to be seen, in here."

"Dear me," cried the old man, with one of his delightful smiles, "I am fond of all such familiar places. And you must not mind me, at any rate. I came to be one of the family, if you will let me."

Mrs. Royden replied that he was perfectly welcome; he did them an honor; but she was sure it would be much pleasanter for him to keep the privacy of his own room, where the children would not disturb him.

"There is a time for all things under the sun," answered the old man. "There is even a time to be a child with children. But what have we here? A sprained ankle?"

"Yes, sir," murmured Sam.

"Ah! it is a bad sprain," rejoined the clergyman, in a tone of sympathy. "How did it happen?" sitting down by Samuel, and taking Georgie and Willie on his knees.

Sam mumbled over the old story about falling over a stone.

"And you were mocking him?" said the old man, patting Willie's cheek.

"He cries," replied Willie, grinning.

"And don't you think you would cry, if you had hurt your foot as he has?"

The boy shook his head, and declared stoutly that he was sure he would not cry. But he, as well as Georgie, began actually to shed tears of sympathy, when their new friend made them look at the sprained ankle, and told them how painful it must be.

They were not heartless children; their better feelings only required to be drawn out; and from that time, instead of laughing at Sam, they appeared ready to do almost anything they thought would please him.

"I haven't had such an appetite in months," said the clergyman, as he sat down at the breakfast-table with the family.

And his happy face shed a pleasant sunshine on all around. Mr. Royden invited him to ask a blessing on the food; and, in a fervent tone, and an earnest, simple manner, he lifted up his heart in thankfulness to the great Giver.

As Mrs. Royden poured the coffee, she appeared to think it necessary to make some apologies. They did not often use that beverage in her fam-

ily, she said, and she was not skilled in its preparation.

"I am afraid it is not very clear," she added.

"No," said the clergyman, "it is not clear enough for me. The only drink that is clear enough for me"—holding up a glass of pure cold water—is this."

"But you will try a cup of coffee? Or a cup of tea, at least?"

"I never use either, except when I need some such restorative. Last night a fine cup of tea was a blessing. This morning I require nothing of the kind."

"But you cannot make out a breakfast on our plain fare, without something to drink besides water."

The old man smiled serenely.

"Your fare cannot be too plain for me. I often breakfast luxuriously on a slice of brown bread and a couple of apples."

"Brown bread and apples!" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, in surprise. "Who ever heard of apples for breakfast?"

"I never feel so well as when I make them a large proportion of my food," replied the clergyman. "People commit a great error when they use fruits only as luxuries. They are our most simple, natural and healthful food."

"You have never worked on a farm, I see," observed Mr. Royden.

"I understand you,"—and the old man, perhaps to illustrate his liberal views, ate a piece of fried bacon with evident relish. "Different natures and different conditions of men certainly demand different systems of diets. If a man has animal strength to support, let him use animal food. But meat is not the best stimulus to the brain. With regard to vegetables, my experience teaches that they are beautifully adapted to our habits of life. Let the man who digs beneath the soil consume the food he finds there. But I will pluck the grape or the peach as I walk, and, eating, find myself refreshed."

"That is a rather poetical thought," remarked Chester. "But I doubt if it be sound philosophy."

"Oh, I ask no one to accept any theory of my own," answered the old man, benignly. "If I talk reason, consider my words; if not,"—smiling significantly, with an expressive gesture,—"let the wind have them."

"But I think your ideas very interesting," said Sarah. "What do you think of bread?"

"It is the *staff of life*. The lower vegetable productions are suited to the grosser natures of men. Those brought forth in the sunlight are more suitable to finer organizations. I place grains as much higher than roots, on a philosophical scale, as the ear of corn is higher than the potato, in a literal sense. Therefore, as grain grows midway between vegetables and fruits, it

appears to be wisely designed as the great staple of food. But the nearer heaven the more spiritual. If I am to compose a sermon, let me make a dinner of nuts that have ripened in the broad sunlight, of apples that grow on the highest boughs of the orchard, and of grapes that are found sweetest on the tops of the vines."

"Very beautiful in theory," said Chester.

"When you have studied the subject, perhaps you will find some grains of truth in the chaff," replied the clergyman, with a genial smile.

"In the first place," rejoined Chester, with the confidence of a man who has a powerful argument to advance, "speaking of nuts,—let us look at the chestnut. You will everywhere find that the tallest trees produce the poorest nuts."

"I grant it."

"Then how does your theory hold?"

Mr. Rensford answered the young man's triumphant look with a mild expression of countenance, which showed a spirit equally happy in teaching or in being taught.

"I think," said he, "your tall chestnut-tree is found in forests?"

"Yes, sir; and the spreading chestnut, or the second growth, that springs up and comes to maturity in cleared fields, is found standing alone."

"It strikes me, then, that the last is *cultivated.* You may expect better nuts from it than from the savage tree. And there is good reason why it

should not be of such majestic stature. Its body has room to expand. It is not crowded in the selfish society of the woods; and, to put forth its fruits in the sunlight, it is not obliged to struggle above the heads of emulous companions."

"But chestnuts are very unhealthy," said Mrs. Royden, to the relief of Chester, who was at a loss how to reply.

"They should not be unhealthy. If we had not abused our digestive organs, and destroyed our teeth by injurious habits, we would suffer no inconvenience from a few handfuls of chestnuts. As it is, masticate them well, and use them as food, —and not as luxuries, after the gastric juices are exhausted by a hearty dinner,—and I doubt if they would do much harm."

CHAPTER VII.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Royden, as the clergyman declined tasting the pie Hepsy brought on as a dessert, "you haven't eaten anything at all! You'd better try a small piece?"

The old man thanked her kindly, adding that he had eaten very heartily.

"I am afraid you will not be able to get through the forenoon," she replied.

"Nay, don't tempt me," he said playfully, as she insisted on the pie. "My constitution was never strong; and, with my sedentary habits, I should never have reached the age of seventy-two, if I had not early learned to control my appetites. It is better to go hungry from a loaded table, than run the risk of an indigestion."

"Are you *seventy-two?*" asked Mr. Royden, in a sad tone.

"The twelfth day of October next is my seventy-second birthday," replied the old man, cheerfully. "Don't you think I have lasted pretty well?"

"Is it possible that you are twenty-eight years older than I?" exclaimed the other.

"Do I not look as old?"

"When your countenance is in repose, perhaps you do; but when you talk,—why, you don't look over fifty-five, if you do that."

"I have observed it," said Sarah. "When you speak your soul shines through your face."

"And the soul is always young. God be praised for that!" replied Mr. Rensford, with a happy smile on his lips, and a tear of thankfulness in his eye. "God be praised for that!"

"But the souls of most men begin to wither the day they enter the world," remarked Chester, bitterly. "Perhaps, in your sphere of action, you have avoided the cares of life,—the turmoil and jar of the noisy, selfish world."

"Heaven has been merciful to me," said the old man, softly. "Yet my years have been years of labor; and of sorrow I have seen no little. Persecution has not always kept aloof from my door."

"Oh, few men have had so much to go through!" spoke up Mr. Royden, in a tone of sympathy. "The wonder is, how you have kept your brow so free from wrinkles, and your spirit so clear from clouds."

"When the frosts have stolen upon me, when the cold winds have blown," replied Mr. Rensford, in a tone so touching that it was felt by every one present, "I have prayed Heaven to keep the leaves of my heart green, and the flowers of my

soul fresh and fragrant. The sunlight of love was showered upon me in return. I managed to forget my petty trials, in working for my poor, unhappy brethren. My wife went to heaven before me; my child followed her, and I was left at one time all alone, it seemed. But something within me said, 'They whom thou hast loved are in bliss; repine not therefore, but do thy work here with a cheerful spirit, and be thankful for all God's mercies.' "

"I understand now how you got the familiar name I have heard you called by," said Mr. Royden, with emotion.

"Yes,"—and the old man's fine countenance glowed with gratitude,—"it has pleased my friends to give me an appellation which the only thing in the world I am proud of,—*Father Brighthopes.* Is it possible," he added, with tears in his eyes, "that I have deserved such a title? Has my work been done so cheerfully, has my faith been so manifest in my life, that men have crowned me with this comforting assurance that my prayers for grace have been answered?"

"Then you would be pleased if we called you by this name?"

"You will make me happy by giving me the honorable title. No other, in the power of kings to bestow, could tempt me to part with it. As long as you find me sincere in my faith and conduct, call me *Father Brighthopes.* When I turn

to the dark side of life, and waste my breath in complaining of the clouds, instead of rejoicing in the sunshine, then disgrace me by taking away my title."

"I wish more of us had your disposition," said Mr. Royden, with a sad shake of the head.

"There is no disposition so easy, and which goes so smoothly through the world," replied the old man, smiling.

Mr. Royden felt the force of the remark, but, being a man of exceedingly fine nerves, he did not think it would be possible for him to break up his habit of fretfulness, in the midst of all the annoyances which strewed his daily path with thorns. He said as much to his aged friend.

"Do you never stop to consider the utter insignificance of all those little trials, compared with the immortal destiny of man?" replied Father Brighthopes. "I remember when a blot of ink on a page I had written over would completely upset my temper. What was the labor of copying the spoiled manuscript? What are all the trivial accidents of life? What even is the loss of property? Think of eternity, and answer. Afflictions discipline us. Sorrows purify the soul. Once an insulting word would throw me into a violent passion; but to-day I will do what I think right; and smile calmly at persecution."

The old man's philosophy had evidently made

an impression. Mr. Royden went about his work in a more calm and self-supported manner than was his wont; and the children had never known their mother in a better humor, at that time of day, than when directing the household affairs, after breakfast.

Lizzie did not fail to remind Father Brighthopes of the book he promised her; and, in opening his trunks, he found not only what she wanted, but volumes to suit all tastes, from Sarah's down to Georgie's, and even a little picture-book for Willie. He also put his hand on something which he thought would interest Sam, laid up with his lame ankle; and selected one of the most attractive books in his possession to cheer the heart of Hepsy.

By this time the children were growing dangerously attached to him. Willie wanted to sit on his knee all the time, and Georgie was unwilling to go and rock the baby, which was crying in the sitting-room, unless the clergyman went out there too.

But Father Brighthopes had a peculiar faculty of governing young people. With a few kind words, and a promise of following soon, he despatched Georgie to work at the cradle, with a good heart; and, telling Lizzie and Willie that he wished to be alone a little while, he sent them away, well contented with the books and kisses he gave them.

Mrs. Royden's household affairs progressed unusually well that morning, and she was remarkably pleasant, until Sam, who could not keep out of mischief, even with his sprained ankle to take care of, occasioned a slight disaster. He had made a lasso of a whip-lash to throw over the children's heads when they should pass through the kitchen, and commenced the exercise of his skill upon the unfortunate Hepsy. Every time she passed he would cast the loop at her neck, but entirely without success in his experiments; and at length the bright idea occurred to him to make an attempt upon her foot. Spreading out the lasso in her way, he pulled up suddenly as she walked over it, and, after several efforts, perseverance resulted in a capture. The loop caught Hepsy's toe.

Sam had not reckoned on the disastrous consequence of such a seizure. The unsuspecting victim was stepping very quick, and the impediment of the whip-lash threw her head-foremost to the floor. She was not much hurt, but an earthen dish she was carrying was shattered to pieces. Frightened at the catastrophe, Sam hastened to undo the loop; but Mrs. Royden was on the spot before he had put the fatal evidence against him out of his hand.

"You careless creature!" she exclaimed, in a sharp key, regarding Hepsy with contracted fea-

tures, "can't you walk across the floor without falling down? If you can't——"

"Samuel tripped me," murmured Hepsy, gathering up the fragments of the dish.

"O, I didn't!" cried Sam, putting up his elbows as Mrs. Royden flew to box his ears.

"What are you doing with that lash?" she demanded, after two or three vain attempts to get in a blow.

"Nothing; only, it was lying on the floor, and I went to pick it up just as Hepsy was going along; and, you see," stammered Sam, "she ketched her foot and fell down."

"Give me the lash!" said Mrs. Royden, angrily.

"I won't have it out any more!" and Sam put it in his pocket.

"Give it to me, I say!"

"I don't wan't ter; you'll hit me with it."

Mrs. Royden could not bear to be argued with on such occasions. She made a seizure of one of Sam's ears, and pulled it until he screamed with pain.

"There!" said she, "will you mind next time, when I speak?"

"Yes. I don't want the old thing!" and Sam threw the contested property across the room, under the sink.

He knew, by the flash of Mrs. Royden's eye, as she hastened to grasp it, that danger was impending; and, starting from his chair with sur-

prising agility, he hopped out doors. But his lame ankle incapacitated him to endure a long chase. Mrs. Royden pursued into the yard, and, coming up with him, laid the lash soundly upon his head and shoulders, until he keeled over on his back, and, holding his lame foot in the air, pleaded for mercy. There, as she continued to beat him, he caught hold of the lash and pulled it away from her; upon which she returned in her worst humor, to the kitchen.

It was sad to see James escape to the barn when he saw the storm, and Sarah make an errand up stairs. Poor Hepsy went silently and industriously to work to avoid reproofs, while her blue eyes filled with sorrowful tears. Georgie got his ears boxed for some slight offense, and his crying awoke the baby, which he had but just rocked to sleep.

At this crisis, Mrs. Royden called Lizzie; but Lizzie dreaded her presence, and hid in the garden, with the book Father Brighthopes had given her; and she made Willie lie down behind the currant-bushes and look at the pictures in his primer, while she read.

Mrs. Royden was casting around for some one besides the weak Hepsy to vent her ill-humor upon, when Chester made his appearance.

"I wish you would take that baby, Chester, and get it still! You must not be afraid to take hold and help while you stay at home. What have you

got on those pantaloons for, this busy morning? Go and put on an old pair. You needn't think you are to walk about dressed up every day."

"I am going to take Father Brighthopes to ride," answered Chester, briefly.

"It is just as I expected!" exclaimed his mother. "Half your father's time and yours will be taken up in carrying him around, and half of mine in trying to make him comfortable here at home."

"I hope *the children* will learn a little sweetness of temper of him, in return," said Chester, significantly.

"You impudent fellow! This is the return you make me, is it, for fitting you out for school, and working my fingers to the bone to keep you there? We'll see——"

"Hush, mother! do!"

With a black frown, Chester strode across the room, having warned his mother of the clergyman's approach. With great difficulty she held her peace, as Father Brighthopes entered.

The advent of the old man's serene countenance was like a burst of sunshine through a storm. Without appearing to remark the darkness of Mrs. Royden's features, he took up the baby, and began to toss it in his arms and talk to it, to still its cries. The little creature was quieted at once.

"It is singular," said the clergyman, "I never

yet found a child that was afraid of me. How I love their pure, innocent looks!"

Already ashamed of her ill-temper, Mrs. Royden hastened to take the babe from his arms; but he insisted on holding it. Georgie meanwhile had stopped crying, and Sarah came down from the chamber. To the latter Father Brighthopes finally relinquished the charge, and, taking his hat and cane left the house with Chester.

James brought out the horse, and helped his father put him into the wagon-thills.

"Where are you folks going?" asked Sam, hobbling along on the grass, with his foot in the air.

"Over to the village," replied James.

Sam's heart sank within him; and it was with sickening apprehensions of calamity that he saw Mr. Royden ride off with Chester and the old clergyman. They could not go far, he was sure, without discovering the entire mystery of his lame leg; and the consequences seemed too dreadful to contemplate.

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNTRY SCENES.

It was a beautiful balmy morning in June; the whole earth rejoiced in the soft sunshine and sweet breezes; and around the sumachs and crab-apple trees, by the roadside fences, where the dew was still cool on the green leaves, there were glad birds singing joyously, as the wheels went humming through the sand.

No careless child could have enjoyed the ride more than the good Father Brighthopes did. It was delightful to hear him talk of the religion to be drawn from fresh meadows, running brooks, the deep solitude of woods, and majestic mountains crags.

"And to think that the good God made all for us to enjoy!" he said, with his clear blue orbs tremulous with tears.

"You give me new ideas of religion," replied Mr. Royden. "It always seemed to me a hard and gloomy thing."

"Hard and gloomy?"—The old man clasped his hands, with deep emotion, and his face radiated with inexpressible joy. "O! how softenirg, how bright it is! The true spirit of religion

makes men happier than all earthly comforts and triumphs can do; it is a cold and mechanical adherence to the mere forms of religion,—from fear, or a dark sense of duty,—which appears gloomy. Look at the glorious sky, with its soft blue depths, and floating silvery clouds; pass into the shadowy retreats of the cool woods; breathe the sweet air that comes from kissing green fields and dallying on beds of flowers; hear the birds sing,—and you must feel your heart opened, your soul warmed, your inmost thoughts kindled with love: love for God, love for man, love for everything: and this is religion."

So the old clergyman talked on; his simple and natural words bubbling from his lips like crystal waters, and filling his companions' hearts with new and refreshing truths.

Chester drove up before a handsome white cottage, which was one of a thin cluster of houses grouped around an old-fashioned country meeting-house.

"Here our minister lives," said Mr. Royden. "You must see him, first of any."

He helped the old man out of the wagon, while Chester tied the horse.

"What a delightful residence!" said Father Brighthopes. "Ah! let me stop and take a look at these busy bees!"

There were two small hives perched upon a bench, under a plum-tree, and the happy insects

were incessantly creeping in and out, through the small apertures,—flying abroad, humming in the flowers of the sweet thyme that loaded the air with fragrance, and coming home with their legs yellow from tiny cups and bells. The old man was so charmed with the scene, that he could hardly be prevailed upon to leave it, and walk along the path towards the cottage door.

"We see so little of such delightful exhibitions of nature, in city life," said he, "that in the country I am like a child intoxicated with novelty."

They made but a brief call on the minister, who was a young and boyish-looking man of about twenty-five. He received them in his study, a luxurious little room, with a window open upon the little garden in front of the house, and shaded by thick jasmines, trained on the wall. He showed no very warm inclination to sociability, but deigned to treat the old man with an air of deference and patronage, for which he no doubt gave himself much credit. It seemed quite a relief to him when his visitors arose to go, and he politely bowed them to the door.

"If any man leads an easy life, Mr. Corlis does," muttered Chester, as they went through the little gate.

"Hush, boy!" said his father, good-humoredly. "You can't expect a minister to go into the fields, to work with his hands."

"I don't say what I expect him to do; but I

can tell pretty well what he does. During the week, he compiles commonplaces, which he calls sermons, drinks tea with his parishioners, and patronizes the sewing-circle. On the Sabbath he certainly labors hard, preaching dulness from the high pulpit, and mesmerizing his congregation."

"What do you talk such nonsense for?" returned Mr. Royden, laughing inwardly.

"Young men learn the ministers' trade, in order to live lazy lives, half the time." continued the youn man.

"Too often—too often!"—Father Brighthopes shook his head sadly,—"but judge not all by the few. Idleness is a sore temptation to young clergymen, I know. Their position is fraught with peril. Alas for those who prefer their own ease to doing their Master's work! This consists not only in preaching Christianity from the pulpit, but in preaching it in their daily walks; in acting it, living it, carrying it like an atmosphere about them, and warming with its warmth the hearts of the poor and sorrowful. O, Lord, what a lovely and boundless field thou hast given thy servants! Let them not lie idle in the shade of the creeds our fathers planted, nor cease to turn the soil and sow the seed!"

The earnest prayer thrilled the hearts of Chester and his father. It may be another heart was touched with its fire. Mr. Corlis overheard the words, as he listened at his study-window, and his

cheek and forehead glowed with a blush of shame.

Mr. Royden and Chester took their old friend to make one or two more calls, and returned home for dinner. Samuel Cone felt very faint, as he lay on the grass in the yard, and saw them coming.

CHAPTER IX.

MARK, THE JOCKEY.

"WHAT have you run away from that churn for?" cried Mrs. Royden, appearing at the door. "Go right back, and fetch the butter before you leave it again!"

"I'm tired," muttered Sam.

"Don't tell me about being tired! You can churn just as well as not."

"Hurts my foot!"

"You can lay your foot on a chair, and——Do you hear?" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, growing impatient of his delay. "Don't let me have to speak to you again!"

Sam hopped into the wood-shed, and began to move the dasher up and down with exceeding moderation. When the wagon drove up to the door, he listened with a sick heart to hear if anything was said about the stray horse. Not a word was spoken on the subject. Even the silence frightened him.

He had never worked so industriously as when Chester entered the shed; and, as the latter passed by without looking at him, he felt certain that retribution was at hand. He listened at the

kitchen door, and trembled at every word that was spoken, thinking the next would be something about his unpardonable offense. But his agony was destined still to be prolonged.

"They an't going to say nothing about it till my foot gets well," thought he; "then they'll jest about kill me."

Mrs. Royden had been considerably fretted in getting dinner and her fault-finding had worried poor Hepsy almost to distraction, when the arrival of the clergyman lent quite a different aspect to affairs. He drew the attention of the young children, who had been very much in their mother's way, and dropped a few soft words of wisdom from his lips, which could be taken in in a general sense, or understood by Mrs. Royden as applying to her annoyances in particular. Soon the table was ready, and the entire household, excepting Sam and Hepsy, gathered around it. The former, supposed to be churning, having been warned by Mrs. Royden that he could have no dinner until he had "fetched the butter," was listening to hear if there was any conversation about the horse; and the poor deformed girl, who had preferred to wait and take care of the baby, was shedding solitary tears from the depths of her unhappy heart.

After dinner, Father Brighthopes was sitting on the shaded grass in the yard, relating pleasant stories to the children, when an athletic young

man made his appearance at the gate, leading a handsome sorrel horse.

"Hillo, Mark!" cried James, "have you been trading again?"

"Is your father at home?" asked the man with the horse.

James answered in the affirmative, and the other led his animal into the yard, making him dance around him as he approached the little group under the cherry-tree.

Even with hunger in prospective, Sam could not apply himself to the churn when he thought there was any fun going on out-doors. He hobbled out, and took his seat on the grass.

All the children were praising Mark's new horse, which he took especial delight in training before their eyes. At length he led him up to the tree, and talked to him coaxingly, smoothing his face and patting his shining neck.

"Where did you get that plaything?" asked Chester, coming out of the house.

"Ha, how do you do, Ches?" replied Mark, turning around. "When did you get home?"

He tied the halter to the tree, and began to feel of the animal's slender ankles, still maintaining a mysterious silence on the subject of his trade.

"Did you put away the brown horse for this?" asked Chester.

"Where is your father?" was Mark's unsatisfactory rejoinder.

Mr. Royden made his appearance. He was a famous judge of horse-flesh, and his shrewd eye examined the colt's admirable points with evident satisfaction.

"Where did you get him?" he inquired.

"How old is he?" asked Mark.

Mr. Royden looked in the horse's mouth a second time, and pronounced him to be four years old.

"Have you been trading?"

"On the whole," said Mark, "what do you think of him?"

"It's a fine colt; but I think here is a faint appearance of a ring-bone."

Mr. Royden pressed the animal's leg.

"I'll bet you a hundred dollars on it!" cried Mark, quickly, his eye kindling.

He was very sensitive about his horse-property, besides being a choleric man generally; and Mr. Royden only smiled, and shook his head.

"Have you got rid of Jake?"

"Never mind that; tell me what the colt is worth."

Mr. Royden expressed a favorable opinion of the beast, but declined to commit himself.

"Well, it don't make no difference," said Mark, with a smile of satisfaction. "He suits me very well," he added, with an oath.

The clergyman's countenance changed. The smile faded from his lips, and he glanced anx-

iously from Mark to the little boys who sat on the grass at his feet.

"Better look out about swearing 'fore the minister," said Sam, in a low tone, to Mark.

For the first time the latter regarded the old man attentively. At sight of his thin white locks, the color mounted to the jockey's brow; and when Father Brighthopes raised his calm, sad eyes, Mark's fell before them.

But Mark had some manly traits of character, with all his faults.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, frankly. "I wouldn't have used profane language, if I had known there was a minister within hearing."

"My friend," replied Father Brighthopes, in a kind but impressive tone, "you have my forgiveness, if that is of any account; but it seems you should rather forbear from using such language before children, whose minds are like wax, to receive all sorts of impressions—good or bad."

"The truth is," said Mark, "I thought nothing of it. It was wrong, I know."

To conceal his mortification, he began to brush the dust from the colt's feet with a wisp of grass. But his cheek was not the only one that tingled at the old man's words. Chester was very warm in the face; but only the clergyman observed the fact, and he alone could probably have understood its cause.

"To tell the truth," said Mark, laughing, "the

colt isn't mine; he belongs to Mr. Skennitt, over on the north road; he has hired me to break him."

"I don't believe that," replied Mr. Royden, half in jest, and half in earnest. "Nobody that knows you would trust you to break a young horse."

"Why not?"

"You're so rash and passionate. You can't keep your temper."

"I believe in whipping, when a horse is ugly," muttered Mark, as if half a mind to take offence, —"that's all."

"You mustn't mind my jokes," said Mr. Royden. "Come, how did you trade?"

"I put away the brown horse, and gave some boot," replied Mark. "By the way, you haven't heard of any one's losing a horse recently, have you?"

"No; what do you mean?"

"Why, Skennit's boys saw a stray one in the road last night."

"Nobody this way has lost one," said Mr. Royden.

Sam's heart beat with painful violence. He was very pale.

"He was running, with a saddle, and with the reins under his feet," continued Mark. "Somebody had probably been flung from him, or he had got away by breaking the halter."

"Was he stopped?" asked Chester.

"Not in that neighborhood, at any rate. It is hard stopping a horse after dark. What's the matter, Sam?"

"Nothing," murmured Sam, faintly.

"What makes you look so white?"

"I—I've got a lame foot."

"And I know where you got it!" thundered Chester, seizing him by the shirt-collar. "It is just as I thought, last night."

"Stop, Chester—don't be rash!" cried Mr. Royden. "Sam, tell the truth, now, about that horse."

"I fell off," blubbered Sam.

"You incorrigible, lying rascal!" ejaculated Chester. "Why didn't you say so last night?"

"I couldn't help it," and Sam wiped his face with his sleeve. "I didn't run him—and—and he got frightened."

"That has nothing to do with the question. Why didn't you tell the truth, the first thing?"

"Cause—I wasn't looking out—and he was going on a slow trot—when a stump by the side of the road scar'd him—and I fell off."

"But what did you lie about it for?" demanded Chester, fiercely.

"I was afraid I'd git a licking," muttered Sam.

"And now you'll get two of 'em, as you richly deserve. If father don't give 'em to you, I will."

"Hush, Chester, I'll attend to him," said Mr. Royden, more calm than usual on such occasions. "James, put the saddle on Old Boy. One of us must ride after the stray horse, and see where he is to be found. Sam, go and finish that churning, and prepare for a settlement."

With a sinking heart, the rogue obeyed. Mark went off, leading his colt; Chester rode to hunt up Frank; Mr. Royden proceeded to the field, and Father Brighthopes sought the privacy of his room to write. The boys clamored a little while at his door, then went cheerfully away to play with Lizzie in the garden.

CHAPTER X.

COMPANY.

It was near sundown when Chester returned, having succeeded in finding Frank, and returned him to his owner.

Meanwhile Father Brighthopes had had a long talk with the distressed and remorseful Sam. The old man's kindness and sympathy touched the lad's heart more than anything had ever done before. He could not endure the appeals to his better nature, to his sense of right, and to his plain reason, with which the clergyman represented the folly and wickedness of lying.

"I am sure," said Father Brighthopes, in conclusion, "that, with as much real good in you as you have, the falsehood has cost you more pain than half a dozen floggings."

Sam acknowledged the fact.

"Then, aside from the wickedness of the thing, is not falsehood unwise? Don't you always feel better to be frank and honest, let the consequences be what they will?"

"I knowed it, all the time," sobbed Sam, "but I *darsn't* tell the truth! I wished I *had* told it, but I *darsn't!*"

"Then we may conclude that lying is usually the mark of a coward. Men would tell the truth, if they were not afraid to."

"I s'pose so. But I never thought of what you say before. When I lie, I git licked, and folks tell me I shall go to hell. I don't mind that much; but when you talk to me as you do, I think I never will tell another lie, as long as I live,—never!"

Sam now confessed to all the circumstances of the last night's disaster, and, at the old man's suggestion, repeated the same to Mr. and Mrs. Royden. He asked for pardon; and promised to tell no more lies, and to keep out of mischief as much as he could.

He was so softened, so penitent and earnest, that even the severe Mrs. Royden was inclined to forgive him. Her husband did more. He talked kindly to the young offender, declaring his willingness to overlook everything, and to do as well by Sam as by his own children, if he would be a good and honest boy. The latter was so overcome that he cried for half an hour about the affair in the shed; that is to say, until the cat made her appearance, wearing a portion of the old twine harness, and he thought he would divert his mind by making her draw a brick.

"In mischief again!" exclaimed Mr. Royden, coming suddenly upon him.

"No, sir!" cried Sam, promptly, letting pussy go.

"What were you doing?"

"You see, this butter won't come, and I've been churning stiddy on it all day——"

"What has that to do with the cat?" demanded Mr. Royden.

"Nothing; only I expect to have to go to help milk the cows in a little while; and I was afraid she would jump up on the churn, and lick the cream, while I was gone; so I thought I'd tie a brick to her neck."

Mr. Royden laughed secretly, and went away.

"That was only a white lie," muttered Sam. "Darn it all! I've got so used to fibbing, I can't help it. I didn't think then, or I wouldn't have said what I did."

The boy really felt badly to think he had not the courage to speak the truth, and made a new resolution to be braver in future.

The relief of mind which followed the bursting of the clouds over his head brought a keen appetite; and he remembered that he had eaten nothing but an apple or two since breakfast. Hunger impelled him to apply himself to the churn; five minutes of industrious labor finished the task, and he was prepared to go to supper with the family.

In the evening a number of young people, living in the neighborhood, called, in honor of Chester's

return from school. The parlor was opened for the "company," and the "old folks" occupied the sitting-room.

Chester was very lively, for he was fond of sociability, and loved to be admired for his grace and wit; but he seemed at length to find the conversation of his old acquaintances insipid.

"Father Brighthopes," he said, gayly, entering the sitting-room, "I wish you would go in and teach our friends some better amusement than kissing games. I am heartily sick of them."

"If Jane Dustan was here, I guess you would like them," said Lizzie, who had preferred to listen to the clergyman's stories, rather than go into the parlor.

Her eyes twinkled with fun; but Chester looked displeased.

"It's nothing but *'Who'll be my judge?' 'Measure off three yards of tape with so and so, and cut it'; 'Make a sugar-bowl, and put three lumps of sugar in it, with Julia'; 'Go to Rome and back again'; 'Bow to the prettiest, kneel to the wittiest, and kiss the one you love best'* and such nonsense."

"Ches has got above these good old plays, since he has been at the academy!" and Lizzie laughed again, mischievously. "You used to like kissing well enough."

"So I do now," said he, giving her a smack, by way of illustration; "but stolen waters are

the sweetest. Some public kissing I have done to-night has been like taking medicine."

His remarks were cut short by the entrance of a tall young lady, with thin curls and homely teeth. She affected unusual grace of manner; her smile showed an attempt to be fascinating, and her language was peculiarly select, and lispingly pronounced.

"What! are you here?" she cried, pretending to be surprised at seeing Chester. "I thought I left you in the parlor."

Chester smiled at the innocent little deception her modesty led her to practice, and, as a means of getting rid of her, introduced her to the old clergyman.

"I believe I had a glimpthe of you, this forenoon," said Miss Smith, with an exquisite smile. "You called at our houthe, I believe. Father was very thorry he wasn't at home. You mutht call again. You mutht come too, next time, Mrs. Royden. You owe mother two visits. What gloriouth weather we have now! I never thaw tho magnifithent a thunthet as there was this evening. Did you obtherve it, Mithter Royden?" addressing Chester.

"It was very fine."

"It was thurpathingly lovely! What thuperb cloudth! Will you be tho good"—Miss Smith somewhat changed her tone—"will you be tho good as to help me to a glath of water?"

Chester was returning to the parlor, and she was just in time to catch him. He could not refuse, and she followed him into the kitchen.

"She has stuck to him like a burr, all the evening," whispered Lizzie. "He can't stir a step, but she follows him; and he hates her *dreadfully.*"

Mrs. Royden reprimanded the girl for speaking so freely, to which she replied, "she didn't care; it was true."

Chester was not half so long getting the water as Miss Smith was drinking it. She sipped and talked, and sipped and talked again, in her most dangerously fascinating manner, until he was on the point of leaving her to digest the beverage alone.

"Theems to me you're in a terrific hurry," she cried. "I hope you an't *afraid* of me. Goodneth! I am as harmleth as a kitten."

Miss Smith showed her disagreeable teeth, and shook her consumptive curls, with great self-satisfaction. When Chester confessed that he was afraid of her, she declared herself "infinitely amathed."

"But I don't believe it. Thomebody in the parlor has a magnetic influence over you," she said, archly. "Now, confeth!"

On returning to the sitting-room, they found that two or three other young ladies had followed them from the parlor.

"What a magnet thomebody is!" remarked Miss Smith. "I wonder who it can be."

"I should think you might tell, since you were the first to be attracted from the parlor," remarked Miss Julia Keller.

"Oh, I came for a glath of water." Miss Smith shook her curls again, and turned to Father Brighthopes. "I am *ecthethively* delighted to make your acquaintanth, thir, for I am *immenthly* fond of minithters."

The old man smiled indulgently, and replied that he thought younger clergymen than himself might please her best.

"Young or old, it makes no differenth," said she. "Our minithter is a delightfully fathinating man, and he is only twenty-five."

"Fascinating?"

"Oh, yeth! He is *extremely* elegant in his dreth, and his manners are perfectly *charming*. His language is ectheedingly pretty, and thometimes gorgeouthly thublime."

"I wish you would let Father Brighthopes finish the story he was telling me," said Lizzie, bluntly.

"A story?" cried Miss Smith. "Thertainly. Let me thit down and hear it, too. I'm *pathionately* fond of stories."

In taking a seat she was careful to place herself in close proximity to Chester, who was engaged in conversation with Julia.

The clergyman resumed his narrative, in which not only Lizzie, but her father and mother also, had become interested. It was a reminiscence of his own early life. He told of afflictions, trials, all sorts of perplexities and struggles with the world, in experiencing which his heart had been purified, and his character had been formed.

As he proceeded, his audience increased. The company came from the parlor and gathered around him, until the scene of the kissing games was quite deserted. Only one person remained behind. Hepsy, with her face behind the window-curtains, was sobbing.

Chester thought of her, and, stealing out of the sitting-room, to find her, stood for some seconds by her side, before she was aware of his presence.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LOVELY AND THE UNLOVED.

With all his vain and superficial qualities, the young man had a kind heart. He thought of Hepsy most when she was most neglected by others. He knelt down by her where she sat, and took her thin hand in his.

"Come, you mustn't feel bad to-night," said he gently.

She was startled; her heart beat wildly, and she hastened to wipe her tears.

"Has anything unpleasant happened?" he asked.

Hepsy tried to smother her sobs, but they burst forth afresh.

"I've come for you to go and hear Father Brighthopes tell his stories," pursued Chester. "Will you come?"

She was unable to answer.

"It's the best joke of the season!" he continued, cheerfully. "Our company made the sourest faces in the world, when they learned that the old clergyman was to be within hearing. 'Oh, we couldn't have any fun,' they said. They wished

him a thousand miles away. And now they have left their silly sports to listen to him."

"I was much happier out there than after you brought me in here," murmured Hepsy, in a broken voice.

"I wish, then, I had left you there," rejoined Chester. "But I thought you would enjoy the company, and made you come in."

"I couldn't play with the rest," said the unhappy girl.

"Why not? You could, if you had only thought so."

Hepsy smiled, with touching sadness.

"Who would have kissed me? I must have such a hideous face! Who *could?*"

She cried again; and Chester, feeling deeply pained by her sufferings, kissed her cheek.

"I could; and I have kissed you hundreds of times, as you know; and I hope to as many more. There are worse faces than yours to kiss here to-night."

"Oh, you are always so good—so good!" murmured Hepsy, with gushing tears.

"Now, tell me what has occurred to make you feel bad," insisted her cousin, very kindly.

The poor girl required much urging, but at length she confessed.

"Josephine Smith called me stupid and sour, because I sat in the corner watching the rest."

"Josephine Smith did?" cried Chester, indig-

nantly. "But never mind. Don't cry about it. Do you know, you are as much better—brighter than she is, as light is brighter and better than darkness? You are ten times more agreeable. She has nothing to compare with your pure soul."

"You are so kind to say so! But others do not think it, if you do," murmured Hepsy. "Oh!" she exclaimed, with a burst of passionate grief, "it was cruel in her, to be Henry Wilbur's judge, and sentence him to kiss me!"

"Did she?"

"Yes; then they all laughed, and she ran out in the sitting-room after you; and the rest thought it such a joke, that anybody should have to kiss *me!*"

Hepsy spoke very bitterly, and Chester's blood boiled with indignation.

"I can't believe they were making fun at your expense," said he, in a suppressed tone. "If I thought they were so heartless——"

"Oh, they did not know how I would feel about it, I am sure," interrupted the girl.

"Did Henry laugh?"

"No"—with a melancholy smile—"it was no laughing matter with him!—No!—Henry was very gentlemanly about it. He did not hesitate, although I saw him turn all sorts of colors; but came right up to do penance, like a hero. I thanked him in my heart for the good will he

showed; but I would not let him kiss me, for I knew it would be disagreeable to him."

"That is all your imagination," cried Chester, cheerily. "So think no more about it. Remember that there is one who loves you, at any rate, let what will happen."

"I know there is one very good to me," replied Hepsy, with emotion. "Oh, you don't know what a comfort your kindness is! I would not—I could not—live without it! I sometimes think everybody hates me but you."

"You are too sensitive, Coz. But since you imagine such things, I'll tell you what: when I am married, you shall come and live with me. How would you like that?"

A quick pain shot through Hepsy's heart. A faintness came over her. Her cold hand dropped from Chester's, and fell by her side.

"I will tell my wife all about how good you are," he continued, in a tone of encouragement; "and she must love you too. She cannot help it. And we will always be like brother and sister to you."

He kissed her white cheek, and went on hopefully:

"I have a secret for you, which I have not even revealed to Sarah or James. I will tell it to you, because I know how it will please you." He took her hand again. "The truth is, I am—engaged."

Hepsy did not breathe; her hand was like stone.

"To a glorious girl, Coz. Oh, you cannot help loving her. You can form no idea how sweet and beautiful she is. She's tall as Sarah, but more slender and graceful. You should see her curls! When she speaks, her soft eyes——But what is the matter?"

"The air—is—close!" gasped Hepsy.

"You are fainting!"

"No; I am—better now."

Hepsy made a desperate effort, and conquered her emotion.

Chester, always delicately thoughtful of the feelings of others, except when his enthusiasm carried him away, proceeded with his description, every word of which burned like fire in the poor girl's heart. And he—fond soul!—deemed that he was pouring the balm of comfort and the precious ointment of joy upon her spirit! For how could he pause to consider and know that every charm he ascribed to the professor's daughter demonstrated to the unhappy creature more and more vividly, and with terrible force, that she was utterly unlovable and unblest? Contrasted with the enchanting valley of his love, how arid and desolate a desert seemed her life!

Meanwhile Miss Josephine Smith had early discovered the absence of Chester from the circle, and looked about to find him. She could not rest

where he was not. Becoming thirsty again, she made another errand to the water-pail in the kitchen; but she drank only of the cup of disappointment. As soon, therefore, as she could do so, without making her conduct marked, she sought her loadstar in the parlor.

"How dreadfully tholitary you are to-night!" she exclaimed, with a smile which showed all her teeth. "Do extricate yourself from that frightfully lonthome corner."

She suddenly discovered that, still beyond the chair in which Chester was seated, there was another, not unoccupied.

"Ho, ho! what charmer have you there? You are getting to be an awfully dethperate flirt, Chethter Royden. Oh! nobody but Hepthy!"

"Nobody but my good cousin Hepsy," replied Chester, coldly.

"Dear me! I wouldn't have *thuthpicioned* you could be tho fathinated with her!" she cried, in a tone she deemed cuttingly sarcastic.

"Miss Smith," said Chester, quietly, "you need not think, because *you* happen to have *peculiar* charms of person, that no others have graces of a different sort."

"Oh, what an egregiouth flatterer!" returned Josephine Smith, shaking her meager curls. "Come"—and she boldly seated herself—"let me know what your interesting conversation is about."

"We were just speaking of going into the sitting-room," answered the young man, rising.

He stooped, and whispered to Hepsy.

"Leave me alone a few minutes, then I will come," she murmured.

He pressed her hand, and walked away.

"Don't you thuppose, now," said Miss Smith, following, and taking his arm familiarly, "I think you have grown wonderfully handthome, thince you have been at school?"

Chester made some nonsensical reply, and, having conducted her to the sitting-room, coolly turned about, and reëntered the parlor.

Hepsy's face was hidden in her hands. She was weeping convulsively.

"I thought what I said would make you happy," he whispered.

Hepsy started; she choked back her sobs; she wiped her streaming eyes.

"It should make me happy," she articulated, in broken tones. "But—leave me alone a little while—I shall feel better soon."

"You are too much alone," said Chester. "You must come with me now."

"My eyes are so red!"

"The company is so much interested in Father Brighthopes' story, that nobody will see you. Come!—you must."

Chester was obliged to add gentle force to persuasion, to accomplish his kind design. Finally,

she told him to go before, and she would come directly. He took his place in the circle around the old clergyman, and presently she glided to an obscure position, behind Mr. Royden's chair. There, unobserved, she indulged in her melancholy thoughts, until they were diverted by Father Brighthopes' remarks.

"Thus, my friends," said he, "you see that I have reason to bless the wisdom that rained upon my head the grievous sufferings of which I complained so bitterly at the time. Truly, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Steel gets its temper from the furnace. What is gold good for, unless it has been fused and hammered? All our trials are teachers; then temptations form themselves into a sort of examining committee, to see how much we have learned by the discipline—to see how strong we are. If all our worldly circumstances were pleasant and smooth, who would not be contented with them? But storms come; winds blow, and rains pour; then we turn our eyes inwardly. When earth is dark, we look up. When men prove false, we remember the Friend who never fails us. In the gloomy valley of the present, we joyfully turn our sight to the soft blue hills of an infinite future. Clouds now and then overcast the sky; but the sun shines forever. So there is an eternal sun of Love pouring floods of blessed light upon our souls continually, notwithstanding the misty sorrows that some-

times float between, and cast their momentary shades.

"Yes," continued the old man, warming and glowing with the theme, "I bless God for all I have suffered, as all of you will, some day"—his clear, bright eye fell upon the miserable Hepsy—"when you look back and see the uses of affliction. It seems to me that the happiest souls in heaven must be those who have suffered most here; patiently, I mean, and not with continual murmurings, which harden and embitter the heart. Even in this life, the poor and afflicted *exteriorly* may always, and do oftenest, I believe, enjoy *interior* happiness and peace, with which the superficial pleasures of life cannot be compared. The great secret is, Love!—love to God—love to man—and a serene and thankful temper.

"But I find that my story has relapsed into a sermon," said Father Brighthopes, smiling. "You were all so attentive, that I quite forgot myself. I hope I have not been dull."

"Oh, no! No, indeed!" cried half a dozen voices.

All agreed that they could hear him talk all night. They had never been so well instructed in the use to be made of afflictions. They had never seen so clearly the beauty of a serene Christian life.

"It's all *excethively* pretty!" said Miss Smith.

"Well, I am glad if you have been entertained," said the old man, with moist but happy eyes. "Good-night! Good-night! God bless you all!"

His fervent benediction was very touching. More than one eye was wet, as it watched him going to his room. There was not much more wild gayety among the little company that evening, but every heart seemed to have been softened and made deeply happy by the old man's lesson.

Hepsy stole away to her room. His words still echoed in her soul. They stirred its depths; they warmed her, they cheered her strangely. All night long her tears rained upon her pillow—when she slept, as when she lay awake—but she was no longer utterly wretched. A ray had stolen in upon the darkness of her misery.

"Love!" she repeated to herself. "Love to God, and love to our neighbor. But love must be unselfish. It must be self-sacrificing. Oh, Lord!" she prayed, with anguish, "purify my bad heart! purify it! purify it! purify it!"

She felt herself a broken-hearted child, humbled in the dust. But a feeling of calmness came over her. Her hot and throbbing heart grew cool and still. Angels had touched her with their golden wings; and her spirit seemed to brighten and expand with newly-developed powers of patience, endurance and love.

Meanwhile, Chester was penning a passionate letter to his affianced, wholly absorbed, and forgetful even of the existence of poor Hepsy.

CHAPTER XII.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

As Father Brighthopes entered the sitting-room on the following morning, he found Mr. and Mrs. Royden engaged in a warm and not very good-natured discussion.

"Come, wife, let us leave it to our wise old friend," said the former, the frown passing from his brow. "I agree to do as he says."

"He cannot possibly appreciate my feelings on the subject," replied Mrs. Royden, firmly. "But you can tell him what we were talking about, if you like."

The old man's genial smile was sufficient encouragement for Mr. Royden to proceed; but his wife added, quickly:

"I don't know, though, why you should weary him with details of our troubles. It is our business to make him comfortable, and not to call on him to help us out of our difficulties."

"My dear sister," said Father Brighthopes, warmly, "the joyful business of my life is *to help.* I did not come to see you merely to be made comfortable. I shall think I have lived long enough when I cease to be of service to my great

family. These hands are not worth much now," he continued, cheerfully, "but my head is old enough to be worth something; and when I am grown quite childish, if I live to see the time, I trust God will give me still a use, if it is nothing more than to show the world how hopeful, how sunny, how peaceful, old age can be."

"I cannot think of a nobler use," said Mr. Royden, "since to see you so must lead the young to consider those virtues to which you owe your happiness. Selfish lives never ripen into such beautiful old age. But to our affair. To-day is Saturday; next week commences a busy time. We go into the hay-field Monday morning. I shall have two stout mowers, who will board with us, and, as they will probably want some more solid food than apples and nuts," said Mr. Royden, with quiet humor, "the consequence will be an increase of labor in the kitchen."

"I should think so!" cried the old man. "What delightfully keen appetites your strong laborers have!"

"And Mr. Royden insists on it," added the wife, "that I should have a girl to help me!"

"Certainly, I do; isn't the idea rational, Father Brighthopes?"

"There are a good many objections to it," said Mrs. Royden. "In the first place, the children recommence going to school Monday morning, and I shall not have them in the way. If ever I was

glad of anything, it is that Miss Selden is well enough to take charge of the children again; she has been off a fortnight; and I have been nearly crazed with noise; but, the truth is, Father Brighthopes, girls are generally worse than no help at all. Not once in a dozen times do we ever get a good one. I have had experience; besides, Hepsy is *very* willing and industrious."

"She works too hard even now, wife—you *must* see it. She is weakly; before you think of it, she goes beyond her strength."

"I don't mean she shall hurt herself," observed Mrs. Royden, incredulously. "Sarah will apply herself more than she has done; and, for at least a week, Samuel will be too lame to go into the field, and he can help around the house."

Her husband laughed heartily.

"With your experience, I should not think you would expect to get much out of him," said he.

"To tell the plain truth, then," added his wife, "we cannot very well afford the expense of a girl."

"What's a dollar and a quarter a week?"

"We cannot get a good girl for less than a dollar and a half, at this season of the year; and that is a good deal. It runs up to fifty dollars in a few months. I don't mean to be close, but it stands us in hand to be economical."

"There are two ways of being economical," said Mr. Royden.

"It is not the right way to be running up a bill of expense with a girl who does not, in reality, earn more than her board, which is to be taken into consideration, you know. We have kept either Sarah or Chester at a high-school now for two years; in a little while, James will be going —then Lizzie—then—nobody knows how many more."

"The more the better!"

Mrs. Royden answered her husband's good-natured sally with a sigh.

"You would bring us to the poor-house, some day, if you did not have me to manage, I do believe," she said.

"Somehow," replied Mr. Royden, "we have always been able to meet all our expenses, and more, too, although you have never ceased to prophesy the poor-house; and I see nothing rotten in the future. Come, now, I am sure our old and experienced friend, here, will counsel us to rely a little more than we have done upon an overruling Providence."

"We must help ourselves, or Providence will not help us," retorted Mrs. Royden.

"There is a middle course." remarked Father Brighthopes, mildly.

"Define it," said Mr. Royden.

"Have a reasonable care for the things of this world; but there is such a thing as a morbid fear of adversity. I am convinced that we please God

best when we take life easily; when we are thankful for blessings, and do not offend the Giver by distrusting his power or will to continue his good gifts."

"There, wife! what do you think of that?"

"It sounds very well, indeed," said Mrs. Royden; "but even if we forget ourselves, we must think of the future of our children."

"My experience is wide," answered the old man, smiling, "and it teaches me that those young people get along the best, and live the happiest, who commence life with little or nothing. Discipline, of the right kind, makes a good disposition; and a good disposition is better than silver and gold."

Something in the tone in which the words were uttered, or in the old man's simple and impressive manner, struck Mrs. Royden, as well as her husband, very forcibly. And when Mr. Royden added that "they had always got along better than they expected, so far, and he did not see the wisdom of hoarding up money for an uncertain future," she gave a partial consent to the arrangement he proposed.

"That is enough!" he cried, triumphantly; "I am sick of seeing house affairs rushed forward in haste and confusion, whenever we have workmen. I mean to take life easier than I have done; and I see no reason why you should not. What cannot be done easily, let it go undone. Things will

come around somehow, at the end of the year. I have to thank you, Father Brighthopes," said he, "for a clearer insight into this philosophy than I ever had before."

The old man's face shone with gratification.

"If I'm to have any girl," spoke up Mrs. Royden, "I prefer the Bowen girl, if I can get her."

"I'll ride over for her, after breakfast," replied her husband; "and Father Brighthopes shall go with me, if he will."

The old man desired nothing better, and the arrangement was resolved upon.

As soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Royden went to harness Old Bill. He brought him to the door, and inquired for the clergyman.

"He went to his room," said Sarah; "shall I call him?"

"No; I will go myself."

On entering the parlor, Mr. Royden heard a voice proceeding from the bedroom beyond, and paused. A strange feeling of awe came over him. He was not a religious man; but he could not hear the fervent soul of the clergyman pouring itself out in prayer, without being deeply impressed. He had never heard such simple, childlike, eloquent expressions of thankfulness, gush from human lips. The old man prayed for him; for his family; for the blessings of peace and love to fall thick upon their heads, and for the light of spiritual life to enter into their hearts.

His whole soul seemed to go up in that strong and radiant flood of prayer.

When he ceased, Mr. Royden might have been seen to pause and wipe his eyes, before he knocked at the door. Father Brighthopes opened it with alacrity. His face was glowing with unearthly joy, and there was a brightness in his eyes Mr. Royden had never observed before.

CHAPTER XIII.

TALK BY THE WAY.

It was another lovely day—sunny, breezy, and not too warm for comfort. As Mr. Royden and the old clergyman rode along together, the former said:

"You seem to have brought the most delightful weather with you, Father. Everything bright in nature seems to be attracted by you."

"There is more philosophy at the bottom of your remark than you dream of," replied the old man. "Your words cannot be interpreted literally; but the attraction you allude to is real, if not actual."

"I do not understand you."

"I mean a bright spirit sees everything in nature bright; it has an affinity for sunny colors. On the other hand,

> 'He who hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
> Benighted walks beneath the noonday sun.'

A gloomy heart sees gloom in everything. Truly Milton has said,

> 'The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make of heaven a hell, of hell a heaven.'

The principle holds universally, notwithstanding apparent contradictions and exceptions in various instances. I have seen more pure and perfect happiness, nestled in poverty, in a laborer's cottage, than I ever met with in the houses of the rich."

"Then the fault lies with me," said Mr. Royden, thoughtfully, "whenever my home appears less agreeable and attractive than it might, I suppose."

"In a great measure, the fault is yours, undoubtedly. Do you not think that an established habit of preserving a serene temper, in the midst of the most trying scenes, would produce blessed results?"

"But the power is not in me."

"It is in every man," said Father Brighthopes. "Only exercise it."

"You can have no conception of what I have had to go through," replied Mr. Royden, gloomily. "Everything has conspired to ruin my disposition. My nature has been soured; I could not help it. I have become irritable, and the least thing moves me."

The old man expressed so much sympathy, and spoke so encouragingly, that Mr. Royden continued:

"You remember me, I suppose, an ambitious, warm, impulsive youth?"

"Well do I! And the interest I felt in you has never cooled."

"Hope was bright before me. I believed I should make some stir in the world. All my plans for the future were tinged with the colors of romance. But the flowers I saw in the distance proved to be only briers."

"You found life a stern and unromantic fact," said Father Brighthopes, smiling. "The same disenchantment awaits every imaginative youth. It is said—it is often very bitter; but it is a useful lesson."

"The blue hills I climbed grew unusually rugged and rocky to my undisciplined feet," resumed Mr. Royden, shaking his head. "I came upon the ledges very suddenly. The haze and sunshine faded and dissolved, even as I reached the most enchanting point of the ascent."

"It is plain you allude to your marriage."

Mr. Royden was silent. His features writhed with bitter emotions, and his voice was deep and tremulous, when at length he spoke.

"My wife is the best of women at heart," he said. "I feel that I could not live without her. But she never understood me, and never could. With the aspirations dearest to my soul she has had no sympathy."

"It is her misfortune, and not her fault, I am sure," replied Father Brighthopes.

"I know it is—I know it is! We did not under-

stand each other before marriage. Our attachment was a romantic one. She had no thought of what was in me; she saw me only as a lover attractive enough to please her girlish imagination. She was very beautiful, and I loved her devotedly. But—" Mr. Royden's voice was shaken—"when I looked to find my other ideal self glowing beneath her brilliant exterior, I saw a stranger there. I found that it was not her character I had loved."

"And she, probably, made a similar discovery in you," said the old man, cheerfully, but feelingly.

"No doubt—no doubt! But I do wrong to speak of this," murmured Mr. Royden, brushing a tear from his eye. "It is a subject I could never talk upon to a living soul, and how I have come to let you into my confidence I am at a loss to know."

"Some good angel prompted you, perhaps," replied Father Brighthopes, "in order that something may come, through me, to counsel or comfort you."

"I would gladly think so!" exclaimed his companion. "I want consolation and instruction: and you are so wise an old head!"

He coughed, spoke to the horse, to urge him into a faster pace, and, having silenced his emotions, resumed the subject of conversation.

"I had little idea of being a farmer, until I was

married. It was necessary to engage in some pursuit, and I had not prepared myself for any learned profession. I fondly dreamed that some way would be opened for me by the magic of my genius; for I was passionately devoted to music, in which I believed I might excel. Delicious dreams of a bright career were followed by naked, every-day life—farmers' cares and farmers' toil. I could not be reconciled to the reality. I murmured because Sarah was so cold, practical, and calculating; I know I made her unhappy. I was constitutionally irritable, and a habit of fretfulness grew upon me. This was not designed to soften her rather harsh nature, or benefit her temper. With children came an increase of cares and discords, which sometimes almost maddened me. Oh, why was I formed so weak, so infirm a mortal?" groaned Mr. Royden. "I have tried in vain to govern my spleen. It rules me with a finger of fire."

"Do you know," said Father Brighthopes, feelingly, "I have a disposition naturally very much like yours?"

"You!"

"Your mother was my father's sister; we inherited from the same stock the same infirm temper. The Rensfords are constitutionally nervous. Our sense of harmony and discord is too fine; we have bad spleens; and we lack forti-

tude. Ill-health, of which we have both seen somewhat, aggravates the fault."

"But what can cure it?" exclaimed Mr. Royden.

"I never saw my remedy until my eyes were opened to the sublime beauty of Christ's character. The wisdom he taught filled me with the deepest shame for my folly of fretting at the trivial perplexities of life. I cried out, in agony, 'Oh, God give me strength!' Strength came. It will come to those who ask for it with earnest, unselfish hearts."

Observing that Mr. Royden was thoughtful, and plunged in doubt, the old man changed the conversation. He spoke of Mrs. Royden. He expressed his sympathy for her, and indirectly showed his companion how tender he should be of her, how charitable towards her temper, how careful not to make her feel the hedge of thorns which their ill-matched dispositions had placed between them. He went so far as to teach how, by mutual forbearance, forgetfulnes of the past and hope for the future, pleasant discourse and serene contentment with the ways of Providence, these briers might be made to blossom thick with roses.

"Talk with her—talk with her!" said Mr. Royden, with gushing emotions. "Oh, if you could create such harmony between us, I would bless you, not for our sakes alone, but for our children's. We are spoiling them; I see it every

day. I am not severe with them; but one hour I am fretful, and the next too indulgent. My wife thinks it necessary to counteract my too easy discipline by one too strict. She punishes them sometimes when she is angry, and that is sure to make them worse."

If Mr. Royden had said she never punished the children except when she was angry, he would not have gone far from the truth.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEACON DUSTAN'S POLICY.

Our friends met a ruddy farmer on horseback. He reined up on the road-side, and stopped. Mr. Royden also stopped, and said:

"Good-morning, Deacon Dustan."

"Good-morning, good-morning, neighbor," cried Deacon Dustan, heartily, his sharp gray eyes twinkling as he fixed them on the old clergyman's face. "Good-morning to you, Father. Mr. Rensford, I believe? I heard of your arrival, sir, and intended to call and make your acquaintance."

The old man acknowledged the compliment in his usual simple and beautiful manner.

"We thought of getting around to your place yesterday, deacon," said Mr. Royden. "But we found we had not time."

"Try again, and better luck!" replied Deacon Dustan. "By the way," he added, in an off-hand, careless manner, "I suppose you will put your name on our paper for the new meeting-house?"

"Is the thing decided upon?"

"Oh, yes. The old shell has held together long enough. The other society has got the start of

us, at the village; and we must try to be a little in the fashion, or many of our people will go there to meeting."

"I don't know; but I suppose I must do something, if a new house is built," said Mr. Royden. "The old one seems to me, though, to be a very respectable place of worship, if we are only a mind to think so."

"It would do very well five years ago," said Deacon Dustan. "But our society has come up wonderfully. We have got just the right kind of minister now. Mr. Corlis is doing a great thing for us. I don't think we could have got a more popular preacher. He is very desirous to see the movement go on."

Mr. Royden said he would consider the matter; a few more remarks were passed, touching the business of farmers, the favorable state of the weather to commence haying, and so forth; and the deacon, switching his little black pony, pursued his way.

"I am not much in favor of building a new meeting-house," said Mr. Royden, with a dissatisfied air, driving on. "Although I am not a church-member, I shall feel obliged to give in proportion with my neighbors towards the enterprise."

"Is not the old house a good one?" asked Father Brighthopes.

"As good as any, only it is old-fashioned. Our

people are getting ashamed of the high pulpit and high-backed pews, since Mr. Corlis has been with us. Deacon Dustan, who has some fashionable daughters, and a farm near the proposed site of the new house, appears to be the prime mover in the affair."

"He probably views it in a purely business light, then?"

"Yes," said Mr. Royden. "The vanity of his daughters will be gratified, and the price of his land enhanced. I ought not to speak so"—laughing—"but the truth is, the deacon is the shrewdest man to deal with in the neighborhood."

"A jolly, good-natured man, I should judge?"

"One of the best! A capital story-teller, and eater of good dinners. But he has an eye to speculation. He is keen. Mark Wheeler, who is a close jockey, declares he was never cheated till the deacon got hold of him."

Father Brighthopes shook his head sadly. He was not pleased to pursue the subject. Presently he began to talk, in his peculiarly interesting and delightful way, about the great philosophy of life, and Mr. Royden was glad to listen.

In this manner they passed by the minister's cottage, the old-fashioned meeting-house and the pleasant dwellings scattered around it; and finally came to a large, showy white house, shaded by trees, and surrounded by handsome grounds,

which Mr. Royden pointed out as Deacon Dustan's residence.

A little further on, they came to a little brown, weather-beaten, dilapidated house, built upon a barren hill. Here Mr. Royden stopped.

"This is one of Deacon Dustan's houses," said he. "Job Bowen, an old soldier, who lost a leg in the war of 1812, lives here. He is now a shoemaker. I hope I shall be able to engage his daughter Margaret to come and live with us. Will you go in, or sit in the wagon?"

"I shall feel better to get out and stir a little," replied the clergyman.

Mr. Royden tied Old Bill to a post, and, letting down a pair of bars for his aged friend, accompanied him along a path of saw-dust and rotten chips to the door.

They were admitted by a bent and haggard woman, who said "good-morning" to Mr. Royden and his companion, in a tone so hoarse and melancholy as to be exceedingly painful to their ears.

"Will you walk in?" she asked, holding the door open.

"Thank you. Is your daughter Margaret at home now?"

"Yes, she is."

Mrs. Bowen talked like a person who had lost all her back teeth, and her accents seemed more and more unhappy and forbidding.

"I called to see if you could let her come and help us next week," said Mr. Royden.

"I don't know. Sit down. I'll see what she says."

Having placed a couple of worn, patched and mended wooden chairs, for the callers, in the business room of the house, Mrs. Bowen disappeared.

Father Brighthopes looked about him with a softened, sympathizing glance; but, before sitting down, went and shook hands with a sallow individual, who was making shoes in one corner. He was a short, stumpy, queer-looking man, past the middle age, with a head as bald as an egg, and ears that stood out in bold relief behind his temples. Sitting upon a low bench, his wooden leg—for this was Job, the soldier—stuck out straight from his body, diverging slightly from the left knee, on which he hammered the soles of his customers.

"Ah! how do you do?" said he, in a soft, deliberate half-whisper, as Father Brighthopes addressed him.

With his right hand—having carefully wiped it upon his pantaloons, or rather pantaloon, for his luck in war enabled him to do with half a pair—he greeted the old clergyman modestly and respectfully, while with his left he raised his steel-bowed glasses from his nose.

"My friend," said Father Brighthopes, "you seem industriously at work, this morning."

"Pegging away—pegging away!" replied Job, with a child-like smile. "Always pegging, you know."

There was an evident attempt at so much more cheerfulness in his voice than he really felt, that the effect was quite touching.

"That's my mother," he added, as the clergyman turned to shake hands with a wrinkled, unconscious-looking object, who sat wrapped in an old blanket, in a rocking-chair. "A kind old woman, but very deaf. You'll have to speak loud."

"Good-morning, mother," cried Father Brighthopes, raising his voice, and taking her withered hand.

The old woman seemed to start up from a sort of dream, and a feeble gleam of intelligence crossed her seamed and bloodless features, as she fixed her watery eye upon the clergyman.

"Oh, yes!" she cried, mumbling the shrill words between her toothless gums, "I remember all about it. Sally's darter was born on the tenth of June, in eighteen-four. Her husband's mother was a Higgins."

The clergyman smiled upon her sadly, nodded assent, and, laying her hand gently upon her lap, turned away.

"Her mind's a runnin' on old times, and she

don't hear a word you say, sir," observed Job, in his peculiar half-whisper, slow, subdued, but very distinct. "She don't take much notice o' what's goin' on now-days, and we have to screech to her to make her understand anything. A kind old lady, sir, but past her time, and very deaf."

Mr. Royden squeezed a drop of moisture out of his eye, and coughed. Meanwhile the aged woman relapsed into the dreamy state from which she had been momentarily aroused, drawing the dingy blanket around her cold limbs, and whispering over some dim memory of the century gone by.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A WOODEN LEG.

"You have a good trade, friend Bowen," said Father Brighthopes, drawing his chair near the shoemaker's bench.

"It does capital for me!" replied Job, cheerfully. "Since I got a bayonet through my knee at Lundy's Lane, I find I get on best in the world sittin' still."

He smiled pleasantly over this feeble attempt at humor, and arranged some waxed ends, which, for convenience, he had hung upon his wooden leg.

"Did you learn shoe-making before you went soldiering?" asked the clergyman.

"I'd been a 'prentice. But I tired of the monotony. So I quarreled with my trade, and fought my *last* at Lundy's Lane, as I tell people," said Job, with twinkling eyes.

"You got the worst of it?"

"All things considered I did. This fighting is bad business; and, you see, I decidedly put my foot in it."

Job touched his wooden leg significantly, to illustrate the joke.

"You seem merry over your misfortune," observed Father Brighthopes.

"Better be merry than sad, you know. There's no use o' complainin' of Providence, when my own folly tripped me up. My understanding is not so lame as that."

It was amusing to see with what a relish the poor fellow cracked these little jokes of his over his infirmity. To get hold of someone who had never heard them before, and could laugh at them as well as if they were quite fresh and new, seemed a great happiness to him; and the clergyman did not fail to appreciate and encourage his humor.

"On the whole," said the latter, "you made a bad bargain when you traded your hammer and awl for a musket and cartridge-box?"

Job's eyes glistened He rubbed his hands together with delight. The old man had given him a capital opportunity to get in another of his jokes, just like an impromptu.

"I might have made a worse bargain," he said. "As long as I had one leg left"—he touched his solitary knee—"I ought to call it a good bargain. You see, I did not come off altogether without something to boot."

"I hope you were contented to return to shoemaking?" remarked the clergyman, laughing

"Well—yes," replied Job, in his cheerful half whisper. "I did not find the change so difficult

as many would. I can say, truthfully, that, with me, there was but one step between the battle-field and the shop."

Father Brighthopes took time to consider the enormity of this far-reaching jest, and replied:

"Well, brother; I trust you get along pretty well now."

"Passable, passable. Better than I should, if I was a lamp-lighter or a penny-postman. I wouldn't make a very good ballet-dancer, either. Do you think I would?"

Father Brighthopes replied that, in his experience, he had learned to regard a contented shoemaker as more blessed—even if he had lost a leg—than a miserly millionaire, or an ambitious monarch.

"I've had considerable to try me, though," said Job. "Two fine boys, 'at would now be able to take care of me and the family, got the small-pox both 't a time; one was nineteen, t'other fifteen; I'd rather lost a dozen legs, if I'd had 'em," he murmured, thoughtfully. "Then I've one darter that's foolish and sickly. She an't able to do nothin', and it's took more 'n my pension was wo'th to doctor her."

"You have seen affliction: thank God, my friend, that you have come through it so nobly!" exclaimed Father Brighthopes, smiling, with tears of sympathy running down his cheeks.

He patted Job's shoulder kindly; and the poor

fellow could not speak, for a moment, his heart was touched so deeply.

"It's all for the best, I s'pose," said he, coughing, and drawing his shirt-sleeve across his eyes.

"Yes; and you will get your reward," answered the old man.

"So I believe! I find so much comfort in these good old leaves."

Job pointed to a worn Bible, that lay on the mantel-piece.

"Right! right!" cried the clergyman, joyously. "Job Bowen, there is a crown for thee! Job Bowen, in my life I have not met with twenty men so blessed as thou. But thousands and thousands of the rich and prosperous well might envy thee, thou poor Christian shoemaker, with one leg!"

"Thank you! thank you, for saying so much!" bubbled from Job's lips, like a gushing stream of glad water.

He laughed; he shed tears; he seemed warmed through and through with the sunshine of peace. The clergyman clasped his hand, weeping silently, with joy in his glorious old face.

"Yes," said Job, rallying, "I knowed it 'u'd be all right in the end. I tell folks, though I an't good at dancing and capering, and turning short corners in life, and dodging this way and that, with my wooden stump, I shall do well enough in the long run."

"And, considering how well afflictions prepare us for heaven, we may say," added Father Brighthopes, "you have already put your best foot forward."

"That I have! that I have!" cried Job, delighted.

"How does your wife bear up, under all her trials?" asked the old man.

At this juncture the old woman in the corner started once more from her dreams, and cried out:

"On the left-hand side, as you go down. There was thirteen children of 'em—all boys but two. The youngest was a gal, born the same day we sold our old brindle cow."

Mr. Royden and the clergyman both started, and looked at the speaker.

"Don't mind her—don't mind the poor creatur'!" said Job, softly. "Her talk is all out of date; it's all about bygones. A kind old lady, but childish again, and very deaf."

Father Brighthopes returned to the subject they were conversing upon.

"My wife has seen a mighty deal of bad weather," said Job, very softly. "Oh, she has got through it amazin' well, for a feeble woman. She astonishes me every day o' my life. But, then, you see, she's a good deal broken, late years."

"I am sorry for her—sorry for her!" ex-

claimed the clergyman, warmly. "But there's a good time coming for all of us old people"—looking up, with a peaceful smile.

"So I tell her," replied Job. "But she han't got the animal sperrits she once had. And that an't to be wondered at. Oh, she's a good soul! and if she'd pluck up heart a little—gracious!" exclaimed the shoemaker, doubling his fists, and compressing his lips with hopeful firmness, "I think I wouldn't like any better fun than to fight the world ten or a dozen years longer!"

"My bold Christian hero!"

"Thank you, sir! To be that is glory enough for me; though I didn't think exactly so when I stood strong and proud on two legs. I believed then I was destined to do wonders with bagonets and gunpowder."

The clergyman patted his shoulder kindly, and said:

"Do you not feel it is better as it is?"

"Well, yes. I think of that a good deal. 'Supposing I had got to be a real, genuine bloody hero?' I say to myself. 'What would it all have come to, in the end?' I expect it was the best thing the devil could have done for me, when he knocked me off my pins. Ah! here comes mother, with Maggie."

Mrs. Bowen entered, accompanied by a plain, good-natured, wholesome-looking girl, modest, but not awkward, coarsely but quite neatly at-

tired. She advanced to shake hands with Mr. Royden, and inquired about Mrs. Royden and the children.

"They will all be glad to see you," he replied. "What do you say to coming and helping us, next week?"

"I don't know how I can come, any way in the world," said Maggie. "Ma's health is so poor now, I ought to be at home."

"I s'pose I shall have to spare you, if you think you would like to go," added Mrs. Bowen, in her sepulchral tone of voice.

Maggie colored very red. She seemed to know hardly what to say. Fortunately, the grandmother in the corner attracted observation from her, by crying out, with a shrill, childish laugh:

"So she did! he, he, he! Eggs ten cents a dozen, and all the hens a settin'! That beat all the jokes I ever heard on! Eggs ten cents a dozen, and five hens a—'s—'s—'s—"

The words died away in the old woman's toothless jaws; but her lips continued to move, and her mind seemed to float lightly upon the waves of an inaudible laugh. Mrs. Bowen broke the silence which followed.

"The truth is"—what a ghostly tone!—"Maggie didn't like to work for Mrs. Royden any too well, when she was there before."

"Oh, ma!" spoke up the girl, entreatingly.

"It's the truth. She liked your folks well

enough, but there's pleasanter families to work for."

"Fie, mother!" said Job, softly. "Let bygones be bygones."

"I am glad you spoke of it," added Mr. Royden, frankly. "My wife means to be kind, but she has a good deal to try her, and she gets fretful, now and then. I am troubled the same way, too."

"Oh, Maggie never said a word ag'in you," rejoined Mrs. Bowen; "nor any real harm of Mrs. Royden, for that matter. But, as I said, there's pleasanter families to work for."

"Well, well!" cried Mr. Royden, desirous of getting away from the disagreeable topic, "I think, if Maggie will try it again, she will find things a little different. At any rate, she mustn't mind too much what my wife says, when she is irritated."

"I suppose you will give a dollar and a half a week, in the busy season?"

If Mr. Royden hesitated at this reasonable suggestion of the girl's mother, it was only because he knew his wife would hardly be satisfied to pay so much. But a glance around the room, in which a struggle with poverty was so easily to be seen, decided him. What was a quarter, a half, or even a dollar a week, to come out of his pocket? How much the miserable trifle might be, falling into the feeble palm of the ghastly

woman, whom trouble had crushed, and who found it such a hard and wretched task to toil and keep her family together!

"I can't come until the last of the week, anyway," said Maggie.

"I am sorry for that," replied Mr. Royden.

"I might get along as early as Wednesday; Monday I am engaged to Deacon Dustan's——"

"I shouldn't care if you broke that engagement," said Mrs. Bowen. "Rich people as the Dustans are, they an't willing to pay a poor girl thirty-seven and a half cents for a hard day's work a washing!"

"I must go, since I have promised," quietly observed Margaret. "Tuesday I shall have a good many things to do for myself. So I guess you may expect me Wednesday morning."

"Well, Wednesday be it; I will send over for you before breakfast," said Mr. Royden. "Now, I want you to make up your mind to get along with us as well as you can, and you shall have a dollar and a half, and a handsome present besides."

Having concluded the bargain, Mr. Royden took leave of the family, with his companion.

"Lord bless you, sir!" said Job, when he shook hands with the clergyman. "You have done me a vast sight of good! I feel almost another man. Do come again, sir; we need a little comfort, now and then."

"I hope your minister calls occasionally?" suggested Father Brighthopes.

"Not often, sir, I am sorry to say. He's over to Deacon Dustan's every day; but he never got as far as here but once. And I'd just as lives he wouldn't come. He didn't seem comfortable here, and I thought he was glad to get out of sight of poverty. He's a nice man—Mr. Corlis is, sir—but he hasn't a great liking to poor people, which I s'pose is nat'ral"

"Well, you shall see me again, Providence permitting," cried Father Brighthopes, cheerfully "Keep up a good heart," he added, shaking hands with Mrs. Bowen. "Christ is a friend to you; and there's a glorious future for all of us Good-by! good-by! God bless you all!"

He took the grandmother's hand again, and pressed it in silence. His face was full of kindly emotion, and his eyes beamed with sympathy.

"Yes, I guess so!" cried the old woman. "About fifteen or twenty. The string of that old looking-glass broke just five years from the day it was hung up. It was the most wonderfulest thing I ever knowed on! I telled our folks something dre'ful was going to happen."

She still continued to mumble, over some inaudible words between her gums, but the light of her eyes grew dim, and she settled once more in her dreams.

Mr. Royden went out; the clergyman followed, leaving the door open, and a stream of sunshine pouring its flood of liquid gold upon the olden floor.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOING TO MEETING.

On the following morning the Roydens made early preparations for attending church. The cows were milked and turned away into the pasture; the horses were caught, curried and harnessed; and the great open family carriage was backed out of the barn.

Meanwhile, Hepsy and Sarah washed the boys, combed their hair, and put on their clean clothes. Willie's bright locks curled naturally, and in his white collar and cunning little brown linen jacket he looked quite charming. It was delightful to see him strut and swagger and purse up his red lips with a consciousness of manly trousers, and tell Hepsy to do this and do that, with an air of authority, scowling, now and then, just like his father. Georgie was more careless of his dignity; he declared that his collar choked him, and "darned it all" spitefully, calling upon Sarah to take it off, that he might go without it until meeting-time, at any rate.

Mrs. Royden busied herself about the house, cleaning up, here and there, with her usual energy of action.

"Come, wife!" exclaimed her husband, who was shaving at the looking-glass in the kitchen, "you had better leave off now, and get ready. We shall be late."

"I can't bear to leave things all at loose ends," replied Mrs. Royden. "I shall have time enough to change my dress. Hepsy! If you let the boys get into the dirt with their clean clothes, you will deserve a good scolding."

"Isn't Hepsy going to church?" asked Mr. Royden.

"No; she says she had just as lief stay at home; and somebody must take care of the baby, you know."

"If Sam wasn't such a mischief-maker, we might leave the baby with him."

"Dear me! I'd as soon think of leaving it with the cows! And, Hepsy, do you keep an eye on Samuel. Don't let him be cracking but'nuts all day. Where's Lizzie? Is she getting ready?"

"I think she is," replied Hepsy. "She was tending the baby; but that is still now."

"I can't conceive how we are all going to ride," added Mrs. Royden. "I don't know but I had better stay at home. The carriage will be crowded, and it seems as though I had everything to do."

"There will be plenty of room in the carriage," said her husband, taking the razor from his chin, and wiping it on a strip of newspaper. "Father

Brighthopes and I can take Lizzie on the front seat with us, and you and Sarah can hold the boys between you. Chester and James are going to walk."

Mrs. Royden continued to work, until she had but a few minutes left in which to get ready. The second bell was ringing, and carriages were beginning to go by.

"Come, wife!" again her husband exclaimed; "we shall be late. There go Mr. Eldridge's folks."

"They are always early," said she, impatiently. "Do let me take my time!"

But Mr. Royden called her attention to the clock.

"Dear me! who would have thought it could be so late?" she cried. "Where the morning has gone to I can't conceive. Hepsy, come and help me slip on my silk dress."

"Willie wants to ride his stick," said Hepsy; "and it is all dirt."

"Willie cannot ride his stick to-day!" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, sharply. "Do you hear?"

Willie began to pout and mutter, "I will, too! so there!" and kick the mop-board.

His mother's morning experience had not prepared her for the exercise of much patience. She rushed upon the little shaver, and boxed his ears violently.

"Do you tell me you will?" she cried. "Take that!"

Willie blubbered with indignation, being too proud to cry outright, with his new clothes on.

"Stop that noise!"

Willie could not stop; and his mother shook him. This was too much for his dignity, and he bawled with open mouth.

"You shall stay at home from meeting!" muttered Mrs. Royden. "Take off his collar, Hepsy!"

"She shan't!" screamed Willie, throwing himself on the defensive. "I'll bite her!"

"Come, come!" said Mr. Royden; "Willie is going to be a good boy, and go to meeting like a man."

"He shall go into the closet, and stay there one hour!" exclaimed his mother, snatching him up roughly.

Willie met with a providential escape. While he was kicking and screaming in his mother's arms, the noise of a dire disaster filled the kitchen, and contributed to drown his cries.

Georgie, reaching up to the water-pail which stood on the sink-shelf, to get a dipper-full of drink, had somehow pulled it over. Its entire contents spouted upon his face, his bosom, his fresh collar and nice clothes, and the pail came with him to the floor. After the shock, and the jar, and a little gasping, he began to shriek. Mrs.

Royden dropped Willie, and ran to the rescue. It was well for the drenched boy that his father arrived first at the spot, and lifted him up. Hepsy was terrified; but Sam, who had hobbled up to the door, to tell Mr. Royden that the team was ready, laughed till he was too weak to stand.

Mrs. Royden, incensed by the lad's insolence, made a rapid dash at him; but Sam dodged, and rolled down the steps. Willie, diverted from his own woes by the mischance which had befallen his brother, crept into a corner in the sitting-room, where he hid away from his mother's wrath.

How the storm would have ended it is impossible to say, had not Father Brighthopes made his appearance, serene and glowing from his morning devotions.

"Ah! what has happened to my little friend?" he cried, as Mr. Royden held Georgie up to let him drip.

Mr. Royden had kept his temper with astonishing success; but he was on the point of giving way to his irritable feelings. The old man's appearance was timely. The perplexed father remembered a resolution he had made, and was calm in a moment.

"Oh," said he, "Georgie has been taking a big drink at the water-pail. It was rather too much for him."

"Accidents will happen," cried the clergyman,

cheerfully. "Bear it bravely, my fine fellow! You will get dry again soon. It helps nothing to cry about it, my little man."

Georgie was hushed almost instantly. He seemed ashamed to make a great ado about his disaster, and smothered his cries into sobs. Meanwhile, Mrs. Royden, with a mighty effort, had controlled her boiling and bursting temper, and hastened to her room.

It was now impossible that Georgie should go to meeting. Hepsy undressed him, while Mrs. Royden got herself ready with nervous haste. All the neighbors bound for church had gone by before the family began to pile into the carriage. Mr. Royden's patience was fast ebbing away.

"Come, come, wife!" he said. "I told you you would be too late."

She flew around confusedly, doing everything amiss, in her hurry.

Three times, when on the point of getting into the carriage, she went back for something she had forgotten. Then Georgie, unwilling to stay at home, began to whimper aloud, and struggle fiercely with Hepsy, who restrained him from running after the family. To make matters worse, the yearling colt got out of the barn-yard, Sam having afforded him an opportunity by leaving the doors open on both sides of the barn. Mr. Royden had to get him back; for it would not do to let him follow the team to church, and Sam,

with his lame foot, could not have kept him out of the road.

Mrs. Royden took advantage of this delay to arrange some portion of her dress, which she had neglected in her haste. Her husband had shut the colt up, and returned to the horse-block, before she was ready. His temper was now on the point of bursting forth, as the clergyman saw by his fiery face, knitted brows, and quivering lips.

"Calmly, calmly, brother!" said Father Brighthopes, cheerily. "Take it easy. Keep cool. Heat and passion always make bad things worse."

"I know it!" exclaimed Mr. Royden. "I will keep cool."

He laid down the reins, and took his seat quietly on the horse-block, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Let affairs take their course," said he. "If we don't get to meeting at all, it will not be my fault. I have done my best."

"Mother, why don't you come?" cried Sarah, impatiently.

Mrs. Royden bustled out of the house, pulling on her gloves. Her hsuband helped her up very deliberately, then took his seat calmly and coolly with Father Brighthopes. At length they started, Sam holding the large gate open as they drove through.

"Hepsy!" cried Mrs. Royden, looking back.

Mr. Royden stopped the horses.

"You needn't stop. I can tell her what I want to."

"If you have any directions for her, we may as well wait," said he, quietly.

"Drive on, if you are in such a hurry," retorted Mrs. Royden. "I only wanted to tell her something about the spare-rib. I thought I could make her understand."

They now flew over the ground at a rapid rate, until Willie began to scream.

"Oh, my hat! my hat!"

"Father, why don't you stop?" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, grasping her husband's arm.

"Whoa! whoa! What is the matter?"

"Willie's hat has blown off."

This seemed the climax of disasters. Willie's hat lay in the road, already forty yards behind. Mrs. Royden began to scold Sarah for not attending to the strings, and tying them so that it could not be lost.

Meanwhile Mr. Royden, struggling with his temper, got down and went back for the hat. On his return, his wife seized it, and, in no very pleasant mood, put it on Willie's head,—reprimanding Mr. Royden for moving so slowly.

"I have made up my mind that it is best never to be in a hurry," he replied, in a gentle tone.

However, he drove very fast, and arrived at the meeting-house steps shortly after the last peals of the bell died upon the air. Nothing he disliked

more than to go in late; but he was a little cheered at seeing the Dustans, who lived so near, roll up to the graveled walks, in their grand carriage, while he was helping his family out.

CHAPTER XVII.

FATHER BRIGHTHOPES IN THE PULPIT.

During all the unpleasant hurry and confusion of the morning, Father Brighthopes had remained beautifully serene. He seemed to enjoy the ride on that still Sabbath—so different, in its calm and quiet loveliness, from all other days in the week—as much as if nothing inharmonious had occurred. But he was more thoughtful than usual, talking little, as if his meditations took a higher and holier range than on common occasions.

His venerable aspect attracted general attention, as he entered the aisle with the family, at the close of the prayer. His aged form was slightly bent, his calm eyes downcast, and his step very soft and light; while his countenance beamed with a meek and childlike expression of reverence and love.

The old man seated himself with his relatives, in a humble attitude; but Mr. Corlis, after reading the hymn, invited him, through Deacon Dustan, to come up into the pulpit. He could not well refuse, although he would have preferred to remain in his obscure position. He ascended the

hidden stairway, which always looked so mysterious to young children, and soon his fine, noble head, with its expansive forehead, and thin, white locks of hair, appeared above the crimson cushions of the desk.

From the pulpit, he glanced his eye over the congregation, as they arose with the singers and stood during the hymn. He was very happy, looking kindly down upon so many strangers, who seemed all dear brothers and sisters to his great heart,—near relations and friends, no less than they who sat in Mr. Royden's pew, and Sarah and Chester in the choir.

The sermon was one of the best Mr. Corlis had ever preached. It was not so flowery as many of his discourses, nor so deep in doctrinal research as others, but it contained more practical Christianity than any of his previous productions. When Father Brighthopes, who was agreeably disappointed in its character, expressed his gratification to his younger brother, at its close, the latter should, perhaps, have confessed how much of its merits were owing to his influence; for, after his interview with the old clergyman, Mr. Corlis, touched to the quick by new convictions of duty, had re-written a large portion of the sermon prepared during the week, and poured into it something of the vital spirit of love and truth which had been awakened within him.

Father Brighthopes read the closing hymn in

clear, musical, feeling tones of voice, while the congregation listened with unaccustomed attention and pleasure. When the services were over, a great many sought to be introduced to him, and Deacon Dustan insisted that he should go home with him and dine. But there was a Sunday-school between morning and afternoon services, and he expressed a desire to remain and witness the teachers' labors.

"Perhaps," said he, smiling, "with my experience, I can throw out some useful hints. However, as I think a breath of air will do me good," he added, turning to Mr. Corlis who had asked him to walk over to the parsonage, "I accept your kind invitation. I can return in the course of half an hour, and still have time to utter a great deal more wisdom than I shall be capable of, I fear."

Mr. Corlis had hardly expected this, and, it may be, he was not very pleasantly surprised. It had been impossible for him to foster any resentment from overhearing the old man's remarks, two days before, touching the duties of clergymen; yet he could not feel altogether comfortable in his presence.

Even this sensation of uncongeniality could not last long. Father Brighthopes was so frank, so humble, so full of love and kindly enthusiasm, that in ten minutes his conversation had swept away the barriers between them. Mr. Corlis really began to like him, and feel that his counsel and sup-

port might be of great assistance to him in his labors.

After partaking sparingly of a tempting collation, to which he was welcomed by the bright eyes and rosy lips of Mrs. Corlis, the old man proposed to return to the Sabbath-school; and the young preacher volunteered to be his companion.

The appearance of Father Brighthopes in the schoolroom was a memorable event. The teachers soon closed up the business of their classes, to listen to what he had to say. All was attention, as he arose, venerable, yet simple and smiling, to address the school.

Hitherto, this had been of a rather gloomy character. Many of the teachers had fallen into a melancholy, droning manner of talking to their pupils about the horrors of sin and the awfulness of God's wrath. The old clergyman's cheerful discourse had so much the better effect, from the contrast. How happy and bright was religion, according to his faith! How glorious was truth! How unutterably sweet was the conviction of God's infinite goodness and love!

It was like the pouring down of sunshine through murky clouds,—that earnest, beautiful discourse. The children never forgot it; and, happily for them, the teachers treasured it in their hearts.

Mrs. Royden thought it did not do her much good to go to meeting. She was so nervous, dur-

ing the morning service, that it had been quite impossible for her to fix her mind on the sermon, or enjoy the singing.

"I may as well give up going to meeting altogether," she said to her husband, on their way home at noon. "There is so much to be done, every morning, before we start, that it is all hurry—hurry—hurry; and if I take my time, then we are late."

He could not make her believe that she did a thousand things, on such occasions, which she might just as well leave undone; and, to "have peace," he gave over the argument.

The baby had been very cross, and Mrs. Royden concluded to stay at home in the afternoon. This was melancholy intelligence for Sam, who had enjoyed a fine season of fun in the morning, playing with the cat, and cracking "but'nuts," and plaguing Hepsy. With the old lady around the house, fun was out of the question on the Sabbath.

Hepsy got ready, and returned with Mr. Royden in the afternoon. Father Brighthopes preached, and his sermon was just such a one as the poor girl needed, to cheer her hopeless, doubting heart. In listening to it, she quite forgot how many eyes regarded her deformed figure and plain face with scorn and dislike; she remembered not the pangs which had shot through and through her sensitive heart, when Chester told her of his in-

tended marriage; the world faded, with its selfishness, pride and envy, and heaven opened, with its angels of peace and love. The old man's eloquent sermon delighted old and young; but there were few fainting, thirsty souls, who drank in its glorious thoughts with such intensity of feeling as did the afflicted Hepsy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. KERCHEY.

Chester, in the meantime, had made the acquaintance of a new resident in the neighborhood.

This was a somewhat singular individual, about thirty years of age, unmarried, and very rich. He was the son of a merchant in New York; but, in consequence of feeble health, together with certain eccentric notions with regard to society, he had resolved to become a gentleman farmer. He had purchased a valuable estate, lying not far from Mr. Royden's farm; and there he now lived with a trustworthy tenant, of whom he was learning the agricultural art.

Mr. Lemuel Kerchey was not easy to get acquainted with. The admirers of wealthy young men, in the neighborhood he had chosen, courted his society in vain. He was not timid, but exceedingly taciturn; he was a good listener, but as a talker he failed. His sociability was of the negative or passive sort. He could do justice to any good dinner to which he was invited, but somehow he could not be got acquainted with.

Mr. Kerchey sat alone in one of the most expensive pews in church; and every Sunday he

looked directly at the minister during sermon and prayer, without once removing his eyes; and appeared just as intent gazing up at Sarah Royden's rosy face, in the choir, during the singing.

At noon Mr. Kerchey accepted an invitation to call at Deacon Dustan's, and partake of a lunch; on which occasion he met Chester. Being introduced to him, and learning that he was Sarah's brother, the bachelor made a mighty effort to talk; but he found it so difficult to express his ideas, that it was really painful to listen to him. However, Chester inclined to encourage the acquaintance, and spared him the trouble, by talking so fast himself, that even Jane Dustan, who was a famous chatterbox, could hardly get in a word.

Mr. Kerchey had driven to church alone in an elegant "buggy," and at the close of the afternoon services he invited Chester to ride with him. In return, the latter asked the bachelor to call at his father's house.

"I shall be—much—ah—pleased," said Mr. Kerchey, in his usual hard way of expressing himself, "to—to—ah—get better acquainted with —with—your people."

Mrs. Royden was preparing a sumptuous meal. Dinner and supper were condensed into one grand repast on Sundays. She liked to have the children come home with keen appetites, which gave their food so delightful a relish.

But Georgie, that afternoon, had burnt his fin-

gers with a wire Sam was heating to perforate an elderstalk for a fife; the baby was unwell and cross, and, by some unaccountable oversight, Mrs. Royden had let the spare-rib cook a little too hard and brown on one side. Everything had gone wrong with her that day, and when the family came home they found her flushed and fretful.

"Hepsy," said she, "do you change your dress as soon as you can, and help me set the table. Put on your apron, Sarah, the first thing. Why do you scream out so loud, Lizzie? You almost craze me!"

"Why, there comes Chester, in Mr. Kerchey's buggy! He is beckoning for Sam to go and open the gate, I guess."

Mrs. Royden was interested. She had a liking for wealthy young men, and was not displeased to see Mr. Kerchey drive into the yard. Hastily taking off an old tire, assumed to protect her dress, she bustled about to prepare herself to do credit to the family.

"Take him right into the parlor, Sarah," said she. "Willie, you may keep on your new clothes, if you will stay in the house. If you get into the dirt, I shall box your ears."

"I wonder what Chester invited that disagreeable old bach to stop for?" murmured Sarah, not so well pleased.

She received him politely, however. Mr. Kerchey, in her presence, was painfully stiff and in-

capable of words. His position would have been most embarrassing, had not Chester come to his relief. Afterwards Father Brighthopes made his appearance, and Sarah, begging to be excused, was seen no more until supper was announced.

Hepsy, Sam and the two younger children, stayed away from the table; the first from choice, the others from compulsion. The little boys especially were hungry, and made a great clamor because they could not sit down.

"Do let them come, wife!" said Mr. Royden. "There is plenty of room."

"May we?" asked Willie, with big grief in his voice, and big tears in his pleading eyes.

"No; you can wait just as well," replied Mrs. Royden. "If you tease or cry, remember what we do with little boys that will not be good. Hush, now!"

Notwithstanding this dark hint of the closet, Willie burst into tears, and lifted up his voice in lamenation.

"Hepsy!" cried Mrs. Royden, "take him into the kitchen."

Extreme severity transformed Willie's grief into rage. The cake which had been given him as a slight compensation and comfort for the martyrdom of waiting he threw upon the floor, and crushed beneath his feet.

Mrs. Royden started up, with fire in her eyes; but her husband stayed her.

"Who blames the boy?" he said. "He is hungry and cross. Come, Willie, bring your chair, and sit here by me."

The idea had, by this time, insinuated itself into Mr. Kerchey's brain that the children were made to wait out of deference to him. Mrs. Royden might consider him as one of the calumniated class of bachelors who detest the light of little blue eyes, and hate the prattle of innocent tongues. After one or two attempts to speak, he succeeded in articulating,

"I—think it would be—would be—ah—pleasant to have the children at the table."

"It is so annoying to be troubled with them when we have company!" murmured Mrs. Royden, relenting. "Well, Hepsy, bring their plates."

To see the happiness shining in the little fellow's eyes, which were as yet hardly dry, must have been sufficient to soften any grim old bachelor's heart. Mr. Kerchey struggled to express his gratification, in order not to be outdone by the cheerful and talkative clergyman; but he could only smile in an embarrassed manner upon the boys, and coin these tough and leaden syllables:

"I—rather—ah—like young people of this description."

Mrs. Royden was glad to have peace, for she saw how much the few unpleasant words which had been spoken vexed the proud and sensitive

Chester, and was not desirous to have a family scene enacted in presence of the stranger.

The meal was a very cheerful one; Father Brighthopes being in one of his most delightful moods, and the family in good humor generally. Sarah manifested a large talent for quiet fun, in her mischievous endeavors to draw Mr. Kerchey into conversation.

The poor bachelor did his best, but he had never found the expression of ideas a more difficult and laborious task. In vain the kind-hearted Mr. Royden winked for Sarah to desist; in vain the good clergyman delicately filled up the painful pauses in Mr. Kerchey's remarks with natural observations, suggestive and helpful: Sarah persisted, and the guest was forced to talk.

When young ladies are suspected of being objects of attraction, they think they have a legitimate right to make fun of all newly-developed admirers. They may marry them next year; they perhaps look upon such an event as probable and desirable; but they will laugh about them to-day, alike regardless of the pain they inflict on their victims, should they perceive the ridicule, and careless of the distress of prudent mothers and friends.

Fortunately for Mr. Kerchey, his talent for observation was not remarkable. Phrenologically speaking, his perceptive faculties were small, as well as "language" and "concentration." He

was rather flattered by Sarah's attentions than otherwise, and very readily accepted an invitation to prolong his call until evening.

"Would you—ah—would you like to—ride—a little ways—ah—after my pony?" he asked of Sarah, as they were sitting in the parlor, after supper.

"Thank you; but I hardly think I ought to go this evening," replied the ready girl.

What a relief it was to hear her silver-ringing voice, after Mr. Kerchey's painful efforts to speak!

"You—you are—you are not—partial to riding—perhaps?"

"Oh, I like it well; but a carriage seems monotonous. Horseback exercises for me!"

"You—like—you like it?"

"Passionately!" cried Sarah. "Oh, how I love a spirited, prancing, bounding pony!"

With his usual labor of enunciation, Mr. Kerchey said that, if she could inform him where a side-saddle was to be obtained, he would be "most —ah—happy" to give her his best horse to ride that evening. He was five minutes occupied in expressing so much.

"We have a ladies' saddle," said Sarah; "but I'd rather not go and ride on Sundays merely for pleasure."

"Ah! a thousand—ah—pardons!" rejoined Mr.

Kerchey, conscious of having committed an indiscretion. "Some—some other time?"

Sarah excused his freedom, and gayly told him "almost any time;" and when he finally took his leave, declared that she had "got well rid of him, at last."

Meanwhile, Sam had decoyed Willie and Georgie into the orchard, and betrayed them into a game of ball. He made his lame foot a good excuse to sit upon the grass and enjoy all the "knocking" or "licks," while the boys threw and "chased."

"What are you about there, you rogue?" cried Mr. Royden, who had enough natural religious feeling to desire that his family should behave decorously on the Sabbath.

"Oh, nothing much," said Sam; "only playing ball a little."

"Do you know what day it is?"

"It an't Sunday after sundown, is it? You always let us play then."

"But the sun isn't down yet."

Mr. Royden pointed to the great luminary which still glowed amid the trees in the west.

"Golly! I thought it was!"

"What a story that is! The sun is nearly half an hour high. You could not help seeing it."

Sam looked with amazement, squinting across his ball-club, and dodging his head this way and

that, as if to assure himself that it was no delusion.

"It *an't* down, *is* it?" he said, honestly. "I'm a little cross-eyed, I expect; and that's why I couldn't see it before."

CHAPTER XIX.

MONDAY MORNING.

"I AM not going to put off washing until the middle of the week, to wait for any girl!" said Mrs. Royden, positively. "We shall have enough to do after Margaret comes, without keeping a great heap of dirty clothes to be washed."

"Well, do as you like," replied her husband, with a dissatisfied air. "But I know just how it will be. You and the girls will wear yourselves out before noon. If you would only take things quietly, and not try to do too much, you would get along better; but you see so much to accomplish, that you fly into a heat and a hurry, which you seldom recover from for two or three days."

Mrs. Royden was resolved. The regular Monday's work was to be done, and nothing could induce her to postpone it. The great boiler was put on the kitchen stove before breakfast, and the clothes got ready for the wash.

It seemed her nature to be cross on such days, and the children knew what to expect. There could be no fun on Monday morning. All must do something,—even Georgie must pull out the stitches of a seam, and Willie must rock the baby.

It seemed that poor Hepsy did everything, and gave satisfaction in nothing.

That was a hard day for Sam. The mowers came, one after the other, and he had to turn the grindstone for them to grind their scythes in succession. They were good-natured, energetic men; and, not wishing them to know how lazy he was, he worked industriously at the crank, before and after breakfast. But the last man "bore on enough to break the stone," Sam said; and he groaned under the infliction, asking, from time to time, if the scythe was "most finished."

At length, to his great joy, it was well ground from heel to point, and its master fastened it to the snath. Shouldering it, and thrusting a "rifle" into his belt, the jolly mower went whistling to the meadow, to join his companion and Mr. Royden, who had gone before.

In the midst of his rejoicing, Sam was dismayed to see Chester make his appearance, with another scythe. It was to be ground, and Sam was just the fellow to help do that work, with his lame ankle.

"Let *me* hold the scythe and *you* turn," whined the lad.

"Turn away!" exclaimed Chester, authoritatively.

Sam turned very slowly, groaning with each revolution of the crank.

"You lazy scamp! I'll cut a sprout, and lay it on your back, if you don't work smarter!"

"Can't!" muttered Sam. " 'Most dead. Han't done nothing but turn grindstone since sunrise. Didn't eat no breakfast, nuther."

The grinding apparatus stood under an apple-tree, behind the house. The spot was retired, offering conveniences for the adjustment of private differences; and Chester, who did not return to farm labor, after being so long at school, in very good humor, quietly clipped a thin green sapling from the roots of the tree.

"I haven't settled with you for the caper you cut up with Frank, the other night," he said, between his teeth. "Now go to work, and hold your tongue, or I'll make you wish the horse had run with you to the end of the world, and jumped off!"

"Better not hit me with that!" muttered Sam, growing desperate.

"Will you turn the grindstone?"

There was something dangerous in the flash of Chester's eye, and Sam was afraid to disobey. A minute later, he was glad to see Mr. Royden coming through the orchard, with his hat in his hand, and his sweaty brow exposed to the summer breeze.

"I am afraid you don't know how to grind a tool," said he, smiling indulgently, as he examined the edge of the scythe.

"I will go and mow in your place, if you will finish it," replied Chester.

"Very well; carry some drink to the men. I will get it for you."

Mr. Royden went to the well, drew up a dripping bucket of clear, cold water, drank from the mossy rim of the curb, and afterwards filled a stone jug.

Carrying this, Chester went to the field with gloves on, and his cravat looped loosely about his neck.

Hepsy's tender eyes beheld the young man as he went through the orchard. How handsome he looked, in his tow trousers, straw hat and snowy shirt-sleeves! To her mind, nothing became him so well as his farmer's rig; and as he disappeared over the hill, she clasped her hands with intense emotion, and wept.

"I'm tired just about to death!" said Sam, pretending that he could with difficulty get the crank around. "Them men bore on all they could, only to make it hard for me. But Ches was worse than either on 'em."

"Pshaw! turn away!"

"And then Ches was going to lick me."

"No, he was not. Chester would not hurt you," said Mr. Royden. "Come, come! turn faster."

"I can't!" groaned Sam. "But he *was* going to; that's what he cut this switch for."

"Well, I shall have to use it in his place, if you

don't stop talking, and work better," replied Mr. Royden, with good-natured impatience.

"He said 'twas 'cause I got flung from the horse," muttered Sam. "You won't let him lick me for that, will you?"

"No; not if you behave yourself," answered Mr. Royden. "What makes you so lazy? I shall not get this scythe ground to-day."

It seemed such hard work for the boy to turn the grindstone, that the kind-hearted farmer, taking pity on him, brought the tool to an edge as soon as possible, and let him go.

"Now, you must be a good boy, and help the women," said he, driving the wedge which married the scythe to the snath.

"Help the women!" repeated Sam, with an expression of disgust. "I'd rather go and spread hay."

"But your foot is lame."

"Well, I can't pound clothes half so well as I can spread hay. I have to walk around the barrel——"

"No more of your nonsense!" said Mr. Royden. "Hepsy!" he cried, seeing his niece in the doorway of the shed, "you can have Samuel to help you now."

There was no escape for the unhappy youth. He saw Mr. Royden depart towards the meadow with dismay. He was left in the hands of one who

knew no mercy. Mrs. Royden was driving business with furious energy. She had commands for all, and kind words for no one. It was interesting to see her seize upon Sam. His complaints of being "tired to death" were like chaff sown upon the wind. The tempest of her temper scattered them; inexorable fate controlled the hour; and Sam hopped from the grindstone to the "pounding-barrel" with despair and discontent in his soul.

He worked pretty well, however, until Mrs. Royden was called to see to the children, who were about starting for school. The moment she was out of sight, he began to swing lazily upon the "pounder," and make fun of Sarah, at work over the wash-tub close by.

"You'll get your pay for this," said the young lady, rubbing away, industriously. "Mother will be back in a minute."

"S'posin' Mr. Kerchey should pop in, jest now!" retorted Sam, grinning. "I'd like to have him ketch you over the wash-tub!"

"I would not care if he did; I am not ashamed of it," replied Sarah. "I'd rather do anything than wash clothes; but when I am about it, I'm not lazy."

She looked beautiful, with her rosy cheeks, brown hair, and fair, full brow, shaded by the plain hood thrown loosely upon her head; her white arms bare, and her hands all covered with the thick, snowy foam of the suds. Sam made

some saucy rejoinder, and, laughing, she stepped up to him quickly, with a garment dripping and soapy from the tub. Before he was aware of her design, she had covered his face with it, rubbing vigorously up and down and to and fro, with pleasant malice.

Sam struggled, gasped, and screamed; he tumbled down, and, clawing the disagreeable application from his face, spit like a cat; while Sarah stood over him laughing, and threatening him with another similar experiment.

"There!" exclaimed Sam, waxing angry, "I won't work now, to pay for it! And, if you do that again, I'll——"

Splash went the garment into his face once more, across his eyes, and over his open mouth! It was just as he was getting up from the floor. At that moment Mrs. Royden reappeared in the shed. She could not have chosen a worse time. To see "such actions going on," when there was so much work to be done, was "enough to try the temper of a saint." Her hands must have ached, from boxing Sam's ears; her heart must have ached, with such a storm of passion bursting it.

It seemed with a mighty effort of self-control that she refrained from striking Sarah; but the latter, making no reply to the deep tones of her displeasure, quietly resumed her work, and, burning, palpitating with anger, she returned to finish preparing the children for school.

Ten minutes later, serene from his morning meditations, Father Brighthopes came out of the parlor. His face was full of tranquil joy; but a noise of dire confusion assailed his ear, and he paused upon the threshold.

Lizzie, neatly dressed for school, but smarting and burning under the pain of boxed ears, was marching sulkily out of the sitting-room, with a satchel of books; Willie, rubbing both fists into his red eyes, was crying grievously; and George was walking very straight, with a book under his arm, and his looks downcast, fearful and watchful, as if momently expecting the afflictive dispensation of his mother's hand.

As soon as the children were well off, the old clergyman came forward. Mrs. Royden was tossing the baby in her arms, and endeavoring to still its cries. The storm was yet raging; she seemed angry with the innocent infant even; when, looking up, she saw Father Brighthopes, with countenance saddened and pale, stand before her.

"Will you let me take the babe? I think I may soothe it," he said, in a very soft and earnest tone.

It was like casting oil upon raging waves. Mrs. Royden made an effort, and appeared more calm. But only the surface of the angry sea was smoothed; still the depths of her soul were broken up and troubled.

"No," said she; "I will not inflict the trial

upon you. What *can* I do to quiet it?" she added, impatiently.

"Perhaps my nerves are calmer than yours," replied the old man, still extending his hands. "A great deal depends upon that. Babes are very susceptible to mesmeric influences."

The idea astonished Mrs. Royden. She doubted if there was any truth in it; but, abandoning the babe to his arms, she saw the thing demonstrated at once. The child seemed to feel itself in a new atmosphere, and what the mother failed to do, in her nervous state, a stranger accomplished by the exercise of a tranquil will.

"I am infinitely obliged to you," said she, as he laid the babe in the cradle, now perfectly still and quiet. "A great deal must depend upon the nerves, and I acknowledge mine were in a bad condition."

"I cannot tell how much I grieve to see you so," replied Father Brighthopes, so kindly that she could not take offence.

"It was wrong; it was very wrong," she murmured. "But I could not help it. Everything goes wrong to-day."

"Is not such always the case, when you have too much work on hand?"

"Yes, I do believe it. Why is it? I'd like to know. The children are obstinate and fretful when I have most to do. I cannot understand it."

"My dear sister," said the old man, taking her hand, and speaking in a voice full of tender and earnest emotion, "do pardon me for my freedom, when I tell you I think everything depends upon yourself."

"Upon *me?*"

"Your example, dear sister, is all-powerful. You have no conception of the immense influence you exert over those young and impressive minds. Oh, do not be offended, if I am plain with you!"

Mrs. Royden told him to go on; she needed his counsel; she would not be offended.

"Every mother," said he, "makes the moral atmosphere of her household. She is the sky overhead; they are lambs in the pasture. How they shiver and shrink beneath the shelter of the fences, and look sullenly at the ground, when the sky is black with storms, and the wind blows cold and raw and damp from the dismal northeast! But look when the drizzling rain is over, when the clouds break away, when the wind shifts around into the southwest, when the bright sun pours flood of soft, warm light upon the earth; how the grasses then lift up their beaded stalks, and shake their heads, heavy with tears; how the streams laugh and babble; how the little lambs skip about, and crop the moist herbage, and rejoice that the sky is blue again, the breezes balmy and mild!"

"But storms will come, sometimes," said Mrs. Royden.

"You cannot control the weather out of doors, but you may make just the kind of weather you chose in your household. Only keep the sky of your own heart cloudless and blue. And you can do it. Every one can. Parents, of all persons, should do this. They owe it to their children; they owe it to the good Lord, who has given them those children, to train aright the vines of their wayward affections, in their tender youth. Sister, you do not realize your responsibility. What are the petty trials of to-day, compared with *their* immortal destiny?"

The old man went on in the same kind but plain and impressive manner. At first Mrs. Royden had been impatient to return to her work; but the words of wisdom, each a golden link, formed a chain to hold her gently back. Her hands fell upon her lap, her eyes sought the floor, and it was not long before her cheeks were wet with downward-coursing tears.

And still the old man talked. Such sweet, simple, earnest and touching eloquence, her soul had never tasted. He did not forget to plead for Hepsy,—the lonely, unhappy and oft down-trodden girl, for whom her pity was seldom moved; and now she wept to think how thoughtless and cruel she had sometimes been.

Mrs. Royden was altogether softened,—was quite melted. Then the old man added words of hope and comfort; he drew a picture of her sensi-

tive, irritable, but loving and noble-hearted husband, made happy by her cheerfulness, aided and encouraged by her to conquer his impetuous and petulant temper; he described the children growing up under mild influences, with such sunny dispositions and gentle natures as reap the golden grain of content, and love, and tranquil joy, in the rich, wide fields of life.

He ceased at the right moment. Pressing her hand affectionately, he took his hat and went forth. She returned to her work. The angels must have smiled, for what a change was there! No more fretting, no more scolding, no more angry looks and impatient words, no more impetuous rushing into the stern arms of labor; but gentleness of manner, low-toned word now and then, thoughtfulness, and some few silent tears, astonished Hepsy and Sarah, and led the guilty Sam to think that this strange calmness boded ruinous storms, to burst with sudden eruptions of thunder and quick cross-lightnings upon his devoted head.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HAY-FIELD.

Father Brighthopes felt much refreshed in the open air. His heart expanded, his soul went up on wings of light towards God.

"I have done my duty, thanks to the Giver of strength!" he murmured, with deep inward peace "Oh, Lord, bless unto her the seed of truth thy servant has scattered upon the thorny ground of her heart!"

Birds sang around him; fearless squirrels chattered at him, from fences and limbs of trees, with fan-like, handsome tails curved proudly over their backs; and the beautiful sunshine kissed his aged cheek.

In the distance he heard the cheerful sound of the mowers whetting their scythes, in the sweet air of June. His heart leaped with joy, as he followed along the grassy orchard path. In a little while he came in sight of the hay-field. A pleasing picture met his eye, and he stopped to look upon it.

A sturdy laborer stood manfully erect, his scythe at his feet, with the blade buried in a fresh swath, and the water-jug elevated at right angles

from his perpendicular, with its nose just beneath his own. Chester, rosy, perspiring, his straw hat carelessly upon one side of his head, stood leaning on his scythe. His father was whetting the obstinate tool which he had been deterred from grinding properly by the ill-timed laziness of Sam. The second hired laborer was seated upon a heap of grass, under the fence, fanning his brown face with his broad hat-brim; and, still nearer the orchard, James was scattering the swaths with a pitch-fork, in the midst of the wide space which the mowers had already gone over.

It was a handsome meadow; the ground high and rolling, the grass waving in the distance, a cornfield on the right, a hilly pasture on the left, and a green grove still further to the south. The old clergyman stood in the midst of the orchard trees, admiring the picture, until Mr. Royden, uttering some pleasant jest, swung his scythe into the tall grass, followed by the two hired men and Chester in regular succession, at each other's heels.

Father Brighthopes found a fork by the orchard fence, and went to help James spread hay. Having gone once across the field with one of Chester's light swaths, he took off his coat, and hung it upon the fence by the pasture; having gone back again, he removed his vest; and one more turn brought off his neckcloth.

"You go to work like an old farmer," cried Mr.

Royden, coming out with his swath, and shouldering his scythe.

"Yes," said Father Brighthopes, cheerily; "I ought to, at least, for I was bred a farmer's boy, and now I *am old*, sure enough."

"Well, I would advise you to take it easy."

"I mean to; risk me for that!"

"But there is danger of your hurting yourself before you think of it," said the careful farmer.

The clergyman thanked him for the kind warning, and stopped to pick some berries in the corner of the fence. Mr. Royden waited for the other mowers to get out.

"Chester," said he, "you don't point out well. Carry your scythe a little lower as you bring it around. There! You will make a famous mower, with practice," he added, encouragingly. "Don't try to cut too wide a swath."

At that moment James was heard to utter a loud shout, and, looking up, Mr. Royden saw him running at full speed towards the pasture fence.

"What is the matter?"

"That confounded mischievous colt!" cried James.

"I declare!" exclaimed Mr. Royden, suddenly, "that cunning brute has got hold of your coat, Father Brighthopes!"

"Ha!" said the clergyman. "My coat? That will never do, at all. Where is the little rascal?"

"Don't chase him, James!" cried Mr. Royden. "You will only make the matter worse."

But James did not hear. The colt, with the clergyman's coat between his teeth, was capering over the hill. James ran after him, throwing pebble-stones and shouting, while the hired laborers leaned their great strong arms upon the fence, and laughed broadly at the fun.

"What a payful animal!" exclaimed Father Brighthopes, laughing as heartily as any. "He thinks he is doing a wonderfully pretty trick."

Suddenly the colt stopped, dropped the garment, and, looking round at James, whom he had distanced by some twenty rods, darted from the top of the hill. This was not all. While the youth ran panting up the acclivity, he returned to the coat, and began to tear it with his teeth and fore-feet; but James put an end to that fun, by sending a well-aimed stone to the very center of his neck, upon which the mischievous animal snatched up the garment again, and went galloping off with it to the further extremity of the field.

Mr. Royden, Chester and one of the hired men, had to go to the assistance of James, and drive the colt into a corner, before the booty could be recovered. When it was finally seized by Chester from under his very feet, it was not worth much. It had been shamefully trampled and torn.

But Father Brighthopes laughed pleasantly, as they brought it back to him.

"The shrewd dog!" said he; "as long as I kept at work, he was too conscientious to touch my coat; but the moment I stopped to pick berries, he thought he would teach me a lesson."

"I am sorry,—sorry!" exclaimed the mortified farmer.

"Oh, it is not a great loss! It will not ruin me. I think I shall recover from the damage. Bad work he made with it, didn't he?" laughed the old man, holding up the wreck of cloth. "It is fortunate I did not wear my best coat out here. It isn't so bad as if I had not another to my back. You have no more colts over in the cornfield, to take as good care of my vest, I trust?"

As the men looked in the direction of the vest, they saw Mark Wheeler, the jockey, coming towards them, across the lot. He was walking very fast, and passion contracted his features.

"Mr. Royden," said he, with forced calmness, "are you pretty busy just now?"

"You see I am holding my own with these hearty young men," replied the farmer.

"I'll work for you enough to make up for lost time," said Mark, "if you will go over and look at my new horse."

"What is the matter with him?"

"He has hurt his eye."

"Hurt his eye? How?" asked Mr. Royden.

"You will see; I can't stop to explain now," answered Mark, showing more and more agita-

tion. "If you can, I wish you would go right over now."

"Oh, well, I will," said Mr. Royden. "Let me carry my scythe to the other end of the swath. Come, Father Brighthopes, would you like to take a short walk?"

The old man, thinking he had exercised about enough for one forenoon, willingly left the meadow in company with Mr. Royden, Chester, and Mark the jockey; having first, to the great amusement of the spectators, put on the farmer's loose coat, to avoid getting cold in his aged bones.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SWAMP-LOT.

"WHAT is the matter with your colt's eye?" asked Chester, as they walked amid the young corn.

"I am afraid it is spoilt," replied Mark, between his teeth.

"Spoilt! Not your new horse,—the splendid sorrel colt you got of Mr. Skenitt?"

"Yes; the splendid sorrel colt; if 'twas either of the others, I wouldn't care so much."

"How *did* it happen?" cried Mr. Royden, deeply pained.

"By——"

The oath came out before Mark thought of it.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he added, with emotion, turning to the old clergyman. "I'm so in the habit of swearing, that I swear without knowing what I am about."

"My friend," replied Father Brighthopes, laying his hand kindly upon his shoulder, "I forgive you, from the bottom of my heart. But it is of not of *me* you should ask pardon. I know the slavery of habit. It is only by resolutely breaking its chains that we can be free."

"An oath must shock you," muttered Mark, penitently.

"True, my friend. I look upon profanity as awful in view of the stern commandment, 'THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.' But, if you take an oath, it matters little whether I hear it. Not against me, but against God and your own soul, is the sin."

"I never thought about the sin being so very great."

"At least," said the old man, kindly, "swearing is not wise. You purchase no pleasure, I am sure, by an idle oath."

"Well, but it is not so easy to break off the habit," replied Mark.

"I have heard a story of a converted sailor," said Chester,—to whom the subject seemed an unpleasant one, without spice,—"who, from his youth upwards, had made profane expletives a large proportion of his conversation, so that, when he came to pray, the favorite oaths would, in spite of himself, besprinkle the piety of his prayer. Yet he prayed with a soul convulsed with anguish for his sins, and, with profanity on his lips, pleaded that he might be pardoned the folly of swearing."

"And he was pardoned! believe it, that prayer was accepted and answered!" exclaimed the old man, with enthusiasm. "It is the heart God reads,—the heart, the heart!"

"I was going to tell you about the colt," said Mark, after a pause. "I went into the yard, and found him picking some spears of grass out of the corner of the fence. He didn't see me, and, without thinking, I spoke to him quick; he flung up his head," continued Mark, with emotion, "and the point of a rail struck him right in the eye."

"Did it put it out?"

"I am afraid so. I wouldn't have had it happen—" another oath—"for one hundred dollars!"

Beyond the cornfield was a swampy lot, overgrown with coarse, wild grass, and partially drained by a black, sluggish stream. Mark led the way, treading upon stones, sticks and slabs, in springy spots, or walking upon logs, that lay rotting upon the ground. Mr. Royden followed, and Chester, with Father Brighthopes, came after.

"I hope you will not wet your feet," said the young man, helping the clergyman over a bad place. "Step on this dead limb; it is solid."

"That is well passed," cried the other, cheerily. "What a fine thing it would be, if, in the difficult path of life, we could get over all bad habits as easily!"

"There is one habit," rejoined Chester, in a low tone, "which I trust I have overcome,—thanks to your timely counsel."

"Ah? It is gratifying to me to hear you say so."

"And I feel that I owe you an apology."

"Me? How so?" asked the old man.

"The truth is," replied Chester, coloring very red, and speaking as if it was a great effort and a relief to be candid, "I haven't been easy in my conscience since the unlucky—or rather lucky—day I met you outside the stage-coach."

"Oh, never speak of it. It is all forgotten," exclaimed Father Brighthopes.

"Not with me, Father. I have been heartily ashamed of my conduct. It was kind in you to rebuke me for swearing, and I should have taken it so. What you said appealed to my reason and to my feelings. But I was too proud to acknowledge the justice of your reproof; and, as I did not know you, I thought to carry out my assumed recklessness by a dash of insolence."

"I forgave it at the moment, my son. I understood it all."

"I hope you will not think I have been in the habit of using profane language," said Chester. "It is my misfortune to be easily influenced by the kind of society I am in. You remember, I was conversing with a wild fellow, who was by no means sparing of oaths. I have lived in the atmosphere of too many such; and, somehow, I have learned to imitate their habits unconsciously."

"Our only armor against such influences is *firm principle,*" answered the old man, encouragingly. "No warm-blooded young person, entering the world, is safe without this."

"It must be so, Father. But why is it that the sight of vice does not always strike us with the same disgust or horror as the mere contemplation of it?"

"We can accustom our palate to any description of vile drugs, by persisting in their use, I suppose."

"I see," said Chester.

"'We first endure, then pity, then embrace,'

the vices we come in contact with. But vices we witness for the first time—they do not always shock us."

"The more pleasing the devil's coat, the more dangerous he is," replied Father Brighthopes. "And there is another thing to be considered. Persons following intellectual pursuits are apt to take purely intellectual views of great as well as petty crimes. The independent MIND can analyze the nature of a murder, coolly as the anatomist dissects his human subject. Eugene Aram has too much intellect. Perhaps his heart is not bad,—what there is of it,—but its virtue is negative. When we silence the conscience, in judging of right and wrong, reason is sure to lead us astray."

"I understand now, better than ever before, why expanded minds are so prone to smile upon and shake hands with crime," said Chester. "Enlarging the intellect, to the neglect of the soul, we leave this to become shriveled, like a flower growing in the shade of a great tree."

"A truth, my young friend, every student should bear in mind," observed the clergyman, earnestly.

Chester walked before him, on a thick fragment of bark, and over a grassy knoll, in silence. He was wondering why it was that the gentle old man had gained such a power over him, to conquer his pride, and to call out his deepest feelings."

"I don't know why it is," said he, as they crossed a rude bridge, thrown over the sluggish brook, "but I feel as though I could talk with you more freely than with anybody else. Perhaps it is well that the stage-coach incident occurred. I felt that I *must* apologize to you for my ungentlemanly conduct; and I see that what was so unpleasant to me was only the breaking of the ice. It must be your wide and genial charity that has had such an effect upon me. Clergymen are generally such grim moralists, that they make me shudder."

"When I consider the calm benignity, the ineffably sweet wisdom, the infinite love of Him who said, 'Go, and sin no more,' what am I, that

I should condemn a brother?" said Father Brighthopes, with suffused features.

Chester was deeply touched.

"I am not a wilful sinner," he muttered, from his heart. "I do love purity, goodness, holiness. *I hate myself* for my bad nature!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

"Ah, that will never do," replied the old man, softly and kindly. "My son, I feel for you. I feel with you. But the nature God has given you in his wisdom,—hate not that. It is the soil in which your soul is planted. You must be content with it for a season. It is a suicidal thought, to wish your roots plucked up, because they reach down amid weeds and rottenness. No; cultivate the soil. Carefully, prayerfully purify it, and subdue its rankness. Then shall your spirit, grafted with the scion of holiness, flourish like a goodly tree. It shall gather wholesome sustenance from below, and at the same time it shall blossom and bloom, and put forth green leaves, struggling upward, upward,—higher, higher, still —in the golden atmosphere; its fruits shall ripen in the beautiful sunlight of heaven, and it shall be blessed forevermore."

"But the flowers fade, the leaves fall, the fruit drops off and decays, and the tree is a naked, desolate object, when the storms of winter wheel and whistle around it," said Chester, darkly.

"No so with the TREE OF LIFE," cried the old man, with fine enthusiasm. "Earth is but its nursery. In his own good time, the Husbandman transplants it into the pure soil of his eternal gardens."

"And the weeds are burned in everlasting fire!"

"The *weeds*—yes; let us hope so! Let us pray that the good God will deliver us from the weeds of all base passion, which continually spring up in the most carefully tended soil of earth. What remembrance do we need of this swamp-lot, when we are once out of its mud and mire?"

"I mean," said Chester, "those trees which the weeds do choke,—those wild crabs which bring forth no good fruit,—*they* are cast out."

"And can the good Husbandman plant them side by side with the better trees, in his garden?" asked the clergyman. "Indeed, would they flourish in a soil so different from that they loved here too well? Nor would they choose that soil. If they are not prepared for the companionship of the cultivated grafts, other and lower places will be found most appropriate for their unsubdued natures."

Chester remained very thoughtful. By this time they had come in sight of Mark's house,—a wood-colored building, situated on a pleasant rise of ground, in the midst of an orchard. Mr.

Royden and Mark were already climbing the fence built about the inclosure, in the midst of which stood the barn and stables.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIGHT AND THE VICTORY.

Father Brighthopes and his companion found Mr. Royden examining the injured eye of the sorrel colt, which Mark held by the halter in the yard.

"Can anything be done for it?" asked the jockey, anxiously.

Mr. Royden shook his head, with a pained expression. He loved horses above all other domestic animals, and a fine colt like Mark's he regarded almost as a human being. He could not, it seemed, have felt much worse, had he witnessed the effects of a similar injury upon a fellow-mortal.

"Spoilt, an't it?"

"Yes," said the farmer; "I see no help for it."

"I know," rejoined Mark, "the sight is ruined. But is the eye going to look very bad? Will he show it much?"

"Ah, Mark!" said Chester, rather harshly, for a fresh suspicion had entered his mind; "that hurt can never be covered up. You can't trade him off for a sound horse, if you try."

Mark turned upon him, with a fierce oath.

"An't it enough for me to know it, without having it flung in my teeth?" he demanded.

"You deserve it all," retorted Chester, kindling.

"I do?" muttered Mark, with clenched fists.

"Oh, I am not afraid of you," said Chester, turning slightly pale, but not from fear.

His lips were firmly compressed, and he fixed his fine dark eyes upon the jockey, with a look of defiance.

"Boys, boys!" exclaimed Mr. Royden, impatiently, "what is all this about? Chester, leave the yard!"

"If you say so, I will go."

"I say so, if you can't stay and be on good terms with your neighbor."

"I only tell him calmly what I think," said Chester, with a resolute air.

"And if older persons had not been present," cried Mark, with another oath, "I should have flung you over the fence, like a puppy—as you are!"

"Be calm, my son! bridle your tongue," said the clergyman, gently, to Chester.

But the young man's pride was touched and his wrath enkindled. He did not pause to consider the consequences of a rash word.

"I should really have liked to see you try that game!" he replied, with cutting sarcasm in his tones.

The jockey uttered a stifled growl, like an enraged bull-dog, and, flinging the halter over the colt's neck, aimed a blow with his fist at Chester's head. But the latter was not unprepared. Avoiding the attack, he skillfully took advantage of Mark's impetuosity, grappled with him, and flung him almost instantly to the ground.

The jockey came down with a tremendous jar, Chester falling upon him. In a moment the latter was upon his feet; when his father, alarmed and highly displeased, seized him by the collar.

"Let go!" muttered Chester, in an excited manner, but not disrespectfully.

"What are you going to do, you foolhardy boy?"

"Nothing; unless I am compelled to. You will let me defend myself, I hope? I don't want to hurt Mark Wheeler; but then Mark Wheeler must keep off."

Meanwhile Mark Wheeler had regained his feet, mad from the fall. His red-burning eyes were like a wild beast's. Father Brighthopes took his arm with a mild and soothing word; but he shook him off, fiercely.

The jockey was a much stronger man than his quick and determined adversary; but either he feared the latter's agility, or blinding passion made him forgetful of every feeling of honor and humanity. His eye fell upon a dangerous weapon, a fragment of a hickory fork-handle, that lay

within his reach. He made a spring for it; but the clergyman had picked it up before him.

"Give it to me, old man!" Mark muttered through his teeth.

"Nay, my friend, you must not have it," replied Father Brighthopes, firmly, but kindly.

"I must not? You mean to govern me like a boy, on my own ground?" hissed the angry man. "Let go your hold!"

"I entreat you, pause one minute to consider," said the clergyman, meekly. "Then you shall have the club, to use it as you please."

His words had no effect, except to turn the tide of Mark's fury against him. The angry man raved at him with a tempest of oaths; shaking his fist in his face, he swore that, were it not for his white hairs, he would have crushed him beneath his heel.

"God have mercy on you!" said Father Brighthopes, with solemn earnestness, and with tears.

"None of your pious nonsense here!" thundered Mark, convulsed with passion. "Let go the club, or I shall break your arms."

"You will not break an old man's arms," replied the clergyman, with sublime energy. "No, Mark Wheeler! I know you better. You cannot injure me."

The strong hand of the jockey seized the old man's shoulder. The latter seemed but a frail child in his grasp; but still he did not shrink,

nor loose his hold of the club. To Chester and his father, who sprang to rescue him, he said:

"Do not touch him. I am not afraid. He dare not hurt me. *I am in the hands of my God.*"

Mark's fist was raised to strike.

"I *shall* tear you to pieces!" he articulated, hoarse with rage.

"The Lord pity you! The Lord forgive you, for raising your hand against his servant!" exclaimed Father Brighthopes, with tears coursing down his pale cheeks. "Mark Wheeler, you cannot hurt me—not if you kill me. But *your own soul* is in your grasp. My friend, I love you, I pray for you! You cannot make me angry. I will be a Christian towards you. I *will* pray for you! You cannot prevent that. Strike the old man to the earth, and his last words shall be a prayer for your darkened soul!"

Mark's clenched hand fell to his side; but with the other he still held the clergyman's shoulder, looking full in his face.

"My friend," said the old man, "you know I have but done my duty. I would not harm you, nor see you harmed. It is to defend you against yourself that I hold the club from you. You may, indeed, hurt my body, which is old, and not worth much, but you will hurt your own soul a thousand, thousand times more. Oh, my God!" prayed the old man, raising his streaming eyes to heaven, "have mercy upon this my poor erring brother!"

Mark's hand dropped from the old man's shoulder. The flame in his eyes began to flicker. His lips quivered, and his face became pale. Father Brighthopes continued to pour out the overflowing waters of his heart, to quench the fire of passion. At length Mark's eyes fell, and he staggered backward. Then the old man took his hand, and put the club into it.

"Our minute is up. Here is the weapon," said he. "Use it as you will."

The club dropped upon the ground.

"Take it, and kill me with it!" muttered Mark. "I am not fit to live."

He sat down upon an overturned trough, and covered his face with his hands, gnashing his teeth.

"Are you fit to die?" asked the old man, sitting down by his side. "Would you enter the tomb through a boiling gulf of passion?"

Mark started up.

"Ches is to blame!" he said, with an oath. "He provoked me, when I was mad from losing my colt's eye."

"Be calm, my friend. Sit down," replied the clergyman. "If Chester has done wrong, he will acknowledge it."

"I spoke what I thought just and true," added the young man, promptly.

"Why just and true?" echoed Mark, his passion blazing up again.

"You will be angry, if I tell you."

"No, I won't."

"Then I will speak plainly. I said you deserved to lose the beauty and value of your colt. Perhaps I was wrong. But I did not believe his eye was hurt by any such accident as you described."

"How then?" muttered the jockey.

"It seemed to me," answered Chester, folding his arms, "you got mad training him, and *knocked his eye out.*"

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes. I saw marks on his head, where you had been whipping him."

"I acknowledge I whipped him," said Mark. "But——"

"Come, come, boys!" cried Mr. Royden, "drop the subject. You, Chester, are to blame; for, even though your suspicion was correct, you had no right to speak it. I am mortified beyond measure to think your folly has fallen upon the head of our good old friend."

"Father Brighthopes, what shall I say to express my sorrow and shame for what has taken place?" asked Chester, with deep humility.

"Promise me that you will never again speak unkindly to one who has erred," answered the clergyman, with a sad smile, pressing his hand. "It was not well that you should use the cutting tone in which you hinted your suspicion."

"I know it," said Chester, frankly. "Mark, I hope you cherish no ill feeling. Here is my hand, if you will take it."

Mark had covered his face again; he did not look up nor move.

"I don't know but I was wrong in my thoughts," proceeded the young man. "I hope I was. But my blood boils when I see cruelty to animals, and I have not yet learned self-control."

"Which you *must* learn," added Father Brighthopes, with tender earnestness.

"I am sorry, Mark, I can't do anything for your colt," observed Mr. Royden, who, to change the disagreeable topic, had caught the animal, and led him by the halter to the spot where the jockey was sitting. "I wish I could."

"I don't deserve it," muttered the other, with his head down. "It is good enough for me. Ches was right. *I knocked that eye out with the butt of my whip.*"

He gnashed his teeth again, and began to tear his hair with remorse.

Father Brighthopes whispered to Chester and his father, who presently went away together, leaving him alone with Mark. They returned to the hay-field. It was noon before they saw the clergyman again. He arrived home from talking with Mark just as the mowers were washing their hot faces at the well, in preparation for dinner.

And still Mark Wheeler sat upon the trough, with his face in his hands; no longer gnashing his teeth and tearing his hair, but sobbing as only strong men sob.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

The fine weather continued during the week. Literally Mr. Royden and his men "made hay while the sun shone." Saturday came, and they were astonished at what was done.

"I have tried my new system pretty thoroughly," said the farmer to his aged guest, that morning. "I have taken things in an easy way, decidedly, this week. Work has gone ahead amazingly. The river was deep, but it ran smoothly. The hay-field has been like a playground to all of us."

But the crisis was to come. Saturday was the great "drawing" day. Mr. Royden was a cautious man; doubting whether the fine weather would continue until Monday, he was anxious to see every cock of hay in the stack, or under shelter, before night. He had laid his plans with great foresight, and would have accomplished them beautifully, had not a sudden change of weather in the afternoon occurred, to throw his affairs into confusion.

When Father Brighthopes mounted the hay-

rick, to ride to the field with the laborers, after their brief nooning, he remarked that he "smelt a storm brewing."

"Let it come," said the farmer. "We will try to be prepared for it."

The air was close and sultry. A few dark western clouds showed their sullen foreheads over the horizon's rim, like grim giants meditating battle. There appeared angry commotions among them now and then, and some low growls of thunder came to the ear.

But overhead the yellow sky was clear. In the east, in the north, in the south, not even a white fleece was to be seen.

"It may rain by evening," said the farmer, gently touching the flanks of the horses with the point of a pitchfork. "We have got our stint, boys; it will be no harm if we have it done when the sun is an hour high."

The horses threw themselves into a lazy trot. The wagon rattled down the lane, and went jolting over the rough ground at the entrance of the meadow. The men jumped out and took their rakes, followed by Chester; while Mr. Royden and James resumed their work of drawing.

The farmer pitched up the cocks, James shaped the load, and the clergyman "raked after," cheerful and spry as any of them. The smell of the hay-field had a fascination for the old man. He felt new strength since he had breathed its health-

ful odors. His cheek had browned, and he had learned to eat meat with the men.

Suddenly one of the great clouds shook himself, slowly reared his mighty form, and put his shoulder up against the sun. A cooling shadow swept across the meadow. At the same time he hurled a swift thunderbolt, and growled in deep and wrathful tones.

"It is going to rain, father," cried James, from the top of the load.

"Drive on," answered the farmer, pitching on the last of a large hay-cock.

Father Brighthopes scratched up the few remaining wisps with his rake, and followed along the wagon-track.

While Mr. Royden and James were transferring the load from the rick to the growing stack in the midst of the meadow, the old man lay upon the grass in the shade to rest. He heard a footstep, and, looking up, saw Mark Wheeler approaching.

"Do you think it is going to rain?" asked the jockey, talking up to Mr. Royden.

"I should not be surprised if we had a shower this evening," replied the farmer, heaving up a heavy forkful to James. "I don't think those clouds will touch us yet a while."

"I can help you just as well as not, if you think there is any danger," rejoined Mark.

"Very well, said Mr. Royden. "It's always

safe to be beforehand. If you're a mind to take hold, and help the boys get the hay that's down into shape, I'll do as much for you, some time."

"I owe you work, I believe," replied Mark, throwing off his vest. "Are you going to pitch on to the load out of the win'row?"

"Yes; unless there comes up a shower. If it looks like it, you'll have to get the hay into cocks the quickest way you can."

Mark found a rake by the stack; but still he lingered. He had not seen the clergyman since Monday, and he appeared desirous, yet somewhat ashamed, to speak with him.

"How do you do to-day, friend Mark?" Father Brighthopes said, reading his mind.

The jockey came up to him, where he lay under the stack, and gave him his hand.

"I am well, I thank you," he replied, in a low tone. "I was afraid to speak to you."

"Afraid!"

"Yes, Father. I know you must despise me and hate me."

"No, my son; you misjudge me," answered the old man, with a kindly smile, sitting up, and pressing Mark's hand, as the latter stooped down to him. "On the contrary, I am drawn toward you, Mark. There is much in you to love; only overcome these besetting faults, which are your worst enemies."

"I shall try—thank you"—Mark's voice quiv-

ered with emotion. "I haven't forgot what you said to me t'other day. I shall not forget it."

"Do not!" exclaimed the clergyman, earnestly, smiling, through the mist that gathered in his eyes. "Go; and God bless you!" he added, tenderly.

The jockey turned away, humble, and much affected. When he came up to where Chester was at work, he spoke to him in a friendly tone, and asked where he should commence.

"Follow after me, if you please," said the young man, with real kindness in his tones.

The quarrel seemed forgotten.

In a little while, Sam came limping to the field with a jug of fresh water. He was beginning to use his sprained ankle again, but he made awkward work of it. Mr. Royden called him, and drank from the jug, having first offered it to Father Brighthopes.

"Any mice, Jim?" asked Sam, slyly.

"We have no time to think of mice, my son," said the clergyman.

At that moment one of the little animals in question ran away from his rake, and took refuge under the wagon.

"I'll ketch him!" said Sam, with eyes sparkling mischief.

"Come, come! no nonsense this afternoon," cried Mr. Royden. "Go and carry the jug to the men. They're wanting it by this time."

"I'm going right along, sir," replied Sam, starting, but looking back for the mouse.

Mr. Royden went on. Turning presently, he saw the boy in hot pursuit of the unhappy mouse. He had forgotten about his lame foot. He was leaping about on the mown sward, and dancing this way and that, with surprising agility.

The truth is, his ankle had been nearly well for two or three days; and he had cherished the convenient habit of hopping and jumping only to excuse himself from labor. Betrayed into running by a mouse, and by his passion for mischief, he confirmed a suspicion which had already entered Mr. Royden's mind.

"Here, you little rascal!" cried the farmer, provoked, but at the same time not a little amused. "Sam Cone!"

Sam did not hear, or would not heed, so enthusiastic was he in the pursuit of fun. At length he made a seizure, with his hand in the turf, and brought up the mouse, screaming with delight.

"I got him! I got him! I g—— Blast your pictur'!"

His song changed suddenly from joy to lamentation. The mouse had bit his finger with its sharp teeth, and would not let go. Sam flirted, yelled, and finally shook him off, with much ado. The animal escaped, while he, reflecting probably that it was a small affair to cry about, became silent, and squeezed the oozing drops of blood

from his wounds, glancing sheepishly around, to see who was looking at him.

"So, your foot is well enough to chase mice, is it?" said Mr. Royden, with quiet humor. "Now, supposing you should take a rake, and help the men with those win'rows?"

"Got bit!" muttered Sam. "Darned ol' mouse!"

"Shall we send for a doctor?" laughed James.

"His teeth went clear through!" complained Sam, limping again worse than ever, and sucking his finger.

But he did not argue the propriety of obeying the farmer's directions. He carried the jug to the men, and went slowly, limpingly, to work.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

Mr. Royden got upon the stack with James, and to hasten this department of the afternoon's work, Mark Wheeler and one of the laborers pitched up the load.

They had now commenced drawing from the windrows where they had been longest exposed to the curing process of the sun. On their return, Chester complained of Sam's laziness, declaring that he was only in the way.

"I'm lame, and you know it," said Sam, in an injured tone.

"Very lame, I know, you ambitious mouse-catcher!" said Mr. Royden. "I'll favor your broken leg. Here, if you can't rake hay, get up on the rick with James. See if you two can load as fast as Mark and I can pitch."

"Get up," cried Mark. "We'll find something for you to do."

Mark was a giant at pitching. He rolled up vast forkfuls, with which he inundated Sam at every rod. The latter had no time for fun; the moment he paused, up came a perfect cloud of hay, which he must dispose of, or be buried.

A towering load went to the stack. By the time the rick was emptied, the clouds, which had made no show of hostilities for some time, sent out a detachment that swept across the sky, black and threatening, wheeling and darkening the field.

"I vow," said Mark, "that looks like rain!"

"Rain—sure enough!" articulated Mr. Royden, with a troubled expression.

"A big sprinkle struck me right on the nose," cried Sam.

"I wish we had got up the hay that was down, the first thing after dinner, and left the cocks," said the farmer, pricking the horses. "I would have risked it in the stack, if I had known it was so well cured. If there should come up a rain, it would be spoilt."

There was real danger, and each man went to work as if the hay was all his own.

"Don't pitch so fast as you did afore, Mark," whined Sam. "You 'most covered me up, fifteen or sixteen times."

"It'll do you good," replied the jockey, heaving a fraction of a ton from the heavy windrow directly upon Sam's head. "Tread it down!"

Father Brighthopes, who had been some time sitting by the stack, to rest his old limbs, observed the threatening clouds, and came out again with his rake.

"You'd better go to the house, Father," said Mr. Royden, in a hurried tone. "I would not

have you get wet and take cold for ten times the worth of the hay."

But the old man would not leave the field, which was now a busy and exciting scene. The storm seemed inevitable. Getting the hay into cocks that would shed rain, Chester and the men worked almost miraculously. It seemed as if they had husbanded their strength during the week for this crisis. They were not jaded and disheartened laborers, but bold and active workmen.

Meanwhile the new load swelled and loomed up prodigiously.

"When I give the word, James," cried Mr. Royden, "drive to the stack as straight as you can go. It must be topped off somehow, before it gets wet."

The clouds roared and wheeled in the sky. The lightnings were vivid and frequent. The sultry air grew rapidly cool, and there was a gale rising. A deep gloom had settled upon all the earth, coloring the scene of hurried labor with a tinge of awfulness, as if some dread event were impending.

A few heavy drops came hissing down upon the hay.

"Drive to the stack, James!" cried the farmer. "Go with what you have got."

"Take the rest of this win'row," said Mark; "hadn't we better? I can heave it up in a minute."

"Be quick, then; for we must secure the stack."

"If the shower will hold off ten minutes, I do believe the boys will have the rest of the hay safe in the cock," observed Father Brighthopes. "How they work!"

The shower did hold off wonderfully. Mark and Mr. Royden threw on the remainder of the windrow, making a large, unshapely load.

With a feeling of triumph, the farmer saw the horses start at a quick pace for the stack.

"The rain is coming!" said the jockey, glancing at a dark fringe of showers dropped from the thunder-clouds over the woods.

"It must come, then!" returned Mr. Royden. "We can pitch enough on the stack, though, to make it shed rain, I hope. The rest of the load we will run right into the barn."

The farmer sprang to a stone-heap, where he had left his coat, seized it, and threw it over the old clergyman's shoulders.

"Walk fast," cried he, "and you will get to the barn before the shower."

"A little rain won't hurt me, if I keep at work," replied Father Brighthopes. "I'll stay and help the boys."

Mr. Royden remonstrated in vain. A cry from Mark called his attention from the old man.

"That load will be off!"

The farmer uttered an exclamation of impa-

tience. The great bulk of hay, thrown on in such haste, and trampled down without much regard to shape or order by the boys, was reeling over the side of the rick. James, encumbered with the reins, scrambled to the left as fast as he could, to keep the balance, calling upon Sam to do the same. But the latter was too busily engaged in tying a straw around a large horse-fly to heed the danger.

Mark and Mr. Royden ran to steady the load with their forks; but suddenly one of the wagon-wheels fell into a little hollow, and they had scarcely time to escape from the avalanche, as it plunged over them, and settled like a cloud upon the ground.

About a third of the load remained on the wagon, which fortunately did not upset; and James had skilfully managed, not only to stop the horses, but to avoid falling off, when the great bulk went over. Not so with Sam. Deep buried in the soft bed he had made, he was too late to save himself, when he discovered the reality of the danger. It was lucky he did not fall upon Mark's fork. As it was, he came down easily, with a very small portion of the load under him, and a very large portion sweeping down upon him. He was quite buried from sight; but in a moment his head appeared amid the billows of hay, and he floundered upon the firm ground.

Sam hardly knew what had taken place. At

first he stared about him, looking at the wagon, and its contents on the ground; then he examined the straw, which he still held firmly clasped in his right hand.

"Thunder and broomsticks!" cried he, "if the darned old load an't off! and I've lost my horse-fly!"

Everybody else, except this thoughtless lover of mischief, who witnessed the disaster, expected to see Mr. Royden thrown into a violent passion. Father Brighthopes feared that his patience could not hold out. But the irritable farmer had not exercised his temper during the week to no purpose. He astonished everybody by his coolness.

"So much for being in a hurry," said he. "I ought not to have expected such a load to ride across the lot. Now let us be more deliberate, and do well what we do at all. There's no use of crying for an accident that cannot be helped."

He and Mark took hold, and threw on enough hay to bind what was left on the rick; and James drove on, just as a sharp shower was commencing. It grew very dark, and they topped off the stack in the rain. But the clouds acted very capriciously. After sifting a little water, they wheeled away to the south, where the rain could be seen streaking down over the woods. But there was no more of it on the meadow for some time; and when at last it began to come down in

volleys, the stack was secured, the hay left in the field was thrown up in shapely cocks, the load which had fallen off was once more on the rick and going into the barn, the horses on a keen trot; and the laborers, shouldering their rakes, were hastening from the field.

Mr. Royden was never in better humor than when he found the old clergyman, somewhat heated, and perspiring freely, wrapped up in his great mantle, in the kitchen corner, prattling with George and Willie. who had just come home from school.

CHAPTER XXV.

A STREAM OF PEACE.

Since Monday, Hepsy had been quite unwell. She had lost her appetite, of late; and although she seemed more cheerfully resigned to her unhappy lot than ever before, it was easy to perceive that continually she had to struggle with some great pain.

Father Brighthopes talked with her a good deal during her illness, and his conversation was an unspeakable comfort to her suffering heart. He imparted a strange power of endurance to her weak nature; he lifted the dark veil from her future; he showed her, opening at the end of the rugged, steep and thorny path she traveled, a paradise of purity, odorous with orange groves and flowery fields, murmurous with falling fountains, and bright with the sunlight of the Saviour's love. There stood angels, too radiant for the weak eye of the doubting spirit to look upon, smiling to welcome her, beckoning with their snowy hands, and chanting psalms of praise to the Being who had given them this labor of love to do. And soon one among them, called Hope, with luminous wings, and a face like the

morning star, came down to her, scattering roses and tufts of softest moss upon the jagged stones in her way, and bound a pair of shining sandals upon her bleeding feet. Love, an angel from the highest heavens descended to earth, where mortals behold her divine countenance but dimly, through the misty exhalations of their impure natures, twined her gentle arms about her neck, and kissed her, pointing upward to the infinite Father of all. Then Faith, a seraph serene and strong, took her by the hand, and bathed her pallid brow and fainting lips in the life-giving light of her own immortal eyes.

Such pictures the clear vision of the happy old man perceived, and discovered to her soul with a power which seemed like inspiration. Tears of joy stole down her sallow cheeks, as her mind followed his. And when he showed her another path, a little removed from the rocky steeps she climbed—a circuitous, tempting road, shaded with trees, many of which bore fruits lovely to look upon, but all ashes to the taste, and bordered with flowers that faded continually at the touch; a long, easy way, peopled by the fairest ones she knew, who, stopping momently to eat of the fruits and pluck the flowers, journeyed—Oh, how slowly!—towards the heavenly fields; and when she saw that what seemed glittering gems under their feet were only flakes of mica, while the very rocks she trod upon, now worn a little, began to

sparkle with native diamonds, burning beneath her sandals; she no longer repined at her destiny, but thanked God for the discipline which led her soul thus early up to Him.

Already Hepsy began to understand the substantial meaning of these pictures. It seemed that everybody was kinder to her than before. Chester never came to the house without sitting down, if only for a minute, by her side, and speaking some tender and brotherly word for her tremulous heart. But others were more changed than he; for in others there had been more need of change. Mrs. Royden seemed a different being. She had become singularly thoughtful and careful of the poor sick girl; and, for some reason, which nobody knew so well as the clergyman, I suppose, she appeared uncommonly even-tempered towards the children, reminding them, from time to time, that "poor Hepsy was sick, and they should do all they could to comfort her, and not disturb her with their noise."

On Saturday evening, when the rain lashed the clapboards of the house, and streaked the window-panes, it was pleasant for all to look back upon the week which was past. The rolling ball of time runs smoothly in the golden grooves of peace. There had been so few jars and discords in the family, that even the children seemed conscious that they had entered upon a new era of life.

Owing to the gloom of the storm, the candles were lighted all of an hour earlier than usual, and Father Brighthopes, taking his place by Hepsy's side, who occupied the rocking-chair, with pillows, in the sitting-room, told his pleasant stories, with the family gathered about him, and the little ones on his knees. The beating of the rain was music to all hearts that night; and when the children went to bed, later than was their custom, their happly souls sank softly into slumber, lulled by the rain on the roof.

On the following morning, the sky was clear, and the sun shone freshly upon the wet earth. The storm broke away a little before dawn, and when the Sabbath threw open its gateway of gold a thousand birds came fluttering through to announce, in songs of joy, the appearance of the heavenly visitant. A gentle breeze shook the beaded rain from glistening boughs, and dried the drenched grasses, while shining mists stole out of swampy hollows, and faded in the sun.

Margaret Bowen, the wooden-legged shoemaker's daughter, who had worked very faithfully and cheerfully since Wednesday without hearing an unpleasant word from Mrs. Royden, wished to go home that morning; and after breakfast James carried her over in the wagon. Willie went too; and the little fellow, overjoyed at his mother's indulgence, took great delight in listening to the birds, in looking at the sparkling leaves

and grass, and in watching the wheels as they cut through the puddles and furrowed the softened sand of the road.

All the family went to meeting, except Hepsy, Mrs. Royden and the baby. Sam rode behind on an extra seat—a board placed across the wagon-box—and fell off twice, without doing material injury to his person; after which trifling accidents he became cautious how he suffered his devotion to fun to send him wheeling over backwards when the horses started suddenly. Chester and James, who walked, witnessed one of his falls, as the wagon passed them on the road. They thought Sam's neck was broken, and ran to pick him up; but, after brushing the moist sand from his clothes, and getting him in the wagon again, they found that he was about as good as new.

In the afternoon, Mr. Kerchey took pains once more to invite Chester to ride with him; and, in no way discouraged by his painful deficiency in the brilliant graces of conversation manifested on a former occasion, readily consented to gratify the family with his presence at supper.

Mrs. Royden was pleased with Mr. Kerchey's condescension. Her fears that he might have taken offense at Sarah's freedom were happily dissipated; and, speaking with the latter aside, she told her, in a kind and motherly tone, that

"she sincerely hoped she would treat their neighbor well."

Mr. Kerchey took them by surprise. He made some strikingly original and sensible remarks, without any of his ordinary hesitation. At the table he expressed some sentiments with regard to children which were quite refreshing, and his description of the storm on the previous day was rather picturesque.

But no shrewd observer, like Sarah, could fail to see that his language was studied and elaborate.

"He has got a little handful of speeches by heart," she whispered to Chester. "He will use them all up soon—*then,* we'll see if he can talk!"

She was confirmed in her suspicions when, questioning some ideas he advanced, she found him utterly unable to answer her in the same easy strain as before. To excuse himself, he, with great difficulty, confessed that those thoughts had been forming themselves in his mind, and that he would have to consider her argument before making a definite reply.

"My — ah — words — you see — they are very slow," he observed. "I—frequently have to—ah—note down what I—intend to—express—on particular times—or occasions."

"Words are the husk, and thoughts are the corn, of our conversation," said Father Brighthopes, with an encouraging smile. "Too many

persons bring only the husks, which they heap upon us in rather uncomfortable abundance."

"Yes, sir;—very—ah—true," returned Mr. Kerchey, gratefully. "I think I have—ah——"

Here he broke down, appearing utterly incapable of finding the words he wanted.

"You have considerably more of the corn than the husk," rejoined the old man; "an excellent and quite excusable fault."

"I think, if there is anything disagreeable, it is an everlasting talker," remarked Sarah, her bright eyes sparkling with fun.

Chester asked her if it was because she wished to usurp the conversation herself; upon which Mr. Kerchey managed to observe, in his very hardest way, that there were some persons of whose talk he could never tire.

He looked intently at Sarah—just as if he meant her, Lizzie suggested, in a low tone, to James.

At this moment Willie diverted the conversation by crying out:

"Sam's pinching me!"

"Oh, I didn't!" said Sam.

"Why do you tell such a story?" demanded Mrs. Royden, with a slight degree of impatience. "I saw you pinch his arm."

"I was only brushing a fly off," replied Sam.

"He asked me how thick my sleeve was, and he

took right hold of skin and all!'' whined Willie, rubbing his arm.

Sam was reprimanded and Willie was consoled with a rind from his father's plate.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RAINY DAY.

Monday was showery. Tuesday was fair, and on Wednesday there was a settled rain. It was anything but fine haying weather. The mowers got down a good deal of grass, but it was mostly left lying in the swath.

The Roydens took advantage of the dull time to visit at Deacon Dustan's, on Wednesday, with the old clergyman. There was quite a large company present, consisting of old and young people, among the choicest families in Mr. Corlis' society.

After dinner the rain "held up," and towards evening the elderly gentlemen of the party went out to walk. Deacon Dustan took great pleasure and no less pride in showing his guests the fairest portions of his goodly estate. Meanwhile he was too shrewd to neglect introducing the discussion of a subject which lay very near his heart.

The company were in excellent humor for a favorable consideration of the project of the new meeting-house; and Mr. Corlis became very eloquent on the subject.

"Come, Neighbor Royden," cried Deacon Dustan, "you are the only influential man in the

society who has not expressed a decided opinion, one way or the other."

"It is because I haven't a decided opinion, I suppose," replied Mr Royden, laughing. "You have heard the case, Father," he added, turning to the old clergyman: "What is your opinion?"

"I have hardly come to any conclusion yet," replied Father Brighthopes. "I have some ideas about such projects, however."

"Well, we would thank you to let us hear them, Father," rejoined Deacon Dustan. "They must be of value, from your long experience."

"Is this Job Bowen's house?" asked the old man; for they were walking leisurely past the shoemaker's residence.

"Yes; here lives patient Job, the wooden-legged philosopher," returned Deacon Dustan, good-humoredly. "What of him?"

"I was there, the other day, and promised to come again. I don't know when I shall have a better time. After I have said good-day to the family, I will tell you something about new meeting-houses. Will you go in too, Brother, Corlis?"

Mr. Corlis could not refuse, although he would much rather have remained without.

"We will all look in at the door, if you please, gentlemen," said Deacon Dustan. "Job is a curiosity."

"I was just thinking that Job's family would

have considered a dish from your generous table to-day a very pleasant curiosity," observed Father Brighthopes.

"Oh, Job is not quite a stranger to my dishes," returned the deacon, quickly. "I should be sorry to say that he was; and I should be sorry to have you think so."

With a smile of sunshine, the old man disclaimed the remotest idea of insinuating such a suspicion.

"A fat dish may be considered a curiosity to a poor man at any time, you know," he added, with tender humor. "Even a cold potato and a crust of bread are often great sources of delight, when accompanied with a kind word, and a cheerful, encouraging smile, from the charitable giver."

Deacon Dustan opened the door, without knocking.

"How are you to-day, Job?" he cried, with his great, strong, energetic lungs.

"Ah! my kind friends!" said Job, rubbing his hands, "I wish I could run to welcome you; but you will excuse me, and come in."

He spoke in his usual soft and subdued voice. He was sitting on his bench, with the window looking out upon the west behind him; and his bald pate and prominent ears were clearly defined, with a picturesque effect, upon the crimson background of the fiery sunset clouds.

"We're too many of us, Brother Job," said the old clergyman, with a smile of sympathetic pleasure; "perhaps you would not like to see us all in your little shop at once?"

"The more the better, bless you!" rejoined the soldier shoemaker, in a sort of glow; "only I'm sorry we haven't chairs enough for all of you."

"Never mind chairs," observed Father Brighthopes, taking Mrs. Bowen's hand, as she was arranging what available seats there were, with her customary melancholy air. "And how are you to-day, sister?"

"I'm pretty well for me," answered the poor woman, in her broken voice. "But we've been hard pushed for means this week; and, besides, since Margaret has been to Mr. Royden's, my other darter has been wo'se, and everything has come upon me."

"Yes; she's had a rather hard time on 't," put in Job, mildly, and with a faint smile. "But she does remarkable, that woman does, my friends—remarkable! She means to make the best of everything."

"He! he! he!" laughed the grandmother, starting up in the corner, and drawing the blanket around her. "That was a chicken-pie not to be ashamed of," she mumbled, in shrill tones, between her toothless gums. "I han't tasted nothing like it these forty years. Our company

was wet and hungry enough when they got there; and you'd better believe that 'ere pie had a relish!"

"Bygones, bygones!" whispered Job, touching his forehead, with a tender glance at the old woman. "You mustn't mind her, my friends: we never do. She is a nice old lady, but all out of date, and very deaf."

"How does Margaret get along?" asked Mrs. Bowen, in her most ghastly tone.

"Oh, very well indeed. She is the best girl we ever had, by all odds," replied Mr. Royden.

"I don't know but I shall have to have her come home for a few days," proceeded the other. "I shall, if my other darter continues so sick. I shall want her help more than the money, though we need that bad enough, Lord knows. We're all out of flour; and, if it wan't for the potatoes you sent over Sunday morning, I don't know what we should do."

"Oh, we shall do very well, my good wife!" cried Job, cheerily. "The Lord won't forget us! He is our friend: he is on our side, he is. It'll all be right in the end—glory be to God for that thought!"

"And for every suffering you will have your reward, my noble Christian brother," exclaimed Father Brighthopes, with kindling enthusiasm. "Believe it: you will come out of the fire all the purer and brighter for the ordeal."

Job squeezed a tear from his eye, and, looking up with a countenance full of emotion, as the red light from the western clouds fell upon it, took a book from the bench by his side.

"I don't know how I shall thank you for all the comfort I owe you," he said, with a tearful smile. "What you tell me is wonderful consoling for me to think about here at work, and to repeat over to my good woman, when she has her trials. But I take it as kind as anything your sending me the books by Margaret. I don't have much chance to read, and they will last me a good while: the better for me, I s'pose. You see, I read a sentence, then I hammer away at my work, thinking it over and over, and explaining it to my good woman: it does her good when she's having her bad spells."

"Which of the books do you like best?" asked the clergyman.

"The story of the Pilgrim's Progress is a glorious thing for a lonesome and fainting traveler on the same road, like me!" exclaimed Job. "But I had read that before, and got it pretty well by heart. Now, this *Barnes' Notes* interests me as much as anything; there was so many things in the Testament I wanted to have explained."

"I am delighted to think you are comforted by any of the books," said the old clergyman, warmly.

"Oh, I get a world of good out of this one, especially. Wife sometimes tells me 't an't no use to read it; but," said Job, with a gleaming intelligence in his queer face, as the sunset glow deepened upon it, "what do you think I tell her?"

Father Brighthopes knew some pleasant sally was coming, and encouraged him to proceed.

"I tell her," said Job, quietly chuckling, "the study of *Barnes* makes my faith *stable.*"

This little jest appealed to the sympathies of the farmers, and they honored it with a laugh. Job was radiant with joy.

"I wish the *Notes* was condensed into half the number of volumes," he proceeded, under this encouragement. "If I had time to read them, the more the better. But I find them like the waters of a deep stream."

Father Brighthopes saw a joke in Job's twinkling eyes, and asked him to explain the comparison.

"Ha! ha!" Job laughed, in spite of himself. "It's a little conundrum I made to amuse my good woman, in one of her bad turns. Why are Barnes' Notes like the waters of a deep stream? *Answer*—Because one would find them easier to get *over,* if they were a-*bridged.*"

The company laughed again; and the clergyman thought it best that they should take leave at the moment when Job was elated with his brilliant success.

"It was in the year 'seventeen," spoke up the grandmother, rousing from her dreams, as they were going away; "I remember it as well as if 'twas yesterday."

"Poor woman!" muttered Job, with feeling, "I've no doubt but she remembers it a great deal better, whatever it is."

"Come again, and I'll tell ye all about it," proceeded the old lady, with a shrill laugh. "I actually gi'n that creatur' three pecks of inions and a pan of dried apples; and she never said so much as *thank'e,* to this day! I might have expected it, though; for she was a Dudley on her mother's side, and everybody knowed how mean that race of Dudleys always was, partic'-larly the women folks. Airly in March, in the year 'seventeen."

She relapsed again into her dreams; Mrs. Bowen bid the visitors a hoarse and melancholy *good-evening;* and Job stumped to the door on his wooden leg to see them off.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"OLD FOLKS" AND "YOUNG FOLKS."

"Now, then, about the new meeting-house," remarked Father Brighthopes, in a spirited tone, carrying his hat in his hand.

The sun was down, the fiery glow was fading from the clouds, and, as the dying light fell upon his large pale forehead and thin white locks of hair, tingeing them faintly with gold, Mr. Corlis thought he had never seen so striking a picture of beautiful and venerable age.

"We hear you," said Deacon Dustan.

"Well," proceeded the old man, "my motion is simply this: If your society can afford to build a new meeting-house, build it, by all means."

"There's wisdom for you!" cried the deacon, triumphantly. "My own ideas simplified and expressed in three words, *If we can afford to build;* and who will say we cannot afford so much?"

"What is it, to afford?" asked Mr. Royden, perplexed by the old clergyman's decision.

"Have you the means to spare for the purpose?" suggested Mr. Corlis.

"Ay, that is the question," said Father Brighthopes. "I don't know but you have. I hope you

have. But you must consider that to do this for your own glory, and not in the service of our Saviour, will be other than acceptable in his sight."

"We trust to do all things, connected with the church, to the praise and glory of God," returned Mr. Corlis.

"Then your labors will bring their reward. But there are still important considerations claiming our attention. I think the Lord is better pleased with other things than pretty meeting-houses. They who build up his CHURCH find more favor in his sight than the mere constructors of elegant place of worship."

"But, to build up the church, we must commence with the frame-work to shelter it," observed Deacon Dustan; "at least, it appears so to me."

"The true church of Christ is in our own hearts," returned the old man, with a gentle smile.

Deacon Dustan's mind was of too material a cast fully to appreciate this truth; so he only nodded mechanically, and said:

"In one sense, certainly."

"To build that up, should be our first care. That we can do without carpenter's tools, plank or plaster. *Righteousness* is the great building material, and *Love* is the head workman. Christ has not said, 'Rear me stately edifices, and make

my houses pleasing unto me with velvet, gilding and paint.' But he has told his followers to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the afflicted and comfort them, to lift up the down-trodden. My brethren," said the old man, "this do as long as ye have any in poverty and distress among you; then, I say, if you can *afford* it, build a meeting-house of gold, and the Lord will be pleased with the work."

The rebuke, although uttered in all kindness and love, came home, with overwhelming force, to all hearts at that time, when they had just witnessed the squalor and rags of a faithful Christian brother in their very midst. Mr. Corlis, who was expected to reply, was struck speechless.

"There is a great deal of truth in what you say," observed Deacon Dustan, after a painful silence. "Some of it applies to us, without doubt; but not so much as you suppose. In our own society, you will not find any one left to suffer poverty. If we have ever neglected poor Job Bowen—and, I confess, I, for one, have not been so thoughtful of him as I should be, even if he were the vilest sinner in the world—our excuse is, that he differs from our persuasion. He is not one of our brethren."

"Christ knows not one sect from another, it is the *heart* he judges," said the old man. "'*Whoever* doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother.' For my part, I never thought to inquire

into the creed of our poor Christian friend, Job Bowen. It is enough for me to know that his Saviour is my Saviour."

Nobody made answer; and, after a pause, Father Brighthopes added:

"Ah! how sweetly the evening comes on! Look, there is the evening star in the soft blue sky! You will have fine weather for haying to-morrow."

The subject of the new meeting-house was not renewed.

By way of contrast with the foregoing scenes, let us now turn to others, of a different nature.

Scarcely had Deacon Dustan and the elder portion of his gentlemen guests set out on their walk, when Mr. Benjamin Smith, a brother of our old acquaintance, Josephine, drove up to the door with a load of saddles.

Benjamin had been to collect them around the neighborhood. The young people were going to ride. Equestrian exercises had been hinted at by Mr. Kerchey, whose fine, spirited horses were at the disposal of the party, and the girls had caught eagerly at the idea.

Mr. Kerchey was not used to the saddle; but Sarah Royden was, and that was enough for him to know. He himself was a little afraid of mounting a mettled horse; but, since she was so fond of the recreation, he had no desire to consult his own feelings in the matter.

"I—I wish you would tell me how—ah—these girths go," he said to Chester, after laboring hard for a quarter of an hour saddling his handsomest horse for Sarah. "I wish—one of my—ah—hired men was here—so that I—ah—would not have to—would not be obliged to trouble you."

"No trouble at all," cried Chester, who, meanwhile, had saddled four horses in front of Deacon Dustan's barn.

He stepped to the stable to see what Mr. Kerchey was about, and, at a glance, burst into a roar of laughter. The amateur farmer had put on the side-saddle, not exactly bottom upwards, but turned square around; and he was trying to buckle the girths upon the stirrup-strap.

"I think Sarah would hesitate to ride with the saddle just in this position," said Chester, checking his merriment.

He skilfully made the required change, and buckled the girths with such rapidity as struck Mr. Kerchey with amazement, and quite discouraged him from ever touching a side-saddle again.

"You see—I—I—I am not—ah—accustomed to this sort of—of business," he stammered, coloring very red.

A dozen horses were saddled and led to the door. In the meantime the girls had prepared themselves for the sport.

"Oh!" screamed Miss Josephine Smith, as the

gallant Chester helped her mount from the block, "my nervth are tho delicate!"

How different Sarah! She sat Mr. Kerchey's handsome horse like a queen, holding her head proudly, as he playfully pranced and reared.

"I—I—hope—I hope there is no—ah—danger?" articulated the amateur farmer, as he reluctantly loosed his hold of the bridle.

Sarah laughed merrily, and boldly struck the animal with her whip. It made Mr. Kerchey gasp to see him bound and plunge. But she kept her balance miraculously.

After seeing that every girth was well fastened, and every fair rider safely mounted, Chester leaped into his own saddle from the turf, without touching foot to stirrup. But he dismounted again immediately, smothering his laughter as well as he could.

All the gentlemen were mounted, except Mr. Kerchey. His horse, excited by seeing his mate, governed by Sarah, dance about the yard, would not stand still an instant, or come up to the block. Harry Dustan, laughing at his distress, had cantered gayly away with Miss Sedley, the "school-ma'am." Only Chester was thoughtful enough to go to Mr. Kerchey's relief.

The latter, heated, agitated, and wofully perplexed, was beginning to see that riding horseback was a far more serious affair than he had imagined. He witnessed the bold riding of his

neighbors with dismay. Galloping was to him a perfect mystery. His courage and ambition had never gone beyond a gentle trot. The mere thought of dashing off side by side with Sarah made him dizzy.

"Can't you mount?" asked Chester, soberly, considering the circumstances.

"No—I—that is—perhaps—on the whole—I'd better not—ah—attempt it."

"Oh, that won't do! What will the girls say?"

"But, you see—it is all—ah—new to me," stammered Mr. Kerchey.

"You'll get into the way of it at once," replied Chester, in an encouraging tone. "It's as easy as running down hill, or running up—an account. Now,"—he wheeled the horse to the block—"put your leg over the saddle. No! the other leg—your right one—unless you want to ride backwards."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. KERCHEY'S DARING EXPLOIT.

After considerable trouble, Mr. Kerchey was mounted, with his feet thrust into the stirrups up to the ankles.

Chester, perceiving the smiling faces of the old ladies at the windows and at the door, watching the performance, was so convulsed with mirth that he could with difficulty get once more into the saddle. But the girls had now all galloped up the road, and, with no inducement to make a display of agility and strength, he braced his toe in the stirrup, and leisurely mounted.

Mr. Kerchey was a little ahead of him, making too ludicrous an appearance to be easily described. He looked like an animated bag of flour, Chester said, awkwardly balanced, jolting painfully, and seeming momently ready to tumble off.

"Oh, you do bravely!" cried the young man, dashing past him, on a smart gallop.

Mr. Kerchey groaned, and grasped the saddle with his left hand, desperately, resolved to ride faster.

The party had halted a little way up the road, and Chester made haste to send Sarah back to

keep Mr. Kerchey company. At first she refused to go, but conceiving the idea of some fun, consented to the arrangement, and rode to meet her admirer.

In order that he might not observe the mirth indulged at his expense, the rest of the party galloped on, Chester riding by the side of the sociable Jane Dustan.

"What a delightful creature this is!" cried Sarah, wheeling sharply around Mr. Kerchey. "I could ride him night and day without wearying."

"Ah! glad to h—h—hear it!" said the amateur farmer, still holding the saddle with a fearful grasp.

"I see you are very careful of your horse," she added, letting her animal prance daintily on before. "Is he lame?"

"No—not—not exactly——"

"Ha! ha! I see! You are preserving his wind in order to outstrip us towards the close of the ride! I shall look out for you, Mr. Kerchey!"

"I—beg—to—assure—you—" replied the tortured man, each word jolted out of his lungs by the hard-trotting horse, "I—have no—no such intention."

"How I envy you the advantages of living in a city!" exclaimed Sarah. "You have riding-schools there; you must have enjoyed them a great deal, Mr. Kerchey."

If, on ordinary occasions, it was difficult for the amateur farmer to express his ideas, what shall we say of him in his present painful situation? All his faculties were called into activity by the threatening danger. His own horse was beginning to prance and amble sidewise; and it was only by the exercise of great vigilance that he kept his balance at all. Let the reader endeavor to carry on a sprightly conversation with a saucy girl and add up a long column of figures at the same time, and he may be able to form a dim conception of the ordeal through which Mr. Kerchey was compelled to pass.

"I—I—never—rode much," he managed to articulate.

"Indeed? you surprise me," cried Sarah, carefully committing the trifling mistake of touching his horse with the tip of her whip.

The animal leaped into the air, breaking so suddenly into a gallop that Mr. Kerchey barely escaped being thrown to the ground.

"Whoa—*whoa—whoa!*" he ejaculated, in an agitated voice, letting go one of the reins, in his confusion.

The horse dashed to the corner of the fence, and stopped so suddenly that Mr. Kerchey, thrown clear over the pommel of the saddle, rested on his neck. Fortunately, having come to this stand, the animal did not move until he had had time to regain his seat; for, as it was, had it

not been for the proximity of the rails, on which he braced his hands, the rider must have plunged head foremost to the ground.

Sweating a cold sweat, and trembling in every limb, Mr. Kerchey seized both reins, one in each hand, resolved to hold the animal "in," at all hazards.

"Whoa—whoa—whoa!" he kept repeating, in tremulous tones, as he once more got into the road.

Sarah choked with emotion.

"Wouldn't you like a whip!" she asked, as soon as she could summon sufficient gravity to speak.

"Oh—no—thank you," gasped Mr. Kerchey.

"You'd better. You'll manage your horse much more easily with one. Will you take mine?"

Sarah rode up to him, and extended the frightful whip, at sight of which Mr. Kerchey's horse bounded to the side of the road like a frightened deer. Off flew his hat; his hands grasped saddle and mane; and he cried "Whoa—whoa!" again, with all the energy of fear.

But some horses, after submitting to a degree of insult, will have their revenge. Mr. Kerchey's thought he would try what virtue there was in running away. Thanks to his feet, thrust ankle-deep in the stirrups, the rider kept his seat this time, but he could not manage the reins and keep

his hold of the saddle at the same time. He went by the amazed party of equestrians on the speed of the wind. The horse turned up to the meeting-house, and made for one of the sheds.

"He'll break his head!" cried Sarah, terrified at the mischief she had done, reining up to Chester's side.

Chester spurred forward, to do what he could to avert so uncomfortable an accident. But already Mr. Kerchey saw his danger, and pulled the bridle with his left hand, still clinging to the saddle with his right. The horse was sufficiently under control to obey the direction. He described a beautiful curve, and went around the meeting-house, reappearing on the opposite side of the green.

The immediate danger passed, the spectators began to laugh. Mr. Kerchey reminded Jane Dustan of the celebrated monkey, Andrew Jackson, who rode the pony in the circus-ring "last fourth of July." Mr. Kerchey's performance was more public. He rode in view of the whole neighborhood, his hat off, his feet thrown behind, in the stirrups, his hands still holding on desperately. Around the meeting-house he went again, faster than before. A third time the horse consented to perform the amusing evolution, then rebelled. Wheeling suddenly, he threw Mr. Kerchey sprawling into a black puddle of indescribable water, near one of the sheds.

It was well for both horse and rider that the latter had instinctively extricated his feet from the stirrups. As it was, the animal, more indignant, it seemed, than terrified, quietly turned under the shed, and stopped.

A magnificent splashing of the water celebrated Mr. Kerchey's descent into the element. He came down like an immense frog, with outstretched arms and legs, sublime. But like anything else than a frog he began to scramble and gasp, and flounder in the puddle.

Chester dashed to the spot, dismounted, and helped him out.

To describe the ludicrous appearance of the strangling, drenched, muddy, hatless equestrian, or the effect it had upon the convulsed spectators, would be superfluous. With the exception of Chester, only Miss Sedley, a young lady of the finest feelings, and Sarah, whose conscience upbraided her for the mischief she had done, were at all able to control their mirth.

"Take me—somewhere!" gasped Mr. Kerchey seeking his handkerchief, to wipe his streaming face. "I'm—hurt. My shoulder—Oh!"

"You haven't put any bones out, I hope?" said Chester.

"I don't know. I'm afraid," moaned the equestrian, with a most ludicrous expression of mingled grief, pain, fright and mud. "Oh dear!

what a—a mournful termination to—to my folly!"

He sank upon the ground, and sat with his feet in the puddle, a picture of utter woe.

"Excuse me," he said, feebly, "I—I am very —faint."

"He is seriously injured, I fear," observed Miss Sedley.

"You won't let me—*die*—here in the filth—will you?" groaned Mr. Kerchey, looking up with a despairing expression into the faces of the spectators.

Even Chester had to hide his face for laughing. But Sarah, more and more alarmed, felt never less susceptible to merriment.

"Do take him right over to Dr. Sackett's!" she exclaimed, with deep solicitude.

"Yes," murmured the unhappy man, "if you can get me there. I—I can't walk—I am sure!"

"We can carry you," replied Chester. "Come, boys!"

"Be careful that I—I don't die by the way!" whispered Mr. Kerchey, on the point of swooning.

The young men fastened their horses under the shed, rolled up their sleeves, and "took hold." Happily, the doctor's house was close by, and they arrived seasonably at the door, with their companion still groaning and moaning piteously. No wonder! The doctor found his excuse. Mr.

Kerchey had broken an arm, besides doing some extensive damage to his shoulder.

When informed of the true state of the case, the company were sobered at once; and Sarah, especially, was very much distressed.

"I was the cause of it all!" she exclaimed, with strong feelings of self-reproach.

"To make ample reparation," said Jane Dustan, "all you have to do is to take care of your victim during his recovery."

"And I'll do it, laugh as you may!" exclaimed Sarah.

She kept her word as far as practicable. Mr. Kerchey was carried home the next day; and every afternoon, during the long week he was confined to his room, she called to inquire about his health, and often stopped to make his broth with her own hands, or to read the newspaper for him.

Mr. Kerchey loved the broth only because she made it, and when she read he was entertained by the sweet tone of her voice alone. Of course, he forgave her for frightening the horse; and if ever there was a poor fellow in love with a kind-hearted, mischievous, merry girl, it was Mr. Kerchey, convalescent, in love with Sarah Royden.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MRS. ROYDEN'S DINNER-PARTY.

How fast the time fled! How quickly, yet how smoothly, the old clergyman's vacation rounded to its close!

Looking back to the day of his arrival, it was hard to realize that more than three weeks had glided away. Yet when he and his friends remembered what had been done, and how many happy and profitable hours they had spent together, the wonder was that so much could have been crowded within so brief a space of time.

The present chronicle of the old clergyman's vacation is necessarily meager. It would require a larger volume to do anything like justice to the scene which opened, shifted and closed, during his stay. I have only seized upon a few salient points, that presented themselves to my mind, and portrayed them with as few hasty touches as I could, without order, and with little study for effect. How much must be gone over in silence, and left entirely to the imagination!

The day before that which Father Brighthopes had set for his departure, Mrs. Royden gave a

dinner-party. He had become so extensively known and so widely beloved in the society of the neighborhood, that old and young wished to assemble and bid him an affectionate farewell.

Was ever a more cheerful gathering? We doubt it. It was a jolly, democratic party. Father Brighthopes was grand-master of the ceremonies. If there was one present more humble than another, he made it his business to take him encouragingly and lovingly by the hand, and lift him up. If it was a sister, how delicately, how tenderly he talked to her, and showed her that bright angel of Hope, his guardian spirit, or genius, and the ready consoler of sorrowing hearts!

Deacon Dustan was there, *without* his new meeting-house schemes; his quiet wife, and Harry and Jane, who were not so quiet, came in his carriage. The Smiths were present; the deacon and his lady. Benjamin, and Josephine, who was so "ecthethively fond of minithterth," and who was sure she could not "thurvive the loth" of so delightful an old man as Father Brighthopes

Mr. Corlis came early, and had a long and earnest conversation with his elder brother, to whom he already owed so much for his kindly warnings and wise suggestions. Mark Wheeler was invited, but he did not come, being unused to such society; but there was one, still less accus-

tomed to the ways of the world, who could not excuse himself, when Mr. Royden sent to have him brought by main force.

It was Job, the soldier-shoemaker. He came, with his wooden leg, his subdued voice, his sunny old face, his queer bald pate and prominent ears, and his exhaustless fountain of good humor within his heart.

It was the first honor of the kind Job had ever received at the hands of his neighbors. But of late a good deal of interest had been taken in his family, and some who had laid up money to aid in the new meeting-house project had been induced to invest a little of it in comforts and necessaries for the poor man. He felt as though he could really afford to abandon his bench for that day, and enjoy himself, his only objection being the impossibility of Mrs. Bowen leaving the house and going with him. But she was comfortable now at home, and Job was easy in his mind about her.

We should not forget to mention that the old soldier made his appearance in an entirely new suit of clothes, and with his Sunday leg on. He joked a good deal about these externals, and amused the company by his genial humor. His coat was one presented him by Mr. Corlis; the waistcoat had belonged to Deacon Dustan, and the trousers were a gift from Father Brighthopes. Job acknowledged half a dozen shirts

from the fair hands of Miss Sedley, the school-ma'am, Sarah Royden and Julia Keller; one of which he had on his back. The handkerchief he wore was a present from Chester. His boot alone was the product of his own labor.

Job had cut off the trousers to fit his wooden leg, and made a jaunty cap of the fragment. The leg itself was an extra one he had kept by him a long time, using it only on Sunday, Fast Day, Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July. It was quite a handsome stick, elegantly finished, and "well seasoned," Job declared.

"I am careful of this leg," he said, in his subdued voice, and quiet, cheerful manner, when the old clergyman joked him about it. "I always keep it on the top shelf at home, with a newspaper around it, to protect it from dust and flies. If you had the gout, sir, you couldn't be more careful of your limbs."

This was after dinner. Job was sitting in the easy-chair, out doors, where the shadow of the house sloped across the grassy lawn. The guests were forming a circle around him and the old clergyman, some sitting upon the green sward, others supporting their dignity upon chairs, and a few of the young people lying at their ease along the ground.

Mr. Kerchey, who happened to be standing near, with his arm in a sling, exerted himself to speak, and made a comparison between his use-

less and painful member and Job's comfortable leg.

"Get a wooden one, get a wooden one," said Job. "But, then, an arm of that sort wouldn't be so convenient as a leg. I don't think I could make shoes with only one hand. Dear me! when I think of it, how thankful I ought to be that only my leg was taken off! Supposing I had lost an arm,—or my head,—and been obliged to get a new one?"

"You wouldn't be the first man to go about with a wooden pate," said Chester. "There are plenty of block-heads in the world."

"I believe I was one when I enlisted," laughed Job.

"At least, your head was turned," quietly observed Father Brighthopes.

Anything the old clergyman said in a facetious vein was sure to raise a laugh. When silence was restored, Job replied,

"Very good! capital!"—in his soft half-whisper, and rubbing his hands. "And I am thankful that, although my head was turned then, only my leg has been turned since. My folly was cut off with my offending member, and my ambition was buried with it."

The company let Job talk in this way a good while. It was refreshing to hear him; and he delighted to be garrulous. There was not a happier heart present than his; and its simple philos-

ophy and genial humor flowed out and mingled in such a sunny, babbling brook, that no one desired it should be checked.

But at length Job himself refused to talk any more.

"I'm pumped dry," said he. "If you want anything more from me, Father Brighthopes will have to *prime* me. I haven't another joke that isn't musty; and now, I say, we'll have a regular-built speech from the old patriarch. Silence!" cried Job, tapping his wooden leg; "attention, every one! Father Brighthopes, we wait to hear from you."

The old clergyman, having sat down upon the grass, was so tangled up in the children, who clung to his neck and arms, that he could not arise to respond.

"Georgie," said Mrs. Royden, in a tone of gentle reproach, "you shouldn't lie upon Father Brighthopes. Get down, Willie. Lizzie, you are too big to be hanging around his neck."

"She is crowning him with a wreath of flowers," murmured Hepsy, who was comfortably seated in the midst of the group.

The poor girl's health was much improved; there was a faint flush on her cheeks; but, although in good spirits, she had scarcely spoken before since dinner, having been absorbed in weaving the wreath for the old man's venerable and beloved head.

At length he was crowned, the children released him, and he got up, radiant and beautiful, with his young and hopeful spirit shining through his glorious old face.

We wish there had been a reporter on the spot. That speech would well be worth preserving, word for word. But we are able to give only a meager outline of it, very imperfect, and without regard to the order in which the sentiments—like so many waves of liquid light—rippled upon the hearts of his hearers.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE OLD CLERGYMAN'S FAREWELL.

THE speaker was about to bid farewell, he said, to all those kind friends. (Sensation.) He would leave them, and be soon forgotten. (Cries of "No, no! never!" from old and young. Job smites his wooden leg, and exclaims, with enthusiasm, "Not that, by a long thread!")

"Well," continues Father Brighthopes, with suffused features, "I thank you. I hope you will remember me, as I shall remember you. God has been very good to me, in giving me friends, all my life long."

"You deserve them, if anybody does," whispers Job, loud enough to be heard by the entire audience.

He rubs his hands as if he meant it.

"Let me give you a little hint about getting and keeping friends," adds the clergyman, smiling around upon the old people in the chairs, and the young people on the grass or standing up. "I thank Brother Job for suggesting the thought."

"Hear, hear!" says Mr. Royden, pulling Wil-

lie away from the speaker's legs, and silencing Georgia, who is inclined to blow his grass "squawker."

"My friends have generally been of the right kind," proceeds the old man. "If you wish to have your friends of the right kind,"—glancing at the younger portion of the audience,—"I'll tell you how to go to work.

"Be always ready to lend a helping hand to those who need assistance. Do so with a hearty good will, not feeling as though you were throwing something away; for, although you get no material return,—which should be the last thing to expect,—you will find in the end that you have been exercising your own capacities for happiness, which grow with their use. Do good for the sake of good, and you will see that the bread thus cast upon the waters comes right back to feed your own hungry souls.

"Be ready to sacrifice all externals to friendship, but maintain your integrity. Give the glittering bubbles of the stream and the current will still be yours, clear and strong as ever. What I mean is, abandon circumstances and outside comforts for the sake of those you love, but never desert a principle to follow any man or set of men. If you do, few friends will be obtained, and they will not be firmly attached; while many who would soon have come round to you will be lost forever. But plant yourself on the rock of prin-

ciple; and, however men may shun it at first, it shall in the end prove a magnet to draw all true souls to your standard. Royal hearts shall then be yours. They can rely on you, and you on them; so there will be no falling off, when the wind shifts to the northeast. Truth is the sun which holds friends in their orbits, like revolving planets, by the power of its magnetism. If the sun forsake its place in the heavens, and go chasing after the bright tail of some gay comet, what will become of the planets? Let the sun be true to itself, and even the comet comes around in time."

The old man looks at Chester with a smile which asks, "Is it not so?"

"Your philosophy is excellent for men of courage, like yourself," says Chester. "But few can bear to be hated all their lives by the mass of their fellow-men, as many have been, for the sake of the truth."

"Those men who do bear that cross are martyrs of the noblest sort," returns Father Brighthopes. "They are not only men of true courage, but men of fortitude, which is a sort of enduring and perpetual courage. To them the truth, and the few who see and love the truth,—if only a handful of poor fishermen and three or four pious women,—will be more precious than all the kingdoms of the earth. If the devil of ambition whispers that by forsaking the former the latter may

be gained, they can resist the temptation; for they know the value of internal convictions of right, and the worthlessness of external shows and shadows and happiness.

"Great truths, when first revealed to mankind, need such martyrs. Oppression assists in the development of principles, as alternate frosts and heats in spring heave and loosen the soil. New truths, like sheaves of grain, must be well threshed by the flail of persecution, and winnowed by the wind of criticism, to separate the pure wheat from the straw and chaff.

"But to none of us, I am confident, will be given the crown of martyrdom. Mankind is too enlightened to make many martyrs nowadays. We gravitate to truth, and we crucify no more the prophet who reveals it to our sight. This is an age in which principles may be demonstrated, and will always be respected. Then let us embrace them, and have that ballast to steady us in the stormy voyage of life."

"Men of principle, even to-day," Chester replies, "are accused of fickleness and inconsistency, and all sorts of unworthy motives, by those who do not understand them."

"Very well; I can bear to be misunderstood for a little while," says the old man. "Those who are not established on the same ground of truth imagine that I waver, while it is themselves who are continually shifting. It took the earth a

great while to learn that the sun and stars did not revolve around it every twenty-four hours. What cared the eternal sun? A ledge upreared in the midst of a swift river seems to be swimming up-stream; but it is only the water moving. Look up at the moon on a windy night when a storm is breaking away, and she appears to be flying wildly across the floor of heaven. It is the clouds that hurry, and the moon feels nothing of the optical delusion. Let us take example of the stars, the sun, the moon and the planets, in order that the true astronomers of the heart may know how to measure our distances and compute our orbits."

"That's my idea, well expressed," says Job, who rubs his hands, feeling that the right kind of friends have finally come around to him; "and that's what I've always told my good woman."

The old man pats Job on the shoulder, and says some pleasant word, which makes everybody laugh. He then proceeds with his speech. He goes from the great principle of integrity to the exercise of the minor domestic virtues. He dwells upon the happiness of the home in which love and contentment dwell, contrasting it with the raw atmosphere which pervades houses of the opposite stamp. How plainly his philosophy demonstrates the necessity of an even temper and a sweet disposition!

"You can keep house without silver spoons, but

not without these," he says. "Charity and kindness are the soft music which regulates the march of life, and cheers the hearts of the soldiers."

This allusion to his old profession reminds Job of his wooden leg, which he pats affectionately whistling *Yankee Doodle* very softly.

The old clergyman goes on. He has a good deal to say to the young folks about the active life upon which they are just entering,—its perils and temptations. He warns them against selfishness, and tells them how it narrows and shrivels the soul. But his favorite theme is LOVE; and he dwells much upon the beauty of its offspring, kindness, contentment, cheerfulness. His language is so simple that even Willie can understand all he says.

"Well," he remarks, in conclusion, "I am talking too long."

"Not a bit of it! I defy you!" cries Job Bowen.

"Go on! go on!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"I must take leave of you soon; and we can spend the little time that remains to us more pleasantly than in speechifying, or listening to a speech. It is doubtful if I ever meet you again. I am growing old," says Father Brighthopes, with a serene smile. "I have but a little while to stay here on earth. I am going home. Our Father has given me my work to do, and it is almost done.

Oh, would I could tell you how joyfully I shall put off corruption for incorruption, and exchange mortality for immortality!

"But I shall see you again, even though we meet here no more. Let us hope so. Let us so live that it shall be so. The Saviour's loving arms are outstretched to receive us all in his embrace."

A pause; silence and tears. Mrs. Royden endeavors to conceal emotion by arranging Hepsy's cape. Others resort to their handkerchiefs. The speaker's voice is choked, and there are shining drops gliding down his aged cheeks. To fill up the pause, he lifts Willie in his arms, as that young gentleman is tying long grass around his feet, and murmuring something about keeping him always; kisses him, and presses him to his heart.

"What are you crying for?" asks the boy, breaking the silence.

With his little brown hand he touches a straw to one of the crystal drops on the old man's face, and strings it off upon it like a bead.

"Thus may all our tears become bright gems!" says Father Brighthopes, smiling tenderly upon the child. "But you cannot realize this, my darling. You teach us a lesson quite unconsciously to your young heart. You show us how hope is born of affliction, and how joy springs from the dark soil of distress. My friends, let us look up.

Never look down. Remember what an eternity opens above us, beyond all the clouds of this life. And may the good God bless you all!''

XXXI.

THE DEPARTURE.

It was evening when the company dispersed. Father Brighthopes took affectionate leave of each individual, and had a kind and hopeful word for every one. They seemed to be bidding farewell to some beloved old patriarch, who had lived all his days amongst them.

The clergyman was left alone with his friends, the Roydens. The evening was spent in sober, sweet communion. In the morning the family was up early; for the old man was to be off at eight o'clock.

"Oh, we cannot express how much we owe to you, good Father!" exclaimed Mrs. Royden, with tears of thankfulness in her eyes, on meeting him in the parlor. "My husband seems a different man since you have been with us. And you have taught me a lesson I shall endeavor to profit by. It is hard to overcome fixed habits, and I know I shall often and often—as I do now every day—yield to the dictates of my harsh temper; but I trust I shall come off conquerer in the end!"

"We are all weak, of ourselves," said the old

man, affectionately. "But there is One who giveth strength."

Father Brighthopes found an opportunity to have a farewell talk with poor Hepsy. She could not bear the thought of his going away. This was now her only sorrow; for he had filled her soul with immortal hopes, and taught her to endure patiently all the ills of life. But she feared lest she might go back into the dark, when he was no longer near to reflect the light from above upon her spirit. Had he not promised to write to her, she would hardly have been consoled for his loss; as it was, it seemed as if the sun was going into a dense, cold mist.

At length the breakfast was out of the way; the old man had offered up his morning prayer in presence of the family, as, by request of the parents, he had been accustomed to do, of late; his trunks were packed and ready, and the time had come to say the last farewells.

James brought the horse to the door, at sight of which Willie just began to comprehend that the old man was really going.

"I want to go too!" he cried, clinging to his knees.

Father Brighthopes stooped to kiss his plump brown cheek.

"Oh, let me go!" exclaimed Georgie, who had not thought of such an arrangement before.

"Would you go and leave your father and

mother, and Chester and James, and all?" asked the clergyman.

"You show me how to do my sums better than they do; and you give me story-books," replied Georgie, bashfully.

"And they do a thousand times more for you," said the old man, embracing the boy. "They give you clothes, and food, and send you to school, and do more things for you than anybody can think of."

"Oh, you will come again next summer, won't you, Father?" cried Lizzie, kissing him impulsively, when his head was down.

"I am too old and feeble to make any promise for another year," replied Father Brighthopes, smiling tenderly. "But I shall come and see you all again, if Providence grant me that indulgence. Be this as it may, I shall always remember you and love you."

How gently then he kissed the affectionate girl! He turned and gave his hand to Sarah, whose eyes filled with tears as she received his blessing.

Mr. Royden took the old man's arm, and led him to the wagon.

"But where is Samuel? I must not neglect him," said Father Brighthopes.

At that moment a groaning was heard behind the shed, under the tree where the grindstone stood.

"Is that Sam?" asked Mr. Royden.

"Yes, sir," replied James. "Something is the matter with him; I don't know what it is. He was taken sick when we were harnessing."

"What is the matter, my son?" asked the old man, cheerily, looking over the gate.

Sam lay upon the turf, with his head on his arm, for a pillow.

"Nothing," he muttered, in a ghastly tone, without looking up.

"Come, I am going away. I want to bid you good-bye."

Sam groaned again; but endeavoring to conquer his malady, he sat up, and raised his swimming eyes. Mr. Royden took him by the shoulder, and helped him to his feet.

"What is the matter?" he demanded.

"Nothing, sir," said Sam. "I'm a little sick, that's all. I shall have to set down again."

He sank upon the turf, and groaned, with his face in the grass.

Father Brighthopes was expressing a great deal of sympathy for him, when Chester came and explained the mystery.

"He has been chewing tobacco," said he, with a cruel laugh. "I told him it would make him sick."

"You foolish fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Royden; "what did you do that for?"

"I only just wanted to learn how," moaned Sam.

"Learn how!"

"Cos all the men chew," added the boy, sitting up again, and burying his face in his hands, as the deathly feeling came over him once more.

"Well, well," said the old man, in an encouraging tone, "let this experience be a lesson to you. Let alone the weed. You can be a man without it, if you try. Good-by, good-by, my son!"

He got into the wagon, leaving the unhappy lad still moaning and writhing with anguish on the green-sward.

Mark Wheeler arrived at the gate, having come to take leave of Father Brighthopes, just as Chester and his father were driving away with their aged friend.

The jockey rode the one-eyed colt, which he still retained in his possession,—a perpetual remembrancer of a memorable day in his rugged and uneven life.

He dismounted, and shook hands with the old man. Mark was much affected by his kind wishes and gentle admonitions; but the presence of Mr. Royden and Chester embarrassed him, and he could not express his feelings.

"Come," said Mr. Royden, observing the state of affairs, "I suppose we have not much time to lose."

"I will ride along with you," replied Mark, throwing himself upon the back of the one-eyed colt.

Mr. Royden, Hepsy and the children, watched the little party as they rode away, Chester driving, while his father sat with the gray-haired clergyman on the seat behind him, and Mark trotted his colt along on the road-side, at their right hand; and they who were left at home felt strange emotions of loneliness steal over their hearts, at the thought that the venerable and beloved form then vanishing from sight might never more repose beneath that roof.

There was no quarreling nor loud words among the children, that morning, as they set out for school; but their faces were expressive of unusual soberness, and their young hearts quite sad; until the bright birds singing by the way-side, the breezes playing in their hair, and the sunshine flooding all the earth, dispelled their gloom, and led them to forget that the gentle old man they loved was riding on his journey, to his field of labor far away.

XXXII.

REUNION.

A LITTLE more than two years had passed away. It was in "peach-time." There was a merry group of young people in Mr. Royden's orchard, one mild September afternoon.

There was Chester, proud, happy, overflowing with wit. He was just married, and had come home, to pass a few days, with his fair bride.

She was a perfect doll; beautiful to look upon, with her soft eyes, fair cheeks, ringlets and symmetrical form; but there was not much character in her face. Her love for Chester was of the romantic kind. Although they had been a week married, she should not relish a peach unless he gave it her with a smile, having taken out the stone and tasted it himself first.

Sarah was there, too,—now Mrs. Kerchey. Let not the reader be surprised. Having broken that gentleman's arm, she could not make up her mind to break his heart also, when he came to woo. He had qualities which she was bound to respect; and at length she saw that, casting all prejudice and false pride aside, she could bestow upon him a large portion of love. Yet she never would have

married him, had it not been for her mother's persuasion.

Parents like to see their children well situated in life. Mrs. Royden could not rest until she heard Sarah addressed as Mrs. Kerchey. This amiable young couple had been married eighteen months; they were very comfortable, and quite happy; Mr. Kerchey had greatly improved in personal appearance; and the sweet little baby, that Lizzie seemed to carry forever in her arms, and devour with kisses, was their property.

Lizzie was a "great girl." But she was very ladylike in her manners. She gave promise of becoming a noble woman. Already she was beginning to have beaux, but she was sensible enough not to care much for them. She was an insatiable reader, and a superior scholar.

James, now a blushing, amiable young man, with a little down on his chin, had quite fallen in love with his new sister. How happy, he thought, Chester must be with his heiress, whom he had won in spite of the cruel professor!

Georgie was now a stout lad, big enough to climb trees and shake off the peaches, and polite enough to pick the handsomest ones for Mrs. Chester; and Willie was what his father called him, "quite a little man." He felt himself quite a big one, and tyrannized over the turkeys and chickens accordingly. He had a little sister, about three years old,—a sweet child to kiss, except that,

on the afternoon we are describing, her face was stained from ear to ear, and from nose to chin, with peach-juice.

We must not forget Hepsy. She was there, sitting on the grass, and knitting a purse for Mrs. Chester. O, how her poor heart throbbed when she gazed upon that pretty face! How her eyes had rained tears of late, when they saw only the gloom of her own chamber! But she had conquered that wild passion which once devoured her heart, and banished selfishness from her breast. She loved the fair bride very tenderly, and felt that to see her and Chester happy would console her for all she had endured. Hepsy's health was good, for her, although she was never strong, and often the disease of her spine caused her hours of secret pain.

Chester was the life of the company,—brimful of good spirits and fun. Every word he spoke was treasured in Hepsy's heart. With a somewhat different feeling, yet with no less admiration, his fair Sophronia caught at the merest drops of nonsense that dripped from his lips, thinking them pearls. She was not very witty herself, and she naturally looked upon Chester as the most brilliant and talented man then existing in the known world.

"There's Deacon Dustan's carriage!" suddenly cried Georgie, from the top of the peach-tree, looking towards the road.

The boy had been lately reading stories of the whale-fishery, and he fancied himself a man at the masthead, on the lookout for blowers.

"We must go over and see the deacon's people to-morrow, Phronie," said Chester.

"O, yes!" exclaimed Phronie, clapping her little hands with childish glee, "anywhere you please."

"The carriage has stopped," observed Lizzie, listening.

Willie ran off towards the fence to see. His little sister, following him, fell headlong into the grass, and burst a great juicy peach on her bosom, at which she began to cry.

"O, never mind, Jenny!" cried Sarah, picking her up, and using her handkerchief to remove the effects of the disaster from the child's clear skin. "You look as though a slight application of water would do your face no harm, sis. What a monster you are, in peach time!"

At that moment a tall, awkward youth, with a good-natured grin on his brown features, came through the gate, at the corner of the shed, and shouted,

"Hillo!"

What a voice! It was rough as the bark of a hickory-tree.

"You can't guess who is come," said Sam,—for it was he,—with a broader grin than before.

"Anybody to see me?" asked Chester.

"Wal, you as much as anybody," replied Sam, throwing his head aside to spit.

"Who is it?" Sarah inquired.

"Guess!"

"How provoking you are, Sam Cone!" exclaimed Lizzie. "Why can't you tell? Georgie said it was Deacon Dustan's carriage that stopped."

"So 'twas; I opened the gate for the deacon to drive through; but somebody came with him—you can't guess who."

Sam spit again, and wiped his mouth with his sleeve.

"O!" said Sophronia, with a look of disgust, turning away her face; "he chews tobacco!"

"What of it?" rejoined Sam, who overheard her.

And he rolled the weed in his cheek, with the air of one proud of the accomplishment.

"Do spit out the filthy stuff!" exclaimed Chester.

"It an't no worse than smoking," retorted Sam.

This was a home thrust. Chester, during his last year at school, had become addicted to cigars, which his silly little wife thought delightful in his lips.

"O, there's no comparison!" she cried, indignantly.

Sam was not convinced; but he could not be indifferent to the opinion of so pretty a creature;

so, with a sheepish look, he flung the quid on the ground behind him.

"Well, if you can't guess who has come," said he, "I'll tell you. It's the old minister,—Father Brighthopes."

"Father Brighthopes!" echoed the children, in chorus.

"Yes," said Sam; "Deacon Dustan was over to town when he came, and brought him straight here."

There was a general rush for the house. Lizzie —for the first time voluntarily—abandoned the baby to Mr. Kerchey's arms, and ran to greet her old friend. Georgie, who had not forgotten the clergyman, came slipping down the tree, regardless of damage done his clothes.

"What else could have happened, to give us a more delightful surprise?" cried Chester. "Come, Phronie. Now you will see, and judge for yourself, the glorious old man you have heard me tell so much about."

Hepsy was not the last to start. But she stopped to take Jenny with her.

"Come, dear," said she, "you must have your face washed now. What are you doing?"

The child, seated upon the turf, was absorbed in the anatomy of a grasshopper. It was one of the oldest of its race,—a large, respectable fellow, over an inch long. In pursuing her investigations, however, Jenny had taken its head off;

and it had thus fallen a victim to infant science.

"Why, Jenny!" exclaimed Hepsy, "you have killed the poor thing!"

"Are you sorry?" lisped the little girl, with beautiful simplicity. "You needn't be," she added, cheerily. "There's enough more of 'em."

It took Hepsy a good while to explain exactly why children should not indulge a passion for decapitating insects; and Jenny was sadly troubled when allusion was made to the gentle removal of her own fair head from her shoulders, in order that she might judge how grasshoppers felt under the circumstances.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCLUSION.

It was a joyful meeting, and that day was one of the happiest in the old clergyman's life. He took the children to his bosom with all the warm affection of his sunny nature, with tears of thankfulness in his eyes.

He had lasted wonderfully. You could hardly discover that he had grown old at all. There was the same serene face,—aged, indeed, but with a spirit eternally young forever shining through.

He had come to pass only a few days with his friends. And those days—would we had space to describe them!—flew swiftly by. Once more the time came for his departure.

But he remained long enough to remark, and to rejoice over, the change in Mrs. Royden's household since the day when he first came there to spend his brief vacation. There was sunshine beneath the roof. There was music in the air of the house. There was beauty all around.

"We owe it all to your teaching and example," said Mr. Royden, one afternoon, speaking gratefully of the change. "Before you came, we never

really knew what religion was. It seemed something separate from the business and everyday affairs of life, and we thought we could not well afford to try its utility. We learned from you that it was the sweetener of every thought and every act of the day. Wife and I have been practicing it as well as we could, and we find that it pours the oil of happiness into the machinery of life, which often creaked so drearily before."

How the good old man poured out his soul in thankfulness, that night, to his Master, inspired with inexpressible joy by this evidence that his Christian labors of love had been blessed in the hearts of his friends!

And so, having been almost worshipped by the Roydens during his stay, and honored with abundant attentions from Mr. Corlis and his society, Father Brighthopes went his way rejoicing and praising the infinite Giver for such abundant blessings.

Chester and his bride, having prolonged their visit on his account, departed at about the same time.

Some months later, this young couple sent for Hepsy to come and live with them, in their new home in Sophronia's native town. The poor girl gladly went. Henceforth she was resolved to devote herself entirely to the happiness of Chester.

He needed her, and he was able to appreciate

her self-sacrifice. He would not have had much of a home without her. Sophronia was a sweet girl; but of the art—more valuable than all other arts in a wife—of making a comfortable home she was lamentably ignorant. Having been petted as an heiress, she was a complete child. Wealth can purchase certain luxuries, and insure an outside show; but the talent for making home *home* lies in the heart of the wife, and transcends in value all the riches of the globe.

Had it not been for the good Hepsy, Chester must have led a miserable life, with his unsatisfied domestic feelings, after all the romance of love was over. She made his fireside, and, with the influence she speedily acquired over Sophronia, drew her within the sphere of peaceful home delights, teaching her a higher, holier love for her husband than had ever entered the heart of the giddy young wife before.

And was Hepsy happy?

There are two kinds of happiness. One consists in the gratification of our wishes and desires, the attachment of friends, the admiration of the world.

Another sort of happiness lies in that noble and unselfish love, which devotes itself to promote the welfare of others, quite forgetful of all the thorns that pierce it as it treads the path of duty, and never knowing the poison of envy or the gall of hate. This is the highest, purest happiness

known on earth; for it approaches the bliss of the immortals, whose home is in the heavens.

Of the former, Hepsy — the poor, sickly, deformed girl — certainly had not much; but the latter was showered upon her in rich abundance, falling like the sweet dew, for want of which the thirsty flowers gasp and wither in the sultry summer day, but which steals softly down, to bathe their rosy cheeks and lily lips, only when they bow their heads under the gloom of night.