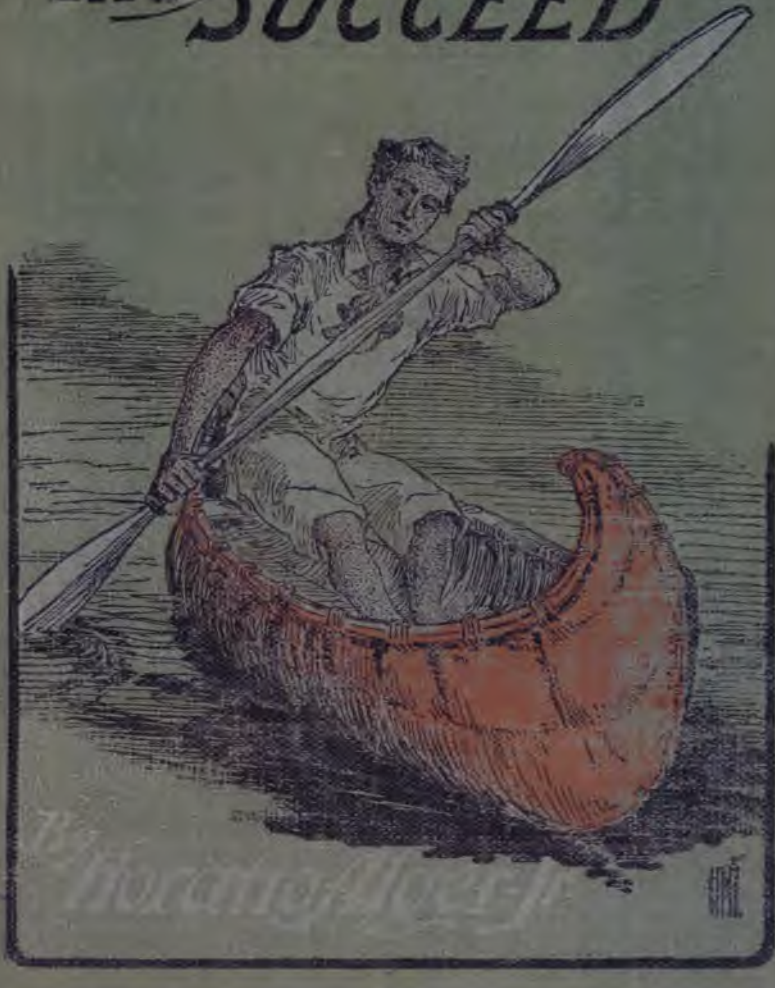
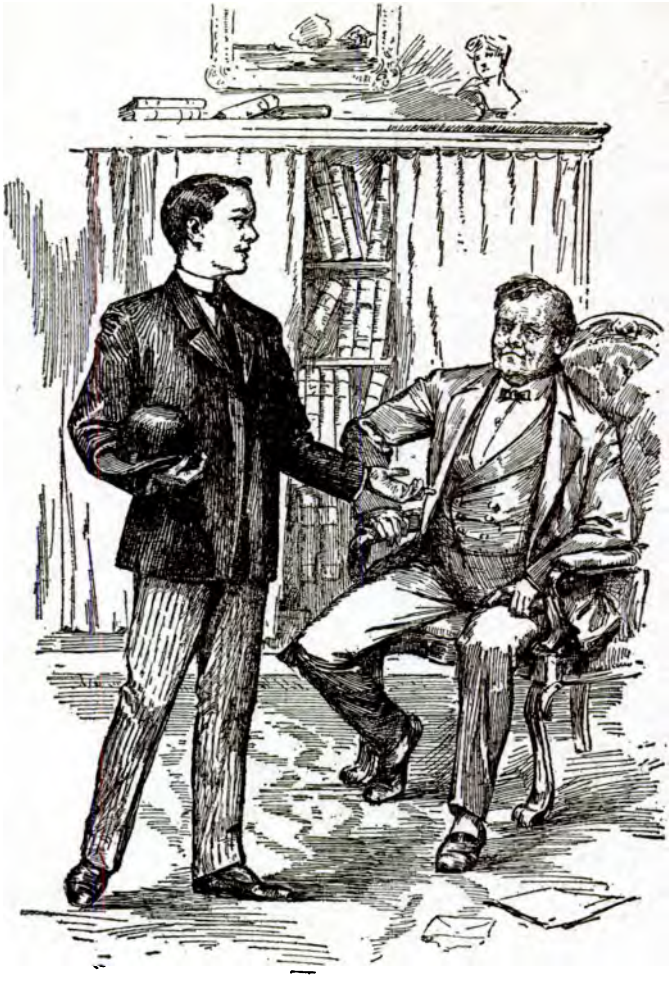
STRIVE and SUCCEED



James L. Higgins.
Olmstedville, N. Y.

Congratulations and
best wishes from
Uncle Morse & Aunt Marie.
October 9, 1909.



"I will sell my shares for sixty thousand dollars," said Walter.

[See page 161.]

STRIVE AND SUCCEED

OR

THE PROGRESS OF WALTER CONRAD

BY

HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

AUTHOR OF

"STRONG AND STEADY," "TRY AND TRUST," "BOUND TO RISE,"
"RISEN FROM THE RANKS," "BRAVE AND BOLD,"
"WAIT AND HOPE," "SLOW AND SURE," ETC.

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STRIVE AND SUCCEED

CHAPTER I

WALTER CONRAD'S MISSION

A LONG train was running at moderate speed over a Wisconsin railroad. Among the passengers was a stout, gentlemanly looking boy, who looked much more than sixteen, although he had not yet reached that age. On the seat beside him was a large carpetbag, which contained all the clothing he carried with him. As the conductor passed through the car, the boy asked:

"Are we near Benton?"

"Yes."

"Thank you."

The conductor passed on, and the boy began to shake the dust from his coat, and opening his carpetbag deposited therein a copy of *Harper's Magazine*, which he had been reading. I may as well introduce him at once to the reader as Walter Conrad, whose previous adventures have been related in "Paddle Your Own Canoe."

Walter, not quite a year since, had received, when at boarding school, the unexpected intelligence of his father's serious illness. On reaching home, he found his parent dead. Subsequently he learned that his father had bought shares to the extent of a hundred thousand dollars in the Great Metropolitan Mining Company, and through the failure of this company had probably lost everything. This intelligence had doubtless hastened his death. Wal-

ter was, of course, obliged to leave school, and accepted temporarily an invitation from Mr. Jacob Drummond, of Stapleton, a remote kinsman, to visit him. In extending the invitation Mr. Drummond was under the illusion that Walter was the heir to a large property. On learning the truth, his manner was changed completely, and Walter, finding himself no longer welcome as a guest, proposed to enter Mr. Drummond's store as a clerk. Being a strong and capable boy, he was readily received on board wages. The board, however, proved to be very poor, and his position was made more disagreeable by Joshua Drummond, three years older than himself, who took a dislike to him. Walter finally left Mr. Drummond's employ, and, led by his love of adventure, traveled as a book agent in Ohio. Here he was successful, though he met with one serious adventure, involving him in some danger, but was finally led to abandon the business at the request of Clement Shaw, his father's executor, for the following reason:

The head of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company, through whom his father had been led to invest his entire fortune in it, was a man named James Wall, a specious and plausible man, through whose mismanagement it was believed it had failed. He was strongly suspected of conspiring to make a fortune out of it at the expense of the other stockholders. He had written to Mr. Shaw, offering the sum of two thousand dollars for the thousand shares now held by Walter, an offer which the executor did not feel inclined to accept until he knew that it was made in good faith. He, therefore, wrote to Walter to change his name, and go on to Portville, the home of Mr. Wall, and there use all his shrewdness to discover what he could of the position of the mining company, and Mr. Wall's designs in relation thereto. It may be added that after selling the balance of the estate Walter was found entitled to

five hundred dollars. He had, besides, cleared eighty-seven dollars net profit on his sales as book agent.

We shall have to call our hero Gilbert Howard—an assumed name which he had adopted at the executor's suggestion, lest his real name might excite the suspicions of Mr. Wall, and so defeat the purpose of his journey.

Walter had scarcely made his preparations to leave the cars when the whistle sounded, and the train gradually stopped.

Several passengers descended from the train, and gathered on the platform. Among them, of course, was our hero.

A shabby-looking stage stood just beside the station. Knowing that it was a ten miles' journey, and important to get a comfortable seat, Walter passed through the building, and took a seat inside. Several other passengers followed leisurely until the carriage was nearly full. While Walter was wondering how soon they would start, a gentleman, accompanied by a boy of about Walter's age, approached the driver.

"Didn't you see anything of my carriage, Abner?"

"I'd have seed it if it had been on the road," said Abner, with more emphasis than strict adherence to grammatical rules.

"I suppose we must ride with you, then," said Mr. Wall. "Can you give us seats inside?"

"There's one seat," he said. "Your son can ride outside with me."

John Wall evidently did not fancy this arrangement. It was beginning to sprinkle, and being nicely dressed he did not want to get wet.

"I want to ride inside," he said.

"I'd like to accommodate you," said the driver, "but there's only room for one."

"I don't see why I haven't as good right to a seat inside as anybody else," said John, in a grumbling tone.

John Wall was rather a stout, freckle-faced boy, dressed with some pretension to style, and sporting a pair of kid gloves. He secretly considered himself to be unusually good-looking, and on the strength of his father's wealth gave himself airs of superiority. His manners were decidedly arrogant and overbearing, and he was far from being a favorite in Portville, although a great many things, which would not have been excused in another less favored by fortune, were forgiven him on account of his father's wealth.

"I'd like to stretch the inside of the stage if I could," said Abner, good-naturedly, "but that ain't easy."

"You may sit in my lap, John," said his father.

"I'd rather not," said John, sullenly.

"Then I think you will have to make up your mind to sit with Abner."

Meanwhile John had been peering into the coach and espied Walter on the back seat. Accustomed to regard his own convenience, he was led to make a very selfish proposal.

"There's a boy inside," he said. "Perhaps he'll get outside and give me his seat."

This proposal struck Walter as refreshingly cool, but always having been in the habit of standing up for his rights, he did not propose to gratify John.

"Thank you," said he, dryly; "I'd rather keep my seat."

"But I don't want to get wet."

"Nor I," said Walter.

"I don't see why I haven't as much right to ride inside as he," grumbled John, turning to the driver.

"So you would, and better, too, if you'd got in first,"

said Abner. "But I must be starting. So if you're goin' along with me, you'd better climb up."

"I'll give you twenty-five cents if you'll give me your seat," said John, making a last appeal to Walter.

"Thank you," said Walter, coldly; "I'm not in want of money."

"Get up without any more fuss, John," said his father, impatiently.

Very discontentedly John climbed up to the box and took his seat beside the driver. He felt very angry with our hero for declining to sacrifice his own convenience to him. It appeared to him that, as the son of General Wall, the richest man in Portville, he had a right to the best of everything.

"Do you know who that boy is, that wouldn't give me his seat?" he asked of Abner.

"Never saw him before," said the driver.

"Do you think it's going to rain much?"

"I reckon it will be a smart sprinkle. You'd better take off them kid gloves of your'n if you don't want them spoiled."

"I don't see why that boy wouldn't give me his seat. He hasn't got on as good clothes as I have," grumbled John.

"Well, if your clothes are spoiled your father's got money enough to buy you some new ones," said Abner.

"That's true," said John, with an air of importance. "My father's very rich."

"I expect you'll be rich, too, some day," said Abner.

"I expect I shall," said John, complacently. "I'm going to be a lawyer."

"All right," said the driver, jocosely; "I'll give you all my law business."

"Oh, I shan't settle down here," said John loftily. I'm

going to Detroit or Chicago. I want to be in a big place."

"I reckon you'll be too smart for Portville," said Abner, with sly sarcasm.

"I guess I can do as well as any of the city lawyers," said John. "I am reading Cæsar already."

CHAPTER II

THE SON OF GENERAL WALL

Mr. Wall, or General Wall, as he was commonly designated in Portville, as a kind of tribute to his wealth, for he had no other right to the title, took a seat opposite Walter. This was the man who had ruined his father—who even now, perhaps, was conspiring to defraud him, and probably others. Under ordinary circumstances he would have been favorably impressed by his appearance. He had a popular manner, and was quite a good-looking man, much more agreeable than his son.

"Well, general," said one of the passengers, "have you been on a journey?"

"Only to the county town. I had some business at the probate office."

"Been buyin' any real estate?"

"I have just purchased Mr. Newton's place. I had a mortgage on it, and we agreed to make a bargain."

"I wonder whether he bought it with my father's money," thought Walter, rather bitterly, for he felt that the man opposite was responsible not alone for his loss of fortune, but for his father's sudden death.

"How's that mining company coming out?" Walter listened eagerly for the answer.

"Why," said Mr. Wall, cautiously, "that isn't easy to say just yet. We may realize five per cent. I can't tell yet."

Five per cent! In the letter containing the offer General Wall had only hinted at two per cent. Supposing five per cent were saved out of the wreck, that on Walter's thousand shares would amount to five thousand dollars, instead of two—a very material increase.

"I am already paid for my journey by this intelligence," thought Walter. "I shouldn't wonder if I got considerably more out of it in the end."

"What was the cause of the break-up?" asked the other passenger, who seemed to be propounding questions in Walter's interest.

"Why," said General Wall, slowly, "it cost a good deal more to work the mine than we expected, and the first indications promised much better than the mine afterwards realized."

"Have they stopped working it?"

"Well, yes, for the present. But there's a prospect of selling it out to a new company with larger means. Of course, we shan't realize much. I shall be a heavy loser myself."

"You ain't often bit, I reckon, general," said his questioner.

"Well, I lay claim to a fair share of judgment," said General Wall, "but you know we are all liable to be deceived. I've lost nigh on to thirty thousand dollars, I reckon, by this affair. However, I expect to keep my head above water," he added complacently.

"'Tain't every man that can lose thirty thousand dollars and think no more of it," said the other, who appeared to act as a sort of toady to the great man.

"Why, no, I suppose not," said Wall, in the same complacent tone. "I shall be left tolerably well off, even if I do lose the full value of my stock. I've been luckier in some of my investments."

"Well, I haven't lost anything, because I hadn't got anything to lose," said his fellow-passenger; "that is, outside of my farm. Me and the old woman manage to pick up a living off that, and that's all we reckon on. There ain't much money in farmin'."

"Suppose not," said the general. "Still, Mr. Blodgett," he added, patronizingly, "you farmers are not subject to so many cares and anxieties as we men of business. You are more independent."

"It's hard work and poor pay," answered the farmer.

"If you ever have a small surplus to invest, Mr. Blodgett, I may be able to put you in the way of making something out of it."

"Thank you, General Wall. Maybe I'll remind you of it some day. I might have a little over."

"No matter how little. I can add it to some of my own funds. I should like to help you to make a little something."

"Thank you, general. I'm much obliged to you. I'll talk to Betsy about it, and maybe I'll see you again."

"Any time, Mr. Blodgett. It's no object to me, of course, but I like to see my neighbors prosperous."

They had a little more than half completed the ten miles which separated them from Portville, when a passenger got out. This left a vacancy, and John Wall, descending from his elevated perch, made his appearance at the door of the coach.

"Did you get much rain, John?" asked his father.

"My kid gloves are spoiled," grumbled John.

"Why didn't you take them off? Didn't you have another pair in your pocket?"

"I don't like to wear woolen gloves. They ain't stylish."

"I am afraid, John, you are getting a little aristocratic," said his father.

"Why shouldn't I be?" said John.

"Now I am perfectly willing to wear woolen gloves," said the general, who wanted to be popular, and so avoided putting on airs, "or no gloves at all. Kid gloves do not make a man any better."

"I don't like to ride backward," said John.

"Why not?" asked his father.

"I can't look out of the window." Then, addressing Walter, "Change seat with me, will you?"

"That is pretty cool," thought Walter.

"Thank you," he answered, coldly, "but I prefer to remain where I am."

"But I don't like to ride backward," grumbled John.

"Nor do I," returned Walter.

"I will change seats with you, John," said his father, "if you are so anxious to look out of the window."

"I'll give him my seat," said the farmer. "I don't mind riding backward; and, as for seein' out, I know the road by heart."

Without a word of thanks John took the proffered seat, and this brought him next to Walter. He eyed our hero attentively, but could not make up his mind as to his social position. Walter was well dressed in a neatly fitting suit, but the cloth was not as fine as his. John glanced at his hands, which were encased in a pair of woolen gloves. On the other hand, our hero wore a gold watch and chain—his father's—and so he might be worth noticing.

"What's your name?" asked John.

"You may call me Gilbert Howard."

"Are you going to Portville?"

"Yes."

"Where are you going to stop?"

"At the hotel, I suppose. There is one, isn't there?"

"Yes. It is called the Portville House."

"Then I shall go there."

John was about to continue his questions when Walter thought it was his turn.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"John Wall," replied John. "My father is General Wall," he added, in a tone of some importance.

"Do you live in Portville?"

"Yes."

"Where have you been?"

"On a journey," answered John, stiffly, thinking to himself that Walter was very impertinent.

"What is your business?" John asked. "Are you a peddler?"

"No," said Walter, coolly. "Are you?"

CHAPTER III

UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME

At length the stage reached its destination. With a flourish the driver drew up in front of the Portville House.

Walter got out, and taking his carpetbag, which was handed down from the roof, entered the inn. General Wall and his son retained their places, and the driver, after a short pause, set out to leave them at their own house.

Walter entered the barroom, which was also the office, and asked if he could have a room.

"You can have your choice of half a dozen," said the landlord. "We ain't crowded just at present."

"Put me in any. I am not particular as long as it's comfortable."

Walter entered himself in the hotel register as Gilbert Howard. It was the name of a schoolmate at the Essex Classical Institute, and the first one that had occurred to him. It was not altogether agreeable to Walter to pass under an assumed name. It seemed like sailing under false colors. He had, however, a great respect for the judgment of Mr. Shaw, and the circumstances seemed to require it. Under his own name he realized that it would be impossible to learn anything of Mr. Wall's fraudulent purposes. Now, he had already learned something from the conversation he had overheard in the stage.

There were five other guests besides himself. These, however, were regular boarders. On the opposite side of the table were a man of middle age and his wife. These Walter learned were Mr. and Mrs. Carver. The former was boarding at the hotel with his wife, until he could find a suitable house. There were also a clerk in one of the village stores, and his sister. His name was Jones—a young man with nothing striking about him. His sister wore ringlets, and doted on the poets, of whom she did not know much. The fifth guest was a tall young man, of sickly appearance. He was narrow-chested and had inherited a consumptive tendency. His lungs being weak, he had left Vermont for the West, in the hope that the more equable climate might be favorable to his health.

"You have a hard cough," said Walter, who sat beside him at the table.

"Yes, it seems to be getting worse," said the young

man. "I came out here, thinking I might be benefited by the change of climate."

"Then you are not a native of Wisconsin?"

"I was born and brought up in Vermont."

"And I am from the State of New York."

"Indeed. Have you just arrived from the East?"

"It is several months since I left home. I have been traveling in Ohio."

"I am glad to meet one who comes from near home. Will you come up into my room after supper?"

"I shall be glad to do so. I have no friends or acquaintances here, and I might be rather dull by myself."

"What may I call you?"

"Gilbert Howard."

"My name is Allen Barclay."

"Have you boarded at this hotel long?"

"Ever since I came to Portville. That is four months since. I am a teacher, and keep the grammar school in the village."

Walter was glad to hear this. He felt that he should take more pleasure in his companion's society since their tastes were probably somewhat similar. Though his life for a few months had been an active one, he had by no means lost his relish for study. In case he should realize five per cent on the mining shares, this would amount to five thousand dollars, a sum with which he would be justified in continuing his preparation for college, and a four years' collegiate course. He estimated that his expenses as a student would not average more than five hundred dollars a year, and as the interest would amount to considerable—three hundred dollars the first year—he concluded that he could educate himself, and have considerably more than half his capital left to start in life with, when his education was complete. I mean, of course, his college

education, for one's education is never complete, and those who attain eminence in any branch confess themselves perpetual learners.

"This way, please," said Allen Barclay, leading the way out of the dining room.

His room was on the second floor, and though hotel chambers are in general—at any rate, in country towns—the reverse of pleasant or comfortable, this room looked both. There was an open fire in the grate which blazed pleasantly. Before the fire a cosy armchair was drawn up. Next to it was a table covered with books. Two or three pictures hung on the walls, and books and pictures do a great deal to give a homelike appearance to an apartment.

"You look very comfortable here, Mr. Barclay," said Walter.

"Yes, I have made the room pleasant. The books and pictures I brought with me, and the armchair I bought in the village. I am sensitive to cold, and so I have a fire lighted just before I come home in the afternoon."

"Have you any scholars in Latin?" asked Walter, seeing a copy of "Cæsar's Commentaries" on the table.

"One—John Wall, the son of General Wall, the most prominent man in Portville."

"I have already made the young gentleman's acquaintance," said Walter, smiling.

"Indeed!" returned Allen Barclay, in surprise.

"I met him in the stage. I don't think we were either of us very favorably impressed with the other."

"What you say does not surprise me," said the teacher. "John is a thoroughly selfish, disagreeable boy, with a very lofty idea of himself and his position as the son of a rich man. He considers himself entitled to the best of everything. I am glad you did not give way to him."

"I am too independent for that," answered Walter. "I don't allow myself to be imposed upon if I can help it, though I hope I am not often disobliging."

"You had no call to yield to him to-day."

"So I thought. What sort of a scholar is he?"

"John Wall? Very poor. He will never set the river on fire with his learning or talents. In fact, if he were a better scholar, I might feel different about teaching him. I have only had an academy education, and have not been beyond Cæsar myself. However, I have no trouble in keeping ahead of John."

Here Mr. Barclay was seized with a violent attack of coughing, which seemed to distress him.

"I don't think I shall be able to keep on teaching," he said, when the fit was over. "If I could only find some one to take my place as teacher, I would leave at once. It is the middle of the term, and I don't want the school closed."

An idea came to Walter. He was a good English scholar—had been as far in Latin as his companion—and was probably qualified to teach any scholars he was likely to have. It was desirable that he should have something to do, which would serve as a good excuse for remaining in Portville. Why should he not offer to supply Barclay's place, since he thought it necessary to resign?

CHAPTER IV

PORTVILLE

"How many scholars have you, Mr. Barclay?" inquired Walter.

"About fifty."

"How do they vary in age?"

"From ten to eighteen. I have three boys, or young men I might almost call them, of eighteen, two of seventeen, and three girls of sixteen and upwards."

"Are they hard to manage?"

"The older ones? No; the most troublesome age is from thirteen to fifteen. Those who are older generally come to school for improvement, and are inclined to obey the rules of the school."

"Mr. Barclay," said he, after a moment's thought, "do you think I would be too young to undertake the school?"

"You look pretty young," answered the teacher. "You are not yet seventeen, I suppose?"

"I am not yet sixteen."

"That is pretty young for a teacher. But then I was not much older than that when I commenced teaching."

"How did you get along?"

"Pretty well. I got the good will of the scholars, and they saw that I wanted to help them on as fast as possible."

"I think I know enough to pass the examination," said Walter, "and I am in search of some business to employ my time. If you want to give up the school, and recommend me to try it, I will offer myself to the school trustees."

"What sort of a fellow are you, Mr. Howard—excusing the term I accidentally used—but have you got grit? Do you generally succeed in what you undertake?"

"I think I do," said Walter, smiling. "I wouldn't give it up, unless I was obliged to."

"I asked the question," said the young man, "because grit weighs heavily in this world. I have noticed that successful men are generally plucky, which is about the same thing."

"I haven't had much chance to tell yet," said Walter. "Until a few months since everything was done for me, my father being rich; then I was thrown upon my own resources, and so far I have been successful."

Here he gave an account of his adventures as book agent, and detailed the experiences of the night he passed in the cabin in the woods. But one thing he thought it best not to mention—his father's business connection with General Wall. He would have been as willing to confide in Allen Barclay as any one, but he thought his best course would be to work out his plans by himself.

"Are teachers so scarce about here," asked Walter, "that you could not find a substitute?"

"No, there is a good supply of teachers who can teach the ordinary English branches; but General Wall insists upon a teacher who can teach Latin, chiefly on account of his son, John."

"Is John Wall the only boy who studies Latin in school?"

"No, there is a class of four beginners, who have just commenced reading easy sentences."

"I don't claim to be a very good Latin scholar," said Walter, "but from what you say I think I know enough to teach John Wall."

"How much have you read?"

"I was in the sixth book of Cæsar when I left the Essex Classical Institute."

"Then you have read more than I have, and I have had no difficulty in teaching John. He is just commencing the second book."

"I think I shouldn't have any trouble, especially as I read the Latin Reader through before commencing Cæsar. My father meant me to enter Columbia College."

"I will tell you what you had better do, Mr. Howard," said the young man. "Come and visit the school tomorrow, and stay all the forenoon. The Latin recitations come then. Thus you will see the scholars, and can form a better idea of whether you would like to undertake it."

This struck Walter as an excellent suggestion.

"That will be much the best way," he replied. "I suppose the school commences at nine o'clock."

"Yes, that is the usual time all over the country, I think."

Walter spent quite a pleasant evening with his new acquaintance. At half past nine he rose to withdraw.

"Don't be in a hurry, Mr. Howard," said Allen.

"Thank you, I don't think I have been. I should have felt quite lonely but for your kind invitation. I feel a little tired with traveling, and shall go to bed as soon as I get to my room."

"Good night, then. We shall meet at breakfast, I suppose?"

"Yes, unless I oversleep myself," said Walter, laughing.

Walter found his bed a comfortable one, and slept soundly. In the morning he felt thoroughly refreshed, and was prepared to do justice to a plentiful breakfast.

"At what time do you start?" he asked of Allen Barclay, who was again seated next to him.

"At fifteen minutes of nine. The schoolhouse is only five minutes distant, and this allows me plenty of time."

"It will seem like going to school again myself. I can almost fancy myself back again at the institute."

"What do you say to a little walk before it is time to go to school?" asked the teacher.

"I shall be very glad to accompany you, Mr. Barclay."

Portville contained about two thousand inhabitants. Of these the majority lived in the village, while perhaps two fifths were scattered about within a radius of three miles. It was rather a flourishing place on the whole, and most of the houses were neat and comfortable. There were several shops or stores, of different kinds; for farmers came from ten miles around to trade in Portville.

"It seems like a pleasant village," said Walter to his companion.

"Yes," said the teacher, "the town is pleasant, and I have found most of the people pleasant also. I should be very well satisfied to remain if my health would allow."

"Whose house is that?" asked Walter, pointing to a residence more pretentious than he had yet seen.

"That is the nicest house in town, and it belongs to the man who is the richest man in town."

"General Wall?" said Walter, inquiringly.

"The same."

"How did he gain his wealth?"

"He has been connected with mines, banks, real estate speculations, and, in fact, with whatever has money in it. He is a politician, and I hear that he hopes some day to go to Congress. In fact, he is a pushing man."

"Is his son like him?"

"He will never be as popular as his father. General Wall may be as selfish as his son, but he is too wise to

show it as openly. John is disagreeable by nature. He wouldn't trouble himself to appear agreeable."

"From what I saw of him," said Walter, "I should think it would be a good deal of trouble for him to be agreeable."

While they were thus speaking, General Wall opened the front door of his house, and they met him at his front gate. He bowed, as Walter thought, with an air of condescension, and said to the teacher, "Good morning, Mr. Barclay. You are taking an early walk, I see."

"Not very early, sir. I always take a short walk before school."

"And how is the school? Is John getting on well with his Latin?"

"Tolerably well, General Wall."

"Push him, Mr. Barclay, push him! I want my son to have a good education."

"I will do my best."

CHAPTER V

A LATIN EXERCISE

It was five minutes of nine when Allen Barclay, accompanied by Walter, approached the schoolhouse. It was a plain wooden building of two stories, painted white. Beside it was a good-sized playground, on which from a dozen to twenty boys were engaged in a game of ball. As Walter saw the ball flying across the field, he felt a strong impulse to join in the game. When a student at the Essex Institute he was considered quite a superior

player. But since his departure he had not joined in a game. Now as he witnessed the game of the Portville boys, he wished himself again a scholar, and a sharer in their fun.

"Do you ever play ball, Mr. Barclay?" he asked.

"No; the physician has forbidden all violent exercise as likely to be injurious to my health. It increases my cough. For that matter, however, I don't think I should play if I were able. I tried it sometimes as a boy, but I never succeeded very well. Do you play?"

"I used to play considerably, but for several months I have not touched a bat."

Among those who were watching the game, Walter noticed John Wall. John was more carefully dressed than any of the other boys, who were playing in their shirt sleeves.

"That is John Wall, isn't it?" asked Walter. "Does he play ball?"

"Not often. He isn't much of a player. Besides, he doesn't like to run the risk of soiling his clothes. He is something of a dandy."

"So I should think. He wore kid gloves the other day in the rain."

"He is partial to kid gloves. He thinks they distinguish him as the son of a gentleman from his more plebeian companions. But come in, Mr. Howard."

Walter followed the teacher into the schoolroom. It was about forty feet by fifty in size, and well supplied with desks. The girls sat upon one side, the boys on the other. Some were already in their seats, while others were grouped near the teacher's desk. They separated on the entrance of Allen Barclay, and repaired to their seats, not without curious glances at Walter.

There was a larger desk for the teacher, with a chair

drawn up behind it. There was another chair in the room, which the teacher drew up near his own.

"That is the company chair, Mr. Howard," said he, smiling. "Will you occupy it?"

"Thank you," said Walter.

"Julius, will you ring the bell?" said Mr. Barclay.

A boy of twelve advanced to the teacher's desk, and took a large bell, with which he went out into the entry and rang with emphasis, as if he enjoyed it. Soon, in answer to the sonorous summons, came trooping in the boys from the playground, flushed with exercise, some of them drawing on their coats as they walked to their desks. John Wall alone looked as if he were fresh from a band-box, his hair plastered down with pomatum, and his clothes innocent of dust or wrinkle.

"If he cared less for his appearance he would have a good deal more fun," thought Walter, judging from a boy's standpoint.

At last all were in their seats. After the preliminary exercises, the recitations commenced. The first were in arithmetic. Walter listened attentively to the recitations of the different classes, and concluded that he would have no difficulty in instructing any of them. The mathematical teacher at the Essex Institute was well fitted for his duties, and had a simple way of explaining the principles of arithmetic. Allen Barclay was deficient in the art of teaching. Walter felt desirous of coming to his assistance, but of course could not do so.

"I believe I should like to teach," he thought.

"The class in Cæsar," said the teacher.

John rose slowly from his seat, and, book in hand, advanced pompously to the bench occupied by classes reciting. There was no other scholar so far advanced in Latin, and he looked down from his superior place of knowl-

edge with calm contempt upon his fellow-pupils. His manner, as he advanced to recite, seemed to say, "Look at me! I am going to recite in Cæsar!"

"Where does your lesson commence, Mr. Wall?"

"At the beginning of the second book."

"Very well. You may read and translate."

John read the first line as follows, pronouncing according to a method of his own, *Cum esset Cæsar in citeriore Gallia in hibernis*, and furnished the following translation:

"He might be with Cæsar in hither Gaul in the winter."

"I don't think that is quite correct, Mr. Wall," said the teacher.

"It makes good sense," said John, pertly.

"It doesn't make the right sense. *Cum* is not a preposition, and if it were it could not govern *Cæsar* in the nominative case."

"I don't see what else you can make of it."

"It is a conjunction, and means 'when,' 'Cæsar' being the subject of the sentence. Then there is another mistake. *Hibernis* means winter quarters, not winter. The clause is to be translated, 'When Cæsar was in winter quarters in hither Gaul.' Proceed."

"*Ita uti supra demonstravimus*," continued John; "so have we shown to be used above."

"Do you think that makes good sense, Mr. Wall?"

"I didn't quite understand it."

"*Uti*," explained the teacher, "is not from the verb *utor*. It means 'as' here. Translate, 'just as we have shown above.'"

John continued: "*Crebri ad eum rumores afferebantur* —frequent persons brought rumors to him."

"I am afraid, Mr. Wall, I must correct you again," said the teacher. "*Crebri* agrees with *rumores*, and the

verb is passive. How, then, will you translate the clause?"

"Frequent rumors were brought to him," answered John, correctly, for a wonder.

"*Literisque item Labieni certior fiebat*—and letters made the same Labienus more sure."

"No less than four mistakes, Mr. Wall. What part of speech is *item*?"

"A pronoun."

"What does it mean?"

"The same."

"You need not go on. You have mistaken the word for *idem*. It means 'likewise.' Is *literis* nominative?"

"No, sir; it is dative."

"It is ablative, and *fiebat* cannot be rendered actively. Without specifying all the mistakes, I will translate for you, 'and likewise was informed by the letters of Labienus.' *Certior fiebat* means, literally, 'was made more certain'; but we cannot always translate literally."

It would be tedious to follow John through his blundering recitation. Walter could not help thinking that Mr. Barclay made a mistake in merely correcting the errors, without adding directions by which a repetition of them might be avoided; and he resolved, if John should become his pupil, to drill him thoroughly in the elementary principles of the language.

"What do you think of that recitation?" asked the teacher, in a low voice, as John took his seat.

"Very poor," answered Walter.

"I am afraid he will never make a Latin scholar. I will now call up the other class in Latin."

This was a class of beginners, and acquitted itself much more creditably than the student in Cæsar. It might be supposed that John would have been mortified by his mis-

takes; but it was enough for him that he could report himself as studying Cæsar.

"Well, Mr. Howard," said Mr. Barclay, as they were returning homeward, "do you think you would like to take the school?"

"I will take it if the trustees will accept me," said Walter, promptly.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDED

"If you really think you would be willing to take my place," said Allen Barclay, "I will see at once if I can obtain your appointment."

"I am not in any hurry to commence, Mr. Barclay, though I may be in a hurry to get through."

"That is my feeling now. The sooner I can be free, the better it will be for my health. The climate is getting worse for me with the approach of winter."

"Who are the trustees?"

"General Wall is the principal one. Besides him there is the village doctor—Dr. Owens—but he has so much to attend to that he has very little to do with the schools. Then there is Squire Griffiths, but he is a man of no education. General Wall is the only one at all qualified for the position. Last year the minister belonged to the board, but he got unpopular by taking sides in a local dispute, and was left off."

"I suppose teachers are examined by the trustees."

"Yes, but the examinations don't amount to much."

"I think I can pass pretty well. I have not been out of school long enough to forget my studies."

"I have no doubt you'll be all right. I'll call on the general this evening."

Accordingly, Allen Barclay called at General Wall's residence about an hour after supper.

General Wall soon made his appearance.

"Good evening, Mr. Barclay," he said, in his usual patronizing way, "I am glad to see you. Nothing wrong at the school, I hope?"

"No, sir; there is nothing wrong at the school; but it is about the school I have come to speak."

"Any advice, ahem! which I can give, will be freely tendered. This is, of course, incumbent upon me in the official position which I hold, but I feel an additional interest as a parent."

"I am afraid, General Wall, that I shall be compelled to give up the school!"

"What!" exclaimed General Wall, in surprise. "Have you any cause of dissatisfaction? Are you not content with the salary?"

"I don't complain of that, but I find that the climate does not agree with my health."

"Indeed! Are you feeling unwell?"

"My lungs are weak, and I find that my cough is becoming daily more troublesome. I think it will be best, therefore, for me to give up teaching, and go elsewhere."

"I am sorry to hear this, Mr. Barclay. Don't you think you can keep along to the end of the term—six weeks, I believe?"

"I don't think it would be wise, General Wall."

"We shall find it difficult to fill your place. We could get teachers, but we want one who is competent to teach

Latin. I want my son John to go on in the same liberal course which I have projected for him," said the general.

"It is on this account that I have delayed mentioning the matter, but now I can recommend a substitute."

"Indeed! May I inquire who it is?"

"You perhaps observed the young man who was walking with me this morning when we met."

"I saw a boy with you, Mr. Barclay. Surely you do not allude to him."

"I know he is young, General Wall, but I have reason to think he is a good scholar."

"I am afraid," said General Wall, dubiously, "that his extreme youth would prevent his succeeding."

"I was not much older when I commenced teaching, but I got along well."

"Is the young man desirous of teaching? Is that the object of his coming here?"

"No; he was not certain that there was an opening. Being well educated, he thinks he might like to be a teacher."

"I should prefer that you would remain, Mr. Barclay."

"Thank you, General Wall; I like teaching, and if my health would allow of it, I would be glad to continue; as it is, I must resign at any rate. I think you had better try this young man."

"Were you previously acquainted with him, Mr. Barclay?"

"No, sir; but from what I have seen of him, I have formed a favorable opinion of him."

"He was my fellow-passenger on the stage last evening."

"So he told me."

"John and he didn't quite agree, but I dare say John

was in fault. John is a spirited boy, Mr. Barclay, and is disposed to stand up for his rights."

"And sometimes for what are not his rights," thought the teacher.

"As a lawyer, it won't do him any harm to be a little tenacious."

Allen Barclay thought the term tenacious rather a mild one to express John's overbearing and grasping tendency.

At this moment John Wall entered the room.

"Don't you see Mr. Barclay, John?" said his father.

John nodded carelessly, for he thought the teacher of a country school, earning a salary of forty dollars a month, by no means his equal; but he was a gentleman, which John Wall was not, and probably never would be.

"Good evening, John," said the teacher.

"Evening," was all that could be heard in reply.

"John is, I believe, your most advanced pupil, Mr. Barclay," said General Wall, complacently.

"He is further advanced in Latin than any other."

"I referred to that. I am not acquainted with Latin myself, but I consider it a highly important branch."

"A good deal of benefit may be derived from the study."

"I should be sorry to have John discontinue it, now that he is so far advanced. However, the young man you speak of understands it well, you say."

"Yes, sir; at least I have every reason to think so."

This remark caught John's attention. Who was the young man, and what connection could his scholarship have with his continuing Latin?

"What are you speaking of?" he inquired of his father.

"Mr. Barclay is thinking of giving up teaching, John,

on account of his health. I was speaking of the young man whom he has recommended in his place."

"Who is it?"

"You remember the young man who was in the stage yesterday?"

"What! is he a teacher? Why, he is only a boy!"

"He is rather young, but Mr. Barclay tells me he is an excellent scholar, especially in Latin. However, we shall examine him to-morrow, and see if he is qualified."

"He can't keep order. He is only a boy."

"If the scholars behave themselves, and he knows enough to teach, I don't see why he should not succeed. I hope, John, you do not propose to make any trouble."

"No," said John, slowly, "but the other fellows will."

"Then," said Mr. Barclay, "you can exert your influence to prevent them."

John did not like the idea of having Walter for a teacher. Mr. Barclay was worldly wise, and had shown John some subserviency on account of his father's position. John had a secret feeling that Walter would not do this, and he determined to make trouble.

CHAPTER VII

A NOVEL SITUATION

"You are to be examined to-morrow evening at General Wall's, Mr. Howard," reported Allen Barclay to Walter.

"What did he say about me as your successor?"

"He thought you were too young. But I told him

that I should resign at any rate, and he had better try you."

"Will the examination be very difficult?"

"Not if the trustees confine themselves to what they know themselves," answered Barclay, laughing. "Squire Griffiths will probably ask a question or two in geography and spelling. They won't be hard."

"It might be a good plan to study a little to-morrow," suggested Walter.

"You are welcome to sit in my room, and use my books, if you wish, Mr. Howard."

"Thank you. Did you see John Wall?"

"Yes; he was at home."

"What did he say?" asked Walter, curiously.

"I hope it won't hurt your feelings if I tell you, but he did not seem in favor of your appointment. He seems to think that you will not succeed. Are you frightened?"

"I shall not expect a very cordial welcome from John," said Walter; "but if that is all the opposition I am to encounter, I shan't trouble myself much."

"You have never inquired the salary," said Barclay.

Walter had not thought of this. He desired the school because it would give him an excuse to remain in Portville without suspicions as to his real motive.

"There isn't much chance of a teacher growing rich in Portville," said Mr. Barclay. "All I receive is forty dollars per month, and I pay five dollars a week board. That is below the usual price, but they make allowance at the hotel for my small income."

The next day Walter, according to the teacher's invitation, installed himself in his room, and spent the greater part of the day in a hasty review of the English branches. By the time Allen Barclay returned from school he had completed his review.

"Well, Mr. Howard, how have you spent the time?"

"In literary pursuits, Mr. Barclay. I feel pretty confident of passing the ordeal. What time had I better go to General Wall's?"

"It is best to be punctual. I think they will be ready for you by seven o'clock."

Seven o'clock found Walter knocking at the door of the chairman of the school trustees. He felt tolerably composed. The undertaking he contemplated might well be formidable to one so young and inexperienced. But Walter was not a timid boy.

"Good evening, Mr. Howard," said the chairman. "Mr. Barclay has mentioned your name to me in connection with the school, which he is compelled to resign."

"Yes, sir. He thinks he must give up teaching."

"You have never taught before, I think."

"No, sir."

"You are acquainted with the Latin language, I presume."

"Yes, sir."

"My son, whom you saw in the stage, is studying Latin. Do you feel competent to teach so advanced a pupil?"

"I don't think I shall find any difficulty in doing so," said Walter, who felt strongly inclined to laugh.

"My son is studying Cæsar."

"Yes, sir; I am familiar with that author."

"I am glad to hear it. We should have little difficulty in filling Mr. Barclay's place, but for requiring a knowledge of Latin. For example, there is an experienced teacher in the next town, Epaminondas Smith, who has been teaching for fourteen years, and would be glad of the place, but he only teaches English branches. He has a great reputation for management, stands six feet in his

stockings. I went into his school once. I tell you, Mr. Howard, the boys were as still as mice. They knew what they would get if they broke the rules."

Walter was large for his age; still he only measured five feet six inches in height. While General Wall was speaking, he could not help observing that he was comparing unfavorably his small physical proportions with those of the redoubted Epaminondas Smith. He might have felt discouraged, but he remembered that one of the most effective teachers at the Essex Institute was an inch shorter than himself, and probably weighed no more.

"Is the school hard to manage?" he asked.

"No, I should say not. Mr. Barclay has had no trouble that I have heard of. Still he is an experienced teacher."

"That is an advantage, of course," said Walter.

"I have spoken to my fellow-trustees, Dr. Owens and Squire Griffiths, Mr. Howard, and we have determined to give you a trial; that is, if you pass a satisfactory examination. I am afraid the doctor won't be able to come this evening. However, he said he was willing to agree to anything the squire and myself might decide upon. Have you long been in the West, Mr. Howard?"

"No, sir; I have never before been as far West as Wisconsin. I spent the last three months in Ohio, however."

"We hardly call Ohio a Western State. We always look upon it as in the East."

"The West is a large country," remarked Walter.

"It is very large, and has vast resources. Its prairies are immense in extent, its rivers are numerous and long, its mines are the richest in the world," said General Wall, rather oratorically.

"I should like to inquire all about the Great Metropolitan Mining Company," thought Walter.

"Do all the mines pay well?" he asked.

"Those that are well managed do for the most part. I am myself connected with one or two, which we hope will pay in the end. One of them has thus far been unsuccessful, but it only needs reorganization and improved management to pay."

"I wish I knew whether he meant the Metropolitan mine," thought Walter.

The door opened at this point, and John Wall entered.

"Here is a letter, father," he said.

His father turned the envelope in such a way that Walter saw the postmark, and with no little interest recognized it as Willoughby, N. Y. He also recognized the handwriting as that of Mr. Shaw. It was doubtless the letter in which the lawyer declined to close at once with the offer of two per cent for Mr. Conrad's claims. Walter was confirmed in this supposition by seeing a look of dissatisfaction upon the face of General Wall. The temporary refusal would necessarily interfere with his plans for the organization of a new company, who should enrich themselves at the expense of the original owners.

"Excuse me, Mr. Howard," said General Wall, "but I recognize this as an important business letter. This is my son, as you doubtless know."

"Good evening," said Walter, politely, offering his hand.

John took the proffered hand coldly, muttering "Good evening" in a not very gracious manner.

At this moment a knock was heard at the door.

"That must be Squire Griffiths," said General Wall.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL TRUSTEE

Squire Griffiths was a small man, with stiff gray hair, which he brushed in such a manner that it stood up straight in front. It might have been to increase his apparent height, or again it might have been regarded as adding to the dignity of his presence, for the squire had by no means a contemptible opinion of himself.

"Good evening, Squire Griffiths," said General Wall. "This is Mr. Howard, whom Mr. Barclay has recommended."

Squire Griffiths drew a pair of glasses from his pocket, and, adjusting them in a leisurely manner, scrutinized the face of our hero.

"How old be you?" he inquired, unceremoniously.

"Nearly sixteen," answered Walter, a little embarrassed by the abruptness of the question.

"Seems to me you're enterin' on the teacher's purfession a leetle airly," remarked the squire.

"Yes, sir, I am rather young," answered Walter, "but I shall do my best to succeed."

"Of course," said the squire. "I expected you'd say that. Why, some of the scholars could thrash you easy."

"Perhaps so," said Walter, smiling; "but I shouldn't let them do it without resisting."

"You look as if you'd got some grit, to be sure," said the squire, reflectively. "Ever taught afore?"

"No, sir."

"Of course, experience would be desirable in a teacher," interrupted the general; "but everybody has to begin,

and some succeed from the first. Mr. Howard is a good Latin scholar, and that is in his favor."

"I don't think much of Latin," said the squire. "If a man knows how to talk English, that's as much as he actilly needs."

"I don't quite agree with you there, Squire Griffiths," said the general. "My boy John is reading Cæsar's works, and I want him to be a fine Latin scholar."

"There's a lot of new-fangled things come up since my day," said the squire. "My Amandy says she wants to study botany. I asked her if it made the flowers smell any sweeter to know about 'em. Then there's algebrey, or some sich nonsense."

"By the way, Mr. Howard, can you teach algebra?" asked General Wall.

"Yes, sir."

"John has not commenced it yet, but if you would advise it, I will buy him a book."

"I should think he was old enough to study it."

General Wall was evidently disposed to employ Walter.

"Well, Squire Griffiths, shall we proceed to the examination?" he suggested.

"I haven't no objection, general. You may start, and I'll come in with a few questions bimeby."

"I will ask you to read first, Mr. Howard."

The book chanced to be an historical work. Walter read it easily and fluently for half a page.

"I think that will do," said General Wall. "Are you satisfied, Squire Griffiths?"

"Pretty fair," said the squire, patronizingly; "but there was one word which I think Mr. Howard pronounced a leetle wrong."

"Which word was it?" inquired Walter, somewhat surprised.

"Will you read that last sentence over again, Mr. Howard?" said the squire.

"Certainly, sir," and Walter read as follows:

"The army of Napoleon suffered less from the military forces which Russia opposed to him, than from the frigidity of the climate."

"It's one of the last words," said the squire, "what you call frigidity."

"Is not that correct?" asked Walter.

"I always say frig-i-dity," said the squire, giving a hard sound to the letter "g" and emphasizing the last syllable but one.

Walter found it difficult not to laugh, and General Wall said, "I think, squire, that yours is the old-fashioned pronunciation, and that Mr. Howard's is now more in use."

"Maybe you are right," said the squire. "For my part, I like the old ways best. Still I suppose people in gineral will like the new-fangled ways."

"Will you ask a few words in spelling, Squire Griffiths?" General Wall said.

Squire Griffiths readjusted his spectacles, and, opening the book, gave out in a loud voice:

"Ridiculous," emphasizing the third syllable.

Walter spelled it correctly.

The next word the squire pronounced spettikle; but Walter, inferring that he meant spectacle, spelled that word.

Here the squire looked off the book, and gave out the word Philadelphia.

"P-h-i-l, phil, a, phila, d-e-l, del, philadel, p-h-i-a, Philadelphia."

"Is that right, General Wall?" asked the squire.

"I believe so."

"I've always spelled it p-h-y, phy," said the squire.

"I happen to have a Philadelphia paper here," said General Wall. "We'll look at that."

The result, of course, was to decide the matter in Walter's favor.

"I think the other way must be right, too," said the squire. "I've got a nephew there, and that's the way he always writes it. On the whole, I'm satisfied with the young man's readin' and spellin'. Suppose we proceed to geography."

"Very well, Mr. Howard, will you bound Russia?"

Walter did so promptly.

"Very well; that is right, I believe, Squire Griffiths."

"I believe he didn't mention Italy, on the west."

"Italy is at some distance from Russia, squire," said General Wall. "Perhaps you are thinking of Turkey."

"Maybe I was. Did he say Turkey?"

"Yes, he mentioned it. Where are the Alps, Mr. Howard?"

"In Switzerland, chiefly."

"Correct."

"Which is the longest river in the United States?" asked the squire.

"The Mississippi."

"Very good," said the squire.

Squire Griffiths now essayed a more ambitious flight.

"Where are the Amazon Mountains?" he asked.

"The Amazon Mountains?" repeated Walter, puzzled.

"Yes. Where are they?"

"I believe the Amazon is a river, Squire Griffiths," suggested General Wall, with suavity. "You are probably thinking of the Andes Mountains."

"Yes, I was," said the squire, a little discomposed, for he did not know where the Andes Mountains were, and was surprised to learn that the Amazon was a river.

"In South America," said Walter.

"Correct, is it not?" asked General Wall.

"Quite so," said the squire.

"And what great desert is in Africa?"

"The desert of Sahara."

"That is just the question I was going to ask," said the squire, who felt a little jealous of the more prominent part General Wall was taking in the examination. He had never before heard of Sahara.

"I have asked all the questions I wished," said General Wall. "I leave you to finish the examination in geography."

"Mr. Howard, where is Cape Horn?" asked the squire, straightening himself up and clearing his throat.

"At the southern point of South America," said Walter.

"That will do, General Wall. Mr. Howard appears to be very well posted in geography. It was always a favorite study of mine, and I am gratified to find him so perficient."

"Mr. Howard," said General Wall, "we are satisfied with the result of the examination. We will take Mr. Barclay's word for your being a good Latin scholar. We authorize you to commence teaching as soon as he gives up the school."

"Just so," said the squire. "I hope you'll get along with the big boys."

"I will do my best," answered our hero.

As he walked home, he could not help wondering how such an ignoramus as Squire Griffiths came to be selected as a school trustee.

CHAPTER IX

THE FASCINATING MISS JONES

"WELL," said Allen Barclay, as Walter entered his room; "how did you get along, Mr. Howard?"

"I came off with flying colors. Squire Griffiths asked me where the Amazon Mountains were!"

"Squire Griffiths is not quite so wise as Solomon. When shall you be ready to commence?"

"I will go in on Monday morning."

"Very well. Then I will pack my trunk and prepare to leave Portville by the 3 P. M. train."

"I wish you were going to remain here; I shall be lonely."

"Thank you for the compliment. However," he added, in a lighter tone, "I leave behind me one who will solace you for my loss."

"I don't know to whom you refer," said Walter.

"To whom could I refer but Miss Jones?"

"The young lady with ringlets," said Walter, smiling. "I didn't know you were interested in that quarter."

"You flatter me. She professes to have literary tastes, and supposes that I am gifted in the same way. When you ascend my vacant throne her attention will be transferred to you."

"You enchant me," said Walter, amused. "But I am afraid I look too young to attract the young lady's attention."

"I will prove to the contrary. Do you see that note?"

Mr. Barclay held up the note and read in pompous tones the contents, as follows:

"Miss 'Melinda Athanasia Jones presents her compli-

ments to Mr. Barclay and his friend, Mr. Howard, and hopes they will do her the honor to spend Saturday evening at her bower, that she may enjoy the rare pleasure of literary converse with congenial spirits."

"Quite a high-flown invitation," said Walter. "What does she mean by her bower?"

"Only her apartment in the hotel."

"I see by the letters R. S. V. P., which she puts at the bottom, that she expects a reply."

"I am not much used to a social etiquette. I am ashamed to say I didn't know what the letters meant."

"They stand for *Respondez, s'il vous plait*—Answer, if you please."

"I will remember that the next time a fashionable young lady writes to me."

"I suppose you have not answered the invitation then?"

"No; I did not understand the letters."

"Will you allow me to draft the answer, Mr. Barclay?"

"I shall be very glad to have you do so."

Walter sat down and dashed off the following reply:

"Mr. Barclay and Mr. Howard are deeply indebted to Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones for her kind invitation, and will have pleasure in visiting her Amaranthine bower at the time appointed, and trust that they may be inspired by the muses, whose favorite haunt it is, to hold appropriate converse with the fair occupant, exchanging thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

"What do you think of that?" asked Walter.

"You have beaten her with her own weapons," said Barclay, laughing. "She will be delighted. I think you had better answer the epistle yourself, Mr. Howard. I feel a little modest about taking the credit of so high-flown a production."

"Let it go in my handwriting then. It purports to be from us both."

"Now how shall we get it to the young lady?" he asked.

"Edward, the errand boy, will call at the door in a few minutes to bring back my clean clothes from the wash."

In fifteen minutes Edward tapped at the door. He brought in the bundle of clothes, and was about going out, when Allen Barclay intrusted the note to him with directions.

"Leave it this evening," he said.

"All right!" said Edward, with a grin of intelligence.

"That fellow will report that I am courting Miss Jones," said Barclay, laughing as he went out.

"I thought he looked knowing."

"Yes; he thinks he is very sharp. However, I shan't trouble myself much about what reports he puts in circulation."

"I am safe enough," said Walter.

"I have seen boys of seventeen—I beg pardon, I should say young men—who looked no older than you."

"I saw false moustaches advertised in some paper the other day for seventy-five cents. Don't you think it would be well to provide myself with one?"

"There might be a little danger of its slipping off some day, and that might prove awkward, you know."

"Have you any idea as to Miss Jones's age?"

"I see you are getting interested in her. Evidently her ringlets have done the business for you."

"I deny the charge," said Walter. "I only felt a little curious."

"I can gratify your curiosity. Miss Jones calls herself twenty-one, but her brother, who is very apt to make blunders, made some allusion one day fixing her age at twenty-

seven. I thought she would have boxed his ears. She took occasion the next day to refer to herself as twenty-one; but, as the boys say, it was too thin."

"What sort of an evening shall we have?"

"Very literary. Perhaps Miss Jones will read us one of her poems."

"Did she ever have any of her verses printed?"

"She frequently hints that she has appeared in print, but she never showed me any of her printed poems. I fear editors have dropped her contributions into the waste basket."

"After all you have said, I feel considerably curious to pass an evening at the bower. But I am afraid the remembrance of the intellectual evening before you will give you an added pang in leaving Portville."

"I can stand it," said Barclay, smiling.

"True, you can correspond. I did not think of that."

"Nor I. Mr. Howard, I could not respond to her letters in fitting language. You could do it better than I."

CHAPTER X

MR. BARCLAY'S FAREWELL

MR. BARCLAY spent a part of Saturday in packing his trunk, preparatory to leaving Portville on Monday. Walter, having no schoolbooks of his own at hand, purchased those of his predecessor, and arranged to move into his room and receive board on the same terms. Saturday was a half holiday. As it would be his last day in school, Mr. Barclay took occasion to make the following remarks:

"My friends and scholars: It may be a surprise to some of you when I say that this day terminates my connection

with you as teacher. I found some time since that the climate of Wisconsin was unfavorable to my health. Still I didn't like to leave you until some one should be secured who could take my place at once. Mr. Howard, who is now present, will take my place on Monday. He is thoroughly qualified for the position, and if you coöperate with him in his efforts for your advantage, I am sure that you will have no reason to regret the change of teachers. For myself, I cannot leave you without great sorrow, since I may never meet any of you again. I thank you for your unvarying good conduct during the terms thus far, and hope that things may continue as pleasantly after I leave you."

While Mr. Barclay was speaking, many curious glances were cast in the direction of the new teacher. Walter flushed as he met the united gaze. He felt that he had undertaken a "big job," but his courage rose with the occasion.

"Won't you say a few words to the scholars, Mr. Howard?" said Barclay, in a low voice.

Whereupon Walter rose, and, after the first slight embarrassment, spoke as follows: "As Mr. Barclay has told you, I have agreed to take his place as your teacher on Monday. I did not come to Portville with the intention of teaching, but, finding that your teacher wished to be relieved, I have consented to try to fill his place. It is so short a time since I was a student myself that I think I know what you expect in a teacher. I hope we shall be mutually pleased with each other."

This speech produced a favorable impression upon the scholars—that is, upon most of them. There were a few who were disposed to regard Walter with contempt, as a boy who would be quite incompetent to manage them.

When school was over, Mr. Barclay said: "If the schol-

ars will remain a few minutes, I shall be glad to introduce them individually to Mr. Howard."

John Wall did not come up; but then he had already made acquaintance with Walter, so that it did not seem necessary. Still, had he been friendly, he would have advanced with the rest instead of standing aloof, eying the scene askance.

The greeting between Walter and the scholars was generally formal enough. He had to say very much the same thing to each, and it would have become monotonous if he had not closely scruntinized each face, partly that he might associate it with the name, partly to form some little idea of the character of the boy or girl. There were two faces which he particularly noticed. One attracted him. It was a boy with dark hair, and a thoughtful, intelligent expression, whom Mr. Barclay had already spoken of to him as the best scholar in school. His name was Alfred Clinton.

The other scholar whom Walter noticed was of very different personal appearance. His hair was red, his face freckled, and his expression stolid; but there was something that indicated an unusual degree of stubbornness. He was sixteen, and, though about Walter's height, was more heavily molded, and looked stronger. There was a peculiar smile on his face as he took Walter's offered hand, and muttered something in return to the young teacher's greeting. Walter felt that the smile boded mischief, and inwardly determined to look out for Peter Groot, for this was his name.

Walter was right in distrusting Peter. His idea of a teacher was, that he must be big enough to "lick" any of the boys; otherwise he had no right to expect obedience. Now, on examining Walter, he decided that he, Peter, could "lick him easy," as he expressed it in conversation with the other boys.

"I guess he won't dare to tackle me," he said, stretching out a stout arm with an air of satisfaction. Of course this was said outside of school.

"I hope, Peter, you are not going to make trouble," said Alfred Clinton, to whom, with others, this was addressed.

"What makes you wish that?" demanded Peter. "The master ain't nothin' to you."

"He is going to teach me," said Alfred, "and I want to profit by his instructions."

"He ain't fit to teach," said Peter Groot, contemptuously.

"Why isn't he?"

"I could lick him with one hand."

"I don't know about that. But even if you could, that doesn't prove that he can't teach, does it?"

"He isn't big enough to keep order."

"What do you mean?"

"If he don't interfere with me, I won't interfere with him. I ain't goin' to be ordered round by a feller I can lick."

"Of course, he will expect us to obey him as the teacher."

"You kin obey him if you want to; I'm goin' to do as I please."

"Why haven't you done that with Mr. Barclay, Peter?"

"Because he's stronger than I am."

The "master," to Peter Groot, was the embodiment of sufficient physical force to keep in due subjection the unruly elements under him, and it was perfectly legitimate for a scholar to refuse obedience unless the one who required it was able to enforce the demand.

There was still another scholar who attracted the notice

of Walter. This was a young man of twenty, who stood six feet in his stockings. He towered above Walter, and our hero was tempted to laugh when he reflected that he was about to assume the position of teacher to one so far his superior in age and size. However, he felt reassured by the expression of Phineas Morton. It did not seem likely that he would do anything to annoy the teacher.

"Well, Mr. Howard," said Barclay, as they were walking home, "what are your first impressions of the scholars?"

"Rather confused," said Walter, laughing. "I have got the names and faces of all mixed up together, and can hardly tell one from the other."

"That was my first experience; but I soon learned to distinguish them."

"There was one I particularly liked."

"I can guess who you mean—Alfred Clinton."

"Yes; he seemed to me very intelligent and attractive."

"You will find him both. He has more talent than any other scholar."

"How old is he?"

"Fourteen. His mother is a widow, and I suspect she has a hard time to get along. You noticed that Alfred was poorly dressed?"

"No, I did not notice that. I only looked at his face."

"Do you think I shall enjoy Peter Groot?" asked Walter, with a smile.

"I don't think you will. He is neither a model scholar nor a model boy. To tell the truth, I am more afraid he will give you trouble than any other boy."

"Did he trouble you?"

"He was impudent to me the second day, and I knocked him over. After that, he gave me much less trouble."

"Does Peter know anything about boxing?" asked

Walter, who understood what was brewing in the mind of his companion.

"Nothing at all. Do you?"

"I have a fair knowledge of it. Peter may be a little stronger, but if worst comes to worst, I think I am a match for him."

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Howard, for I suspect he will give you a chance to display your science upon him."

"I wouldn't undertake to encounter the big fellow."

"Phineas Morton? He won't require it. If he finds you are a good teacher, he will stand by you."

"Then I am not afraid. John Wall probably isn't very friendly, but I am not afraid of him."

"If he works against you, it will be in an underhand way."

"At any rate, the die is cast:

> "'In battle I'll fall, or in death be laid low,
> With my face to the field, and my feet to the foe.'"

Barclay laughed.

"If you undertake it in that spirit," he said, "I think you will succeed. At any rate, you have my best wishes."

CHAPTER XI

TWO POETS

Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones devoted herself during the day to the composition of a poem to be read to the guests whom she expected in the evening. She had sent several poems to the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine* at various times, but both periodicals had "respectfully declined" them.

"It is because I am a Western *literati*," she exclaimed to her brother, with a lofty contempt for grammar. "If

I were a Boston or New York *literati*, they would be glad to get my productions."

"I reckon you're right, Melindy," said her brother Ichabod. "Why don't you have your perductions, as you call 'em, mailed in Boston or New York?"

"Thank you, I wouldn't stoop to the subterfuge," said Melinda, reciting melodramatically:

> Breathes there a girl with soul so dead,
> Who never to herself hath said,
> Wisconsin is my native State?

"Good!" said her brother. "When did you make up them verses?"

"They are not mine. They are by Byron."

"Are they, now? He was a smart feller, wasn't he?"

"He was an inspired poet, Ichabod; but you wouldn't understand him. He soars into the realms of the evanescent."

"Does he? Then I guess I couldn't. I ain't much on soarin'."

At half past seven o'clock a knock was heard at the door of Melinda's boudoir.

"Ichabod, open the door," she said.

As Barclay and Walter entered the room, they beheld their fair hostess seated at the center table, with a volume of poems resting on her lap, while one hand supported her forehead, the elbow resting on the table. She had practiced this attitude during the afternoon before a looking-glass, and considered it effective.

"Pardon my pensive preoccupation," she said, rising and greeting her guests. "I was communing with Milton. Do you often commune with him, Mr. Barclay?"

"I haven't had much time for that lately, Miss Jones. My friend here is more poetical than I am."

Two Poets

"Do you ever provoke the muse, Mr. Howard?" asked Melinda, who probably meant invoke.

"Sometimes," said Walter. "I hear you are an authoress."

"A little of one," said Melinda, modestly.

"I hope you will favor us by reading something of your own."

"Indeed, Mr. Howard," said Melinda, with affected bashfulness, "I should be afraid to submit my careless productions to gentlemen of such literary taste. I did indeed throw off a few rhymes to-day, but——"

"We shall be glad to hear them, Miss Jones. Perhaps, after you have read them, my friend, Mr. Howard, will read something."

"Oh, that will be delightful! In that case I cannot refuse. Ichabod, will you bring me that portfolio from the desk?"

Her brother complied with his sister's request.

Melinda drew out a sheet of note paper and unfolded it.

"I hope, Mr. Howard, you will not be severe upon my verses. You will see that they reveal my too susceptible soul. I am subject to fits——"

"Why, Melinda," broke in her brother, "you never told me you had fits."

"To fits of lonely contemplation," continued Melinda, looking severely at her brother, "and it was in one of these that I penned the following stanzas."

Melinda cleared her throat, and read as follows, in an impressive voice:

Oh, lay me to sleep in the deep, deep sea,
  For my life is dark and drear;
Or give me the wings to soar aloft,—
  I am tired of living here.

Two Poets

I feel that I am not understood;
  My thoughts are far too deep
For the common crowd, who only care
  To eat and drink and sleep.

My soul walks through the world alone,
  Where it e'er must sadly roam,
Pining for congenial company
  In some celestial home.

I wreathe my face in hollow smiles,
  And people think me glad;
They cannot see my aching heart,
  For I am ever sad.

Then lay me to sleep in the deep, deep sea;
  For my life is dark and drear;
Or give me the wings to soar aloft,—
  I am tired of living here.

"It takes Melinda to string off the rhymes," said Ichabod.

"Do you share her talent, Mr. Jones?" asked Walter.

"Me? I couldn't write poetry if you was to pay me ten dollars a line. I shouldn't want to, either, if I'd got to feel as Melinda says she does in them verses."

"It is the penalty of a too-sensitive soul. Surely you have had such feelings, Mr. Howard. I am afraid you were not favorably impressed by my poor verses."

"The lines are very smooth, Miss Jones," said Walter, "but I cannot say I ever have quite such feelings. I am of a cheerful temperament, and my muse would not soar to such lofty heights as yours."

"I envy you, Mr. Howard," said Melinda, with a sigh. "I wish my muse were not so thoughtful and contemplative. Have you not some poem you could read us? Mr. Barclay says you are a poet."

Two Poets

"I am afraid Mr. Barclay has spoken without authority."

"Come, Mr. Howard, you must read Miss Jones the verses you wrote this afternoon."

"What! Were you, too, provoking the muse, Mr. Howard?" asked Melinda, with eager interest.

"I am afraid I was," said Walter, gravely, choosing to understand the young lady's words literally.

Walter finally yielded, and Barclay read, with appropriate emphasis, the following verses, which were modeled after a song found in a small collection of minstrel verses in Walter's possession:

Around the little cottage
  Waved fields of golden grain
And in it lived my heart's delight,—
  My Sophronisba Jane.

It was an humble cottage,
  But peace and comfort reign
Within the pleasant homestead
  Of Sophronisba Jane.

Her cheeks were like red apples,
  Her dress of neat de laine;
She was an artless maiden,
  Was Sophronisba Jane.

You cannot find in far-off climes,
  In Italy or Spain,
A girl that's half so charming
  As Sophronisba Jane.

And if I were a monarch,
  Instead of humble swain,
I still would seek to win the love
  Of Sophronisba Jane.

"How sweet!" murmured Melinda. "Indeed you are a true poet, Mr. Howard."

"Thank you," said Walter, who had hard work not to laugh, knowing himself what ridiculous rubbish his verses were.

"Now, Mr. Howard, I think it excellent," said Miss Jones. "I cannot expect all to be so contemplative as I am. My muse loves to dwell alone in primeval solitude. Yours seeks the woodland glade."

"You have expressed the difference admirably, Miss Jones," said Barclay, gravely.

"Do you often indite verses, Mr. Howard?" asked Melinda. "I hope you will show me all your productions."

"I seldom write, Miss Jones. Whenever I do, I shall be sure to ask your critical opinion of my verses."

CHAPTER XII

LED BY A BOOTBLACK

WHILE Walter is anticipating commencing his duties as teacher on Monday morning, we leave him awhile to chronicle the adventures of Joshua Drummond, his distant relative. Readers of "Paddle Your Own Canoe" will call to mind that he was the son of Jacob Drummond, of Stapleton, a country shopkeeper, with whom Walter passed a few weeks shortly after his father's death. Mr. Drummond was thoroughly a mean man, and, though his son was now eighteen years of age, allowed him only twenty-five cents a week for spending money. Work was not what Joshua wanted. He thought that, as a rich man's son, he was entitled to a liberal allowance without working

at all. He was willing, nevertheless, to take a situation in the city, being anxious to see life, as he termed it.

Finally, seeing no other way to compass his desire, Joshua opened his father's strong box with a key which he had found, and abstracted from it fifty dollars in gold, and a five-twenty government bond for five hundred dollars, excusing himself for the theft by the specious reasoning that it was only taking in advance what would be his some day.

Thus provided, he secretly left the house, and took the train for New York, saying to himself, in exultation, as he took his seat at the car window, "Now I am going to see life."

When he reached New York he felt bewildered. The change from the quiet streets of Stapleton to the thronged avenues of the great city was very great, and he hardly knew whether he stood on his head or his heels. But he realized, with a thrill of exultation, that he was in the city of which he had so often dreamed. He felt that a new page was to be turned over in his life, and that his future would be much more brilliant than his past.

Joshua knew nobody in the city except Sam Crawford. Sam he was accustomed to regard as a personage of a good deal of importance. But how to find him—that was the question. He knew that Sam was a clerk in a shoe store on Eighth Avenue.

While he was standing outside the depot in some perplexity, wondering how far off Sam's store was, he was accosted by a sharp-looking bootblack.

"Shine yer boots, mister?"

Joshua was not reckless in his expenditures, and he inquired, cautiously, "How much do you ask?"

"Twenty-five cents," said the bootblack.

"Twenty-five cents!" exclaimed Joshua, aghast.

"Well," said the bootblack, "seein' you're from the country, I'll call it twenty cents."

"What makes you think I'm from the country?" asked Joshua, quite unconscious of his rustic air.

"I saw you git off the cars," said the bootblack.

"Yes," said Joshua, satisfied; "I came from the country this morning. I don't know much about the city. I've got a friend here. He is in a store in Eighth Avenue. His name is Sam Crawford. Do you know him?"

"Know Sam Crawford? In course I do," said the bootblack, who had never heard the name before. "I black his boots every mornin'."

Joshua believed all this. He was not yet accustomed to the "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" of city street Arabs."

"I guess I'll have my boots blacked," he said. "Can't you take less than twenty cents?"

"That's the regular price, fixed by the city gov'ment," protested the bootblack. "If I was to take less, I'd have my license took away."

"Have you got it here?"

"No, I've got it to home, along with my gold valooables. I had to pay fifty dollars for it."

"That's high, isn't it?" asked Joshua.

"Yes, it is; but then you see we have to support the gov'ment."

Meanwhile the mendacious young bootblack was vigorously employed upon Joshua's boots. He had a hard job. At length, however, they were polished, and certainly were greatly improved by the process.

"They do look better than they did," Joshua was compelled to admit. He drew out twenty cents from his vest pocket and handed it to the boy.

"Is it far to Sam Crawford's store?" he asked.

"About two miles," was the answer.

"Could I find the way easy?"

"Yes; all you've got to do is to go up Madison Avenue till you get to the Battery. Go round it; then cross Madison Square, keepin' the Astor House on your left hand. Turn into the Bowery at Trinity Church; then cross over to Twenty-seventh Street. Go up Twenty-seventh Street six blocks till you get to A. T. Stewart's store; then take a short cut to Eighth Avenue, and there you are."

These false and absurd directions were delivered with great volubility by the bootblack; but they made a very confused impression upon the mind of Joshua, who felt more bewildered and helpless than before.

"I don't know any of those places," he said. "I am afraid I couldn't find the way."

"Maybe you couldn't. I know a man who was two days findin' a place only a mile off. If he'd paid a dollar to somebody that knew the way he'd a been all right."

This put a new idea into Joshua's mind.

"If you'll show me the way to Sam Crawford's, I'll give you fifty cents," he said.

"That's too little," said the boy. "I couldn't neglect my business so long for that. I'd lose money."

"How much do you want?"

"A dollar. It's worth a dollar to go so fur."

The boy would have stood out for a dollar but that another bootblack had come up and he was afraid he might offer to go for less.

"All right," said he. "Hand over your money."

"Wait till I get there," said Joshua, cautiously.

"Payment in advance," said the young Arab. "That's the way they do business in the city."

Joshua drew out seventy-five cents, and placed them in his hand.

"Follow me, mister," said the young conductor. "I guess I won't go the way I told you. I'll take a short cut," he added.

The bootblack led Joshua by a pretty direct course to Eighth Avenue. He felt elated to think that his home was from henceforth to be in the great city. Some time or other, when his father had forgiven him, he would go back to Stapleton, and show off the same city airs which had so impressed him in the case of Sam Crawford. He was rather alarmed when he came to cross Broadway, and came near being run over by a passing cab.

"Look out, mister," said his young guide, "or you'll get knocked into a cocked hat. Folks is in such a hurry here that they don't stop to pick up dead bodies."

Arrived in Eighth Avenue, the bootblack, who had cunningly managed to find out Sam Crawford's business, pointed to the first shoe store they reached and said, "That's the place."

"Does Sam Crawford work there?"

"In course he does. You jest go in, and you'll see him at the back of the store."

Joshua went in, never dreaming that he had been deceived. Meanwhile his guide took to his heels.

CHAPTER XIII

A STRANGER IN NEW YORK

Joshua entered the shoe store pointed out by his guide without the least suspicion that he had been imposed upon. It had a liberal stock of boots exposed outside, at prices low enough to attract the attention of those passing.

Joshua looked about him, but failed to recognize the friend of whom he was in quest.

He walked up to the counter, and asked, "Is Sam Crawford out?"

"He hasn't been in very lately," answered the clerk, taking in the rustic appearance of his questioner at a glance.

"Is he coming in soon?" he asked.

"I really don't know," said the clerk, winking to his fellow salesman, who was within hearing distance.

"I suppose he works here, don't he?" he inquired.

"Not that I ever heard of."

"Why," said Joshua, puzzled, "the boy that showed me the way told me he did."

"Then the boy told a lie."

Joshua felt disturbed at this information. It appeared that he had paid away seventy-five cents without receiving value therefor. Besides, apart from this, he wanted to find Sam. He felt helpless in a large city, without a single acquaintance.

"Are there any other shoe stores in this street," he asked.

"I should say there were—several," answered the clerk; "but of course we sell the best articles at the lowest price."

"Do you?" said Joshua, with an air of one receiving information.

"Yes; can't we sell you a pair?"

"I guess not to-day," answered Joshua.

"I suppose you know that your boots are out of style," said the other, surveying Joshua's boots contemptuously.

"I won't buy any to-day," said Joshua.

As he left the store he looked about for the boy who had deceived him. The latter would probably have been

invisible, but a gentleman had hailed him, and he was now engaged in polishing his second boot. Joshua waited till he was through, and then commenced the attack.

"Look here," said he, "you said Sam Crawford worked in that store."

The bootblack decided to brazen it out.

"Who's Sam Crawford?" he asked, vacantly. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"You told me Sam Crawford worked in that store."

"Did I? I don't know any Sam Crawford."

"You told me you blacked his boots every morning," persisted Joshua.

"Look here, mister, haven't you got hold of the wrong boy?"

Joshua was rather taken aback by this question.

"No, I have not," he said; "I paid you seventy-five cents for showing me the way to the store where Sam Crawford worked."

"How could I show you when I never heard of Sam Crawford?"

"You said you knew him."

"I guess you're crazy, mister."

"You've cheated me," said Joshua, getting provoked. "Just give me back that seventy-five cents I paid you."

"Do you see any green in my eye, mister?" inquired the bootblack.

"What makes you ask that?"

"I see what you are," said the bootblack, boldly carrying the war into the enemy's camp; "you're one of them swindlin' fellers that go round cheatin' the poor out of their hard earnings. I'll call a cop."

"What's a cop?" asked Joshua, uneasily.

"A peeler."

"What's a peeler?"

"A purlice officer. Where was you brought up?" demanded the boy, contemptuously. "If I knowed where Sam Crawford lived, wouldn't I tell you?"

"Are you sure you ain't the boy that showed me the way?"

"In course I am."

"You look just like him," said Joshua, doubtfully.

"I know who it was," said the bootblack, who had no scruples about lying. "It was Pat Brady. He and me look like twin brothers."

Joshua was at last convinced that he had made a mistake. He was completely taken in by the young rascal.

"Did Pat black your boots?" he asked.

"Yes," said Joshua.

"I thought so," said the bootblack, contemptuously. "He can't shine boots. How much did you pay?"

"Twenty cents."

"Then he cheated you."

"He said it was the regular price."

"How that boy will lie!" said the young Arab, virtuously. "The regular price is ten cents. Don't you ever get Pat Brady to shine your boots ag'in."

"No, I won't," said Joshua, indignant at the swindle which the virtuous young bootblack had exposed. "If I ever see him again, I'll give him a licking."

"That's right, mister; I'll help you do it any time," said his new friend.

"I wish I knew where to find Sam Crawford," said Joshua, in perplexity. "Is this Eighth Avenue?"

"Yes."

"Sam is in a shoe store somewhere in this street."

"Why don't you go into every store, and ax 'em if he works there. I'll go with you for fifty cents."

But Joshua began to think that New York was a very

extensive place, where it was quite necessary to be on the lookout for swindlers. If he could only find Sam Crawford, for whose knowledge of life he had high respect, he would, undoubtedly, be all right; but there were difficulties in the way. Still he was not without hope. If he inquired in every shoe store on the avenue, he must come across him after a while.

The store of which Joshua was in search was in reality on the next block below the one which he had entered; but, ignorant of this, he directed his steps uptown, and very soon found another store.

"Does Sam Crawford work here?" he asked, entering.

"No, he don't, but I'll sell you a pair of shoes or boots as cheap as he will."

"I don't want to buy anything. Sam Crawford is a friend of mine; I want to find him."

"I am sorry I can't help you. I don't know any such man. Hadn't you better let me show you a pair of boots?"

"No, I don't need any," said Joshua, and, disappointed a second time, beat a retreat.

"It's strange Sam Crawford isn't any better known," thought Joshua. "I should think those that keep stores in the same street would know him."

My readers may conclude that Joshua was very verdant, but the fact was that he lived all his lifetime in a country village, where everybody knew everybody else.

In the next store the young man to whom he addressed his stereotyped question prided himself on being a wag, and, perceiving that Joshua was from the country, resolved to have a little fun with him.

"Sam Crawford!" he repeated. "He's a young man, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Dark hair?"
"Yes."
"Black eyes?"
"Yes."
"A mustache?"
"Yes."
"Acquainted with the shoe business?"
"Yes. Do you know him?" asked Joshua, eagerly.
"And a humpback?"
"What?"
"With a hump between his shoulders?"
"No."
"Then it can't be the Crawford I know."

Joshua was deeply disappointed. Again he emerged into the street. There was a shoe store on the next block. His hope revived. He entered that also, but the faces were all unfamiliar. He kept on his way for a mile, entering store after store, marveling inwardly why there should be need of so many shoe stores, and, as he failed to discover Sam, almost beginning to doubt whether he hadn't made a mistake about the street. He began to feel lonely, the peculiar loneliness of a stranger in a great city, who, among the multitudes that he meets, recognizes not one familiar face.

CHAPTER XIV

A FRIEND IN NEED

Joshua walked as far up as Central Park. What if he should be unable to find Sam at all? He resolved to retrace his steps, and explore that part of the avenue which he had not yet visited. He felt tired, and would

have entered a car, but was afraid he might not know where to get out.

It was fortunate for him that he decided to walk. About Thirtieth Street he met the one for whom he was in search. Sam was looking in at a shop window, and did not perceive his approach. Overjoyed, Joshua hurried forward and touched him on the shoulder.

"Joshua Drummond!" exclaimed Sam, in surprise; "where in the world did you come from?"

"I came from Stapleton this morning," said Joshua. "I didn't know as I should ever find you. I have been walking a long way, going into all the shoe stores I could find, asking for you."

"Didn't you know my number? You had it in a letter."

"I forgot to bring the letter."

"How long are you going to stay in the city?"

"I ain't going back to Stapleton," answered Joshua. "I've got sick and tired of it."

"Are you going into a store in New York?"

"Yes, if I can find a place. You'll help me, won't you, Sam?"

"I'll do all I can. So the old man was willing to let you come?"

"No, he wasn't. I came away without asking him."

"Did you?" said Sam, cooling a little, for he was afraid that in that case Joshua was not supplied with money. "How do you expect to live while you're looking out for a place?"

"I can board somewhere. Can't I get in at your boarding place?"

"Why, you see," said Sam, "they'll expect you to pay your board every week in advance unless you can give references. I'm hard up, so I can't help you."

"Oh, I've got money," said Joshua.

"Oh, you have!" said Sam, feeling considerably relieved. "Have you got enough to last you a month?"

"I've got most six hundred dollars."

"You don't say so!" said Sam, cordially. "Where did you raise it? Did you draw a prize in the lottery?"

"No," said Joshua, "I drew a blank. The old man found out about the ticket and made a row."

"Then how came he to give you the money?"

"He didn't give it to me," said Joshua, a little awkwardly.

"Never mind," said Sam, quickly, for he suspected the true state of the case. "The main thing is that you've got the money. Now, my dear fellow, I want you to come and room with me."

"That's just what I should like," said Joshua, gratified.

"I have a hall bedroom now; but Mrs. Jones has a larger room with a double bed. We'll take that together, and I'll show you round."

"That's just what I want," said Joshua. "You see, I've never been in New York before, and I've got to get used to it."

"I know all about it," said Sam, with an air of consequence. "I know the ropes, if anybody does. I'll show you life. Have you got the money with you?"

"Five hundred dollars of it is in a government bond. Can I sell it?"

"Oh, yes, that's easy enough. Have you got some money besides?"

"Yes; I've got over seventy dollars in money."

"I am glad you came to me," said Sam, who had already made up his mind to help Joshua spend his money.

"Come with me," he said; "I've got to go back to the store now, but in an hour or more I shall be going out

to supper. You can come with me, and then we will fix it about having a room together."

"How much salary do you get, Sam?" he inquired.

"A thousand a year," answered Sam, with an air of consequence.

In reality he was receiving eight dollars a week; but he did not intend to be quite candid with Joshua, lest the truth should weaken his ascendency over him. He judged shrewdly; for, to the unsophisticated boy from the country, a thousand dollars a year seemed like a very large income, as, indeed, Sam himself would have considered it, if by good luck he had obtained it.

"Do you think I will ever get as much, Sam?" asked Joshua.

"Of course not for a long time," said Sam. "You know you haven't had experience like me. By the way, you needn't mention how much I get. I don't care about letting it be known. If the other clerks in the store knew it, they might be jealous."

"All right; I won't say anything about it if you don't want me to."

"Here's the store," said Sam, suddenly.

Joshua now saw that it was only a block below the point where he had entered Eighth Avenue.

It was not a very imposing establishment. The front was probably about twenty feet, the depth seventy, leaving the back part of the store rather dark and gloomy. A variety of cheap shoes, with the prices attached, were exposed in front of the store. They looked very common to a practiced eye.

"Come in, Joshua," said Sam.

"Where have you been gone so long?" demanded the proprietor of the establishment, addressing Sam, rather sharply.

"I met a friend from the country," answered Sam, blushing a little at being thus addressed before Joshua. "I thought he might need a pair of slippers."

"Oh, very well," said the proprietor, more graciously. "I am glad to see you, sir."

"My friend's name is Drummond, Mr. Craven," said Sam. "Joshua, Mr. Craven."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Drummond," said Mr. Craven, offering his hand.

"Much obliged," said Joshua, awkwardly.

"Your friend will show you some slippers. I guess we can fit you."

"I don't know as I shall need any slippers," commenced Joshua, but he was quickly interrupted by Sam.

"Oh, yes you will!" he said. "You need 'em in the evening."

"How much will they be?" asked Joshua.

"Two dollars."

"Ain't that rather high?" asked Joshua, who privately doubted whether it would not be better to keep his money.

"Not at all. We should charge two dollars and a half to anybody else. As you're a friend, I make allowances. You'll want some new boots soon. Those you have on are countrified."

"I guess they'll last me a little longer," said Joshua, hurriedly; for, though the money was dishonestly acquired, he was inclined to be frugal.

"Well, you needn't buy to-day. Next week will answer."

Sam's object in urging Joshua to purchase was to reconcile his employer to his presence in the store. He wished, besides, to obtain an extra evening off duty, meaning to accompany Joshua to the theater at the latter's expense. He did not expect that Joshua would volunta-

rily pay for the tickets; but there is such a thing as borrowing without the intention of repaying the money, and this Sam meant to do.

"Mr. Craven," said he, "can you spare me this evening?"

"You had your regular evening off yesterday," was the reply.

"I would not ask but for my friend, who is a stranger in the city, and depends upon me to find him a boarding place," said Sam.

"Did you sell him anything?"

"Yes, he took a pair of two-dollar slippers."

"I will try to do without you this evening, as you particularly desire it," said Mr. Craven; "but you must not repeat the application."

"Thank you, sir," said Sam.

"I'm in luck, Joshua," he said; "I am off for the evening. We'll go to the theater and have a high old time."

"Do you have to work in the evening, Sam?" asked Joshua, surprised.

"Yes," answered Sam. "You see," he added, consequentially, "I know all the business, and they can't get along very well without me."

CHAPTER XV

"A BAD PENNY"

THE boarding house to which Sam conducted his friend was not externally prepossessing. It was a shabby brick house, between Seventh and Eighth avenues. The hall was covered with oilcloth, dirty, and in places worn away, while the stair carpeting was of the same material.

"Come up to my room, Joshua," said Sam. "While you are fixing your hair, I'll let Mrs. Jones know you are here."

Sam's room was a hall bedroom on the third floor. It was barely large enough for a narrow bedstead, a trunk, a chair, and a washstand. There was no bureau, and no room for any; but in place, there were nails to hang his clothes upon just opposite the bed. It fell below Joshua's anticipations, being quite inferior to the room he occupied at home. He had supposed that Sam, who had strutted about Stapleton the summer before, was handsomely situated. So it was with a feeling of disappointment that he regarded the small room, the thin, cheap carpet, the common wooden bedstead, and untidy washstand.

"It's rather small," said Sam, in a tone of apology, "but there's a larger room on this floor. We will take it together. I'll speak to Mrs. Jones about it."

Joshua proceeded to arrange his toilet, while Sam did as proposed.

"The old lady'll be glad enough to take you," he said. "We can have the other room. We'll go into it after dinner."

"After dinner?" repeated Joshua, who had been accustomed to regard the third meal as supper.

"Yes, we always have dinner at this hour," explained Sam. "We never take supper except Sunday evening."

"Don't you eat anything in the middle of the day?"

"We take lunch then. You'll find New York a different sort of a place from Stapleton."

Joshua was ready to believe this.

"Now, if you are ready, we will go down to dinner."

The dining room proved to be in the front basement. Three or four young men were already seated at the table, while a red-haired girl was waiting upon them. The mis-

tress of the boarding house was a thin, tired-looking woman, who, to judge from her appearance, found her business rather a wearing one.

"Mrs. Jones, Mr. Drummond," introduced Sam.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Drummond," said Mrs. Jones. "Sit down there, if you please, next to Mr. Crawford."

Joshua took his seat, and the waitress came.

"Will you have roast beef or roast lamb?" she asked.

"Beef for me," answered Sam. "What will you have, Joshua?"

"The same," said Joshua.

I suppose it is useless to say that Mrs. Jones did not keep a first-class boarding house. The fare she furnished to her boarders was considerably inferior to that at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, or a good many other hotels of lower standing; but this was a point in which Joshua was not likely to be disappointed. His father, as has been explained in the preceding volume, was a man so fond of money that he always furnished a very mean table. So to Joshua the fare at Mrs. Jones's boarding house seemed excellent.

"Well, Joshua, how do you like the feed?" asked Sam, as they were going upstairs.

"It's very good," answered Joshua, in a tone of satisfaction. "Do you always have as good a dinner?"

"Yes, always. On Sundays we have something extra."

"I think I shall like it. How much does Mrs. Jones charge for board?"

"For room and board, six dollars."

"Ain't that rather high?" asked the frugal-minded Joshua, who had been used to Stapleton prices.

"No, it's very cheap, for the city. Of course, board's much higher here than in the country."

"Is it?"

"Certainly. There's a friend of mine pays fifteen dollars a week for board."

"Why, that's enough to support a family in Stapleton."

"We do things on a larger scale here in New York, as you will soon find out," said Sam. "We make money fast, and we spend it fast."

"That's just what I want."

"To spend money fast?"

"No, to make money fast."

"Oh, well, you can do it after a while."

Mrs. Jones appeared at the head of the stairs. She opened the door of the adjoining room and invited them in.

It was a room about twelve feet square, with a double bed in the middle. The carpet was the same quality as that in Sam's smaller room, but there was a little more furniture, and there were two windows. Joshua was not, however, as favorably impressed with it as with the dinner.

"We shall want to sleep here to-night, Mrs. Jones," said Sam.

"It shall be ready, Mr. Crawford. I suppose you will be going out this evening?"

"Yes," answered Sam. "My friend and I are going to the theater."

"It shall be ready by the time you return, then."

"Joshua," said his friend, "just give me a lift with my trunk, and I'll move now."

"All right."

"I suppose you didn't bring a trunk, did you? Came away in too great a hurry, eh?"

"Yes," answered Joshua, smiling.

"I tell you what would improve the looks of the room."

"What's that?"

"A sofa."

"So it would."

"I don't suppose the old lady would put one in. What do you say to buying one?"

"I buy a sofa?" ejaculated Joshua, alarmed.

"Yes, or a lounge. I guess you could get a decent one for fifteen dollars."

"I don't think we need any," said Joshua, hastily; "but if you want to buy one——"

"Oh, it's no matter," said Sam. "It'll be pretty hard to get money out of him," he thought to himself. "However, I guess I can manage him."

This was likely to prove true. Joshua had got into dangerous company. Could his father have looked in upon him, and realized the manner in which the money he had scraped together was likely to be expended, he would have been angry and horror-stricken. But up to this moment he did not suspect the double loss he had incurred.

Let us return to Stapleton for a moment, and look in upon the home which Joshua had deserted.

When the supper table was spread Mr. Drummond came in from the store.

"Where is Joshua?" he asked.

"I don't know," said his wife, anxiously. "He wasn't here to dinner. I hope he hasn't gone out on the pond and got drowned."

"No fear," said her husband, philosophically. "He's got a sullen fit and wandered off somewhere. He'll be back some time this evening."

"I wish I was sure nothing had happened to him," said Mrs. Drummond.

"I'll risk him. His being away won't spoil my appetite," said the father, rather contemptuously.

"A Bad Penny"

"I don't think you treat him just right, Jacob," said Mrs. Drummond; "he's been looking down for some days."

"I know what it's about. He wants me to increase his allowance."

"Twenty-five cents does seem small for a boy of Joshua's age."

"If he wants more, let him go to work and earn it. That's the way I had to do when I was of his age. I'll tell you what it is, wife, Joshua is a lazy, good-for-nothing boy. If he had his own way, he'd spend five dollars a week, and do nothing but loaf around the village. He shan't squander the money I have worked so hard for."

The suspicion that Joshua had run away from home had not entered his father's mind.

After supper Mr. Drummond went back to the store, and did not return till it had closed.

"Has Joshua got home?" he asked.

"No," answered his wife, anxiously. "I am afraid, Jacob, you have driven him to some desperate step."

"Nonsense! A bad penny always returns."

He went upstairs to deposit the money he had brought from the till, in his little black trunk. Two minutes afterwards he hurried downstairs, pale with passion.

"What do you think your son has done?"

"What?" gasped she. "Tell me, quick."

"He has robbed me of over six hundred dollars. If I ever catch him I'll flog him within an inch of his life."

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE SPIDER'S WEB

JOSHUA and his friend, Sam Crawford, selected Niblo's Theater as the most attractive.

"Shall we walk?" asked Joshua.

"No," said Sam; "it's too far."

"How much do they charge in the horse cars?"

"Only five cents," answered Sam, thinking that Joshua must be mean to trouble himself about such a trifle, and that he might find it a harder job than he anticipated to get money out of him. "That's cheap enough."

"Yes," said Joshua, doubtfully.

They stopped the next car and got in.

When the conductor came round, Joshua put his hand into his pocket, but Sam said, in an offhand manner: "Never mind, Joshua; I've got the change. I'll pay."

"Thank you," said Joshua, his face brightening. He did not know that Sam meant to get twenty times as much out of him before the evening was over.

They reached the theater some minutes before the performance commenced. There was a line of men waiting their turns before the ticket office.

"Join the line, Joshua," said Sam, "and get two reserved seats in the parquet."

"Two?"

"Yes, one for me. I'll pay you afterwards."

"How much will they be?"

"Two dollars."

"Isn't that high?" asked Joshua, alarmed. "They only charge fifteen cents for concerts at home."

is much better than a concert. Take your place, quick."

Thus exhorted, Joshua in due time purchased the tickets.

"Now, come along," said Sam, seizing him by the arm.

So they passed the wicket, giving up their tickets, and were speedily ushered to their seats. Joshua looked around him with curiosity, for to him it was a novel scene; but even this did not lead him to forget that Sam was indebted to him.

"You owe me a dollar," he whispered.

"All right," said Sam; "I'll pay you afterwards. I don't want to take out my pocketbook here."

Joshua would have preferred to be paid on the spot, but no suspicion had yet entered his mind that Sam intended to cheat him.

"Who are those men playing?" he inquired of his more experienced friend.

"That's the orchestra."

"Then, when does the play begin?"

"In about five minutes."

At the time specified, the curtain rose, and Joshua's eager attention was soon absorbed by the play. He asked various questions of Sam, which led the latter to smile, though but a year before he had been quite as unsophisticated. At a quarter to eleven o'clock the curtain fell, and the audience rose and made their way out of the theater.

"How did you like it, Joshua?" asked Sam.

"First rate," said Joshua. "It cost a good deal, though."

"It's worth the money. Everything is much higher in the city than in the country."

"In Stapleton they never charge more than twenty-five cents admittance to anything."

"You must enlarge your ideas, Joshua. Country peo-

ple are mean. They count every cent, and are more afraid to spend a cent than city people are to spend a dollar."

"My father's mean," said Joshua. "What do you think he used to allow me a week for spending money?"

"A dollar?"

"Only twenty-five cents."

"The old man was tight, that's a fact. A young man of your age ought to have had five dollars. I feel hungry. Shall we go in and get some oysters? I know a tiptop place."

"How much will it cost?"

"Oh, I'll treat!" said Sam, nonchalantly.

As Joshua had no objection to the oysters, but only to the expense, he readily accepted the invitation, which he would hardly have done had he known that his companion had but ten cents in his pocket.

Sam led the way into a recess, and, in a tone of authority, ordered "stews for two."

"How did you like them?" asked Sam.

"Splendid!" said Joshua.

"Suppose we order a fry?" suggested Sam; "I think I can eat a little more."

"I don't know," hesitated Joshua.

"I'll treat. Here (to the waiter), bring us two fries, and be quick about it."

When the repast was concluded, Sam felt for his pocketbook. First he felt in one pocket, then in the other.

"How stupid I am!" he muttered.

"What's the matter?" inquired Joshua.

"It's a good joke. I came from home and forgot my pocketbook. I must have left it in my other pants."

"You paid in the cars."

"Yes; it was a little change I had in my vest pocket."

"What are you going to do?" asked Joshua.

"I shall have to borrow a little money of you to pay

for the oysters. Let me see; it'll be a dollar and ten cents."

"Won't they trust you? You can come in to-morrow and pay them," suggested Joshua.

"No, they won't trust. They don't know me."

"They'll have to, if you haven't got the money."

"No; they'll hold you responsible."

"You owe me a dollar already for your ticket."

"I can pay you for both together. You ain't afraid to trust me, are you?"

"No-o," said Joshua, slowly; and very reluctantly he drew out a dollar and ten cents, and placed it in the hands of his friend.

"That's all right," said Sam, and he stepped up to the counter and settled the bill.

"It is time we were getting home, Joshua," said Sam. "We'll get home by twelve, or before. That would be pretty late hours for the country."

"Yes," answered Joshua. "At home I always was in bed by ten o'clock."

"Oh, well; no wonder! There was nothing going on in Stapleton. It's an awfully slow place."

"That's so."

"You don't want to go back, do you?"

"No, I never want to go back," answered Joshua, thinking of the money and bond he had stolen.

"So I thought. Everybody likes the city. Why, in ten years you'll be richer than the old man!"

"Will I, do you think?" asked Joshua, eagerly.

"Yes, I think so. There's Ned Evans, a young man not thirty, who came to the city ten years ago, who is worth now—how much do you think?"

"How much?"

"Fifty thousand dollars!"

"Did he have to work very hard?"

"Oh, pretty hard; but, then, it's a good deal easier to work hard when you are well paid for it."

"Yes, that's so. Do you expect to get rich soon?"

"You won't repeat it if I tell you something, will you?"

"No."

"You mustn't breathe a word of it, for it's a secret. When I am twenty-one, old Craven is going to take me into partnership."

"Is he? Does he make much money?"

Made fifteen thousand dollars last year. Half of that'll be pretty nice for me, won't it?"

Sam Crawford had told two most unblushing falsehoods. He had grossly exaggerated the profits of the establishment, and, moreover, Mr. Craven was no more likely to take him into partnership than I am to be appointed prime minister to the Emperor of Japan.

"You're in luck, Sam," said Joshua. "Do you think I'll ever get such a chance?"

"I think you can, with my influence," said Sam, loftily. "I'll do my best for you."

CHAPTER XVII

SUBTLE FLATTERY

THE two boys reached their boarding house as the clock struck twelve.

"The best thing is to get to bed," said Sam.

"You might as well pay me what you owe me," suggested Joshua.

"Oh, yes!" said Sam. "Let me find my pocketbook."

He felt in the pocket of his "other pants," but of course it was not there for he had, before leaving for the theater, carefully locked it up in his trunk.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, whistling, as he withdrew his hand, empty.

"What's the matter?" inquired Joshua, anxiously.

"My pocketbook isn't there!"

"Isn't it? Where is it, then?" demanded Joshua, beginning to be alarmed.

"I must have taken it with me to-night, after all," said Sam. "I understand now," he added, suddenly. "I must have had my pocket picked in the car."

"Had your pocket picked?" repeated Joshua, as ruefully as if it had been his own.

"Yes; didn't you notice that black-whiskered man that sat next me?"

"No."

"I am sure it was he. I thought he looked suspicious as I entered the car. If I hadn't been talking with you, he couldn't have robbed me without my knowing it."

"Was there much in the pocketbook?" inquired Joshua.

"Not much," said Sam, indifferently. "Between twenty-seven and twenty-eight dollars, I believe—a mere trifle."

"Then, you can't pay me what you owe me?"

"Not just now. I must wait till I get my wages."

"How much do you get then?"

"Twenty dollars."

"You will surely pay me then?"

"Of course. You ain't afraid to trust me?" said Sam.

"No," returned Joshua, slowly.

"I don't think I shall run away on account of such a debt," said Sam, laughing. "If it was two thousand dollars, instead of two, I might, you know."

"Two dollars and ten cents," corrected Joshua.

"What a mean hunks!" thought Sam. "He's going to be worse than his father, and that's saying a good deal."

Had Joshua known the real state of the case, he would have been more alarmed for his money, but, as he supposed that Sam really received twenty dollars a week he did not doubt that he should be paid.

"Well, Joshua, what are you going to do with yourself?" asked Sam the next morning.

"I don't know."

"I've got to go to business, you know. I'd like to go round the city with you, but I can't be spared."

"I'll walk down to your store with you."

"All right; only I wouldn't advise you to stay very long."

"Why not?"

"Oh, Craven would think I was neglecting my business, and, as I am to be his future partner, I want to keep his good opinion."

"To be sure," said Joshua. "I can walk round."

"Yes, you can go around and see the city—only keep your eyes peeled, so you will know the way back. And, if you ride in the cars, look out for pickpockets."

"Is there much danger?" asked Joshua, hastily thrusting his hand into his pocket.

"Plenty of danger. If you like, I'll take your money—that is, what you don't need to use—and lock it up in the safe."

"I guess I'll keep it," said Joshua, hastily. "I'll look out for pickpockets. Besides, I'll walk."

"You'll get tired if you tramp about all day."

"If I get tired, I'll come back to the room and rest a while."

Subtle Flattery

As proposed, Joshua accompanied his friend to the shoe store, but, after a few minutes, went out to see what he could of the city. He wandered about for two hours, examining with curiosity the many unusual objects which everywhere met his view. At length, his attention was drawn to a car going uptown, on which was printed its destination, "Central Park." The car was nearly empty, and, therefore, as it struck him there could not be much danger of pickpockets, he resolved, especially as he felt quite tired, to get in and ride to the park, even if it did cost five cents. Getting into the car, he seated himself at a distance from other passengers, and kept his hand on his pocket. After a time, he reached Fifty-ninth Street, and had no difficulty in guessing that the beautiful inclosed space before him was the park of which he had heard so much. He was a little afraid, on seeing the policeman at the entrance, that there was a fee for admission, but was gratified to find that no money was required.

He wandered on, and sat down on one of the seats considerately placed at intervals for the benefit of weary pedestrians.

He had not been sitting there long, when a dark-complexioned man of forty also seated himself on the bench.

Joshua took no particular notice of him till the stranger looked toward him, and remarked, politely: "It's a fine day, sir."

"Yes," said Joshua, who was secretly flattered at being called "sir."

"I suppose you live in the city?"

"Yes; that is, I do now," answered Joshua.

"I am a stranger in the city," said the other; "I live in the country. I never was in the park before."

"Weren't you?" asked Joshua, with the air of one who had visited it a great many times.

"No; I like it very much. It reminds me of the country where I live."

"It is very pretty, we city people think," said Joshua, swelling with satisfaction.

"I ought to like it," said the stranger, laughing, "for I have had a piece of great good luck here this morning."

"Indeed!" said Joshua, pricking up his ears.

"I was walking just above here, when I found this."

As he spoke, he drew from his pocket what appeared to be a handsome gold watch of considerable size.

"Did you find that?" said Joshua, enviously, wishing he had had the same good fortune.

"Yes; somebody must have dropped it. It must be worth a hundred dollars. Why, the chain is worth thirty, at least."

"I wish I had been as lucky," said Joshua, with longing eyes. "How long is it since you found it?"

"About twenty minutes. However, I've got another watch at home. I don't need it. I'd sell it for a good deal less than it is worth," and he looked suggestively in Joshua's face.

Now, Joshua had long cherished the desire of having a watch, though his hopes had been confined to a silver one, and a chain of silk braid. Never, in his wildest and most ambitious dreams, had he thought of an elegant gold watch and chain like this.

"How much will you take?" he asked, eagerly.

"Why, it's well worth a hundred dollars," said the stranger, "but I'll take half price."

"That is, fifty dollars?"

"Yes; it'll be a great bargain at that. Any jeweler would give more, but I haven't time to go and see one."

"I can't afford to give fifty dollars," said Joshua.

"I might take a little less," said the stranger.

"I'll give you thirty dollars," said Joshua, after a little pause.

"That's too little," said the other. "I'd rather stay here till the next train, and sell it to a jeweler. I feel sure they would pay me sixty, at least."

If that was the case, it would certainly be a good speculation to buy the watch and sell it again. Joshua began to be anxious to get it.

"I want it for myself," he said, "and I can't afford to pay fifty dollars."

"Will you give forty-five?"

"I'll give thirty-five."

"Say forty, and it's yours; though I ought not to sell it at that. Just put it on, and see how well it looks."

Joshua put it in his watch pocket, and was conquered.

"All right," he said; "I'll take it."

He paid the forty dollars, and bade farewell to the kind stranger who had given him so good a bargain.

"You city people are sharp," said the stranger, as he bade him good morning. "We poor countrymen don't stand much chance with you."

This remark flattered Joshua immensely, and he strutted about the park, glancing continually at his new acquisition, and fancying that he already had quite a city air.

CHAPTER XVIII

TROUBLE IN STAPLETON

"I COULD never have got such a bargain if I had stayed in the country," thought Joshua. "I don't believe I should have had a watch until I was thirty years old."

Trouble in Stapleton

Joshua congratulated himself that, though he now possessed a hundred-dollar gold watch and chain, purchased at less than half price, he still had left considerably more than five hundred dollars. When he purchased the watch, his first thought was to sell it almost immediately, and so realize something by the speculation. But, being well provided with money, he decided to keep it, for the present, and not to sell unless he should stand in need of money.

Joshua returned to his boarding house in time for lunch. Here he met Sam Crawford.

"Where did you get that watch and chain?" he asked.

"I bought it," said Joshua.

"At what jeweler's shop did you buy it?" asked Sam, rather vexed that Joshua should have made so important a purchase without consulting him.

"I didn't buy it at any jeweler's," answered Joshua. "If I had, I couldn't have got it so cheap."

"Didn't buy it at a jeweler's!" repeated Sam, suspiciously. "Where did you buy it, then?"

"I bought it of a man I met in Central Park."

"A man you knew?"

"No; a stranger—a man from the country."

"Let me see the watch," said Sam, abruptly.

He could not tell whether it was genuine or not.

"I shouldn't wonder if you had got swindled," he said, handing it back. "How much did you pay for it?"

"Forty dollars. The man said it was worth a hundred," said Joshua, beginning to feel uncomfortable.

"Of course, he would say so," returned Sam, contemptuously. "They always do. What made him sell it to you so cheap, then?"

"He found it, and had to go out of the city very soon."

Sam shook his head.

"You ought not to have bought a watch without my being with you. If you are swindled, it is your own fault."

"It looks like gold," said Joshua, soberly. "How shall I find out?"

"Come out with me, when I go back to the store. We'll stop at a jeweler's on the way, and he will tell us."

Joshua ate his lunch in a state of painful suspense. Forty dollars was a good deal to lose. Besides, it was, or would be, mortifying to feel that he had been swindled.

When lunch was over, he went out with Sam to a small jeweler's shop. Sam led the way in, and he followed.

"Give me the watch," said Sam.

He handed it to the clerk behind the counter.

"Will you tell me what this watch and chain are worth?" he asked.

The clerk took it, and said, with a smile:

"I hope you didn't give much for it."

"It does not belong to me. My friend purchased it this morning. Is there any gold about it?"

"A little—on the outside. It is covered with a thin coating of gold. I will tell you in a moment what is underneath."

"It is a kind of composition," he announced.

"How much is the whole thing worth?"

"Three or four dollars, at the outside."

The feeling with which Joshua listened to this revelation may be imagined better than described. He followed Sam out of the store, with a very red face.

"I'd like to get hold of the feller that sold me the watch," he said, elevating his fist.

"Serves you right," said Sam, coolly, "for not waiting till I was with you. I shouldn't get swindled easily. I've been in the city too long. I know the ropes."

"You had your pocket picked last evening," said Joshua.

"That's true," Sam was forced to answer—though it was not true. "I was talking with you, and that made me careless. But I shouldn't be cheated on a bargain."

"I should like to sell the watch for as much as I gave," said Joshua, not very honestly. "I might go to Central Park this afternoon."

"You wouldn't catch a greenhorn every day that would let himself be taken in as you were."

"Do you call me a greenhorn?" added Joshua, angrily.

"Of course, you're a little green," said Sam. "I was myself, at first," he added, in a conciliatory manner. "But you'll soon get over it. Only don't buy anything of importance unless I am with you. That will be your safest way for the present."

Joshua did not reply, but he reluctantly decided that perhaps he would do better to follow Sam's advice. He felt unhappy whenever he thought of his loss. He had been in the city only twenty-four hours, yet it had cost him in the neighborhood of fifty dollars.

We must now return to Stapleton, where Mr. Drummond was still nursing his indignation at the audacity of his son, whom he had never supposed daring enough to rob his strong box. Mrs. Drummond essayed to say one word in defense of Joshua.

"He is a vile young scoundrel!" exclaimed the angry father. "Mark my words, Mrs. Drummond—he will end his days on the gallows."

"How can you say such dreadful things, Mr. Drummond?" said the mother. "Remember, he is your son!"

"I am ashamed to own that I am the father of a thief."

"He would not have taken the money if you had not kept him so close. Twenty-five cents a week is very small

to give a boy of Joshua's age. All of his companions get more."

"It was more than he deserved, the idle vagabond!"

"You are very hard upon him, Mr. Drummond."

"I have reason to be. I suppose," he added, "you justify him in robbing his father of his hard earnings?"

"You know I do not; I only say that, if you had treated him more generously, this would never have happened. The poor boy used to feel mortified, because he never had a cent in his pocket."

"I work hard for my money, Mrs. Drummond, and you needn't expect me to waste it on an idle young rascal."

"He was willing to work. He has told me that if you would let him go to the city he would get a place in a store, and work cheerfully. He was tired of Stapleton."

Mr. Drummond's attention was excited.

"So he was very anxious to go to the city?" he said, inquiringly.

"Yes; he used to speak of wanting to go there."

"Then that's where he is now," said his father. "I might have known it. All the idle vagabonds who are too lazy and shiftless to earn an honest living in the country go to the city. Now, go and lay out a clean shirt for me. I shall start for the city by the early train."

"If you find the poor boy, don't be harsh with him, Jacob," pleaded the mother.

"If I find him," said Mr. Drummond, significantly, "I'll give him a lesson that will cure him of thieving for a long time, I can tell you that!"

Mrs. Drummond turned away, with a sigh, to obey her husband's request. She did not justify Joshua in his course, but she was a mother, and could not help making some excuse for her son.

In Search of a Thief

The next day, Mr. Drummond was one of the passengers by the early train which left Stapleton for New York.

CHAPTER XIX

IN SEARCH OF A THIEF

It was with no pleasant feelings that Jacob Drummond landed in New York. His paternal affection for Joshua had never been very great.

"If I get hold of him, I'll flog him within an inch of his life," he muttered, between his closed teeth.

But it is not so easy to find a particular person in a city of a million inhabitants, and Mr. Drummond was very much puzzled to know what to do, or where to go first. He might have sought the aid of the police, but he wished to inflict private punishment upon him.

"I won't give him any allowance at all," he said to himself. "I'll let him get along without a penny, and see how he likes that! I wonder if he's spent much of the money he stole from me?"

His face contracted with anguish, as he thought that Joshua might squander the greater part of the money before he found him; or, worse still, lose it. His father had a contemptuous opinion of Joshua's shrewdness.

Whenever he came to the city—which was not often—he was in the habit of stopping at Lovejoy's Hotel, near by, and the force of habit led him thither now. At every step, he looked inquisitively about him; but no Joshua met his gaze. In fact, Joshua about an hour later went to Central Park, where he made the surprising bargain of which

we already know, so that there was very little chance of his father's coming upon him.

After walking about in a desultory way, during the forenoon, Mr. Drummond all at once had a bright thought. He remembered that Sam Crawford was in a shoe store in the city, and naturally concluded that Joshua, whom he had seen in Sam's company during the latter's vacation at Stapleton, would, in his inexperience, seek him out. He remembered, also, that Sam's direction had been given him. He felt in his pocket, and, to his great satisfaction, found that he still had it.

"I'll go and see young Crawford," he at once decided.

Taking the Eighth Avenue cars, half an hour brought him to the shoe store. Sam himself was standing in front of the door, ticketing some shoes, when Mr. Drummond got off the car, and touched him on the arm.

Sam started, and flushed a little, when he saw who it was that had touched him.

"Mr. Drummond!" he exclaimed. "I didn't expect to see you!"

"Have you seen anything of Joshua, Sam?" asked Mr. Drummond, hastily.

Sam made up his mind not to betray Joshua—not from any high-minded feeling of friendship, but because he wanted to help Joshua spend the money he had with him. Accordingly, he threw as much surprise as possible into his tone, as he answered: "Joshua! Is he in the city?"

"Then you haven't seen him?" said Mr. Drummond.

"When did he come up?" asked Sam. "I wonder he didn't come to see me."

"He's a young villain!" exclaimed Mr. Drummond.

"What has he done?" asked Sam.

"He's run away with several hundred dollars of my money," said Mr. Drummond, sternly.

"Just as I thought," said Sam to himself. "I didn't think that of Joshua," he added aloud.

"Nor I," said his father; "but he's long been pestering me to let him come to New York, but I wouldn't let him. Didn't he ever say anything to you about it?"

"Yes," said Sam. "He's often spoken of it."

"I hoped you could tell me where to find him," said Mr. Drummond.

"I haven't the least idea where he is," said Sam.

"I may have to go back to Stapleton without finding him," continued Mr. Drummond. "If you see anything of him, I wish you would telegraph up to me at once, and I'll pay all expenses, and——" here Mr. Drummond paused, but at last added, liberally: "I'll give you a dollar besides."

"I shan't want any reward," he said, but he inwardly pronounced him a pretty mean fellow. "Very likely I shall see him, if he stays in the city."

"He won't go away from the city," said Mr. Drummond. "He wanted to live here. Well, good-by. It won't do for me to miss the afternoon train home."

"I wouldn't like to stand in Joshua's shoes when his affectionate papa gets hold of him," said Sam. "It's lucky he didn't happen along just now. So the old man expects to buy me for a dollar. It's too cheap. I always knew he was mean; and Joshua isn't much better."

About five o'clock Joshua came round to the store.

"Most ready to go to supper, Sam?" he asked.

"Wait five minutes, and I'll be ready."

"Where have you been, Joshua?" asked Sam.

"Walking all around. I'm as tired as a dog. I shan't want to go anywhere to-night."

"Who do you think I have seen to-day?" asked Sam.

"I don't know," said Joshua, indifferently.

"The old man!" answered Sam, in italics.

"The old man!" repeated Joshua, turning pale. "Where did you see him?"

"I was standing outside the door, when I felt some one touch my shoulder. I looked round, and there he was."

"My father?"

"Mr. Jacob Drummond, of Stapleton, himself."

"What did he say?" asked Joshua, looking frightened.

"What did he say?" repeated Sam, a little maliciously. "Well, he called you a young villain, the first thing."

"He always treated me mean," said Joshua, resentfully. "What else did he say?"

"He said you'd run away with several hundred dollars of his, and he seemed very anxious to get hold of you."

"You didn't tell him where I was, did you?" said Joshua, in alarm.

"Of course not. I pretended I didn't know anything. What do you think the old man wants me to do?"

"What?"

"He thinks you'll come and see me, sooner or later, and asked me to telegraph to him when you did, so that he might come for you."

"You wouldn't do it, would you, Sam?" said Joshua.

"Do you think I'd betray a friend?" demanded Sam, loftily. "No, Joshua; I am your firm friend. I will never desert you, although your father offered me money."

"Did he?"

"Yes," answered Sam.

"How much?"

"Oh, no doubt he would come down handsomely."

"Do you think he will come to the city again?" asked Joshua.

"Yes, I think he will."

"He might get hold of me," said Joshua, panic-stricken.

"I wouldn't go back to Stapleton for anything. Oh, Sam, where shall I go?"

"I'll tell you what, Joshua," said Sam, after a pause, "I think you'd better leave the city."

"Where shall I go?"

"Go out West. It wouldn't be safe for you to stay here. He might get mad—the old man, I mean—and set the police on your track. You know, he could, on account of the money you took."

"When had I better go?" he asked.

"Soon. Of course, you'll need to turn your government bond into money before you go."

"I'll go and sell the bond to-morrow," said Joshua.

"It wouldn't be safe," said Sam, shaking his head.

"Why not?"

"Your father may have put the police on your track."

"Then, what am I to do?"

"I'll tell you what, Joshua, you're my friend, and I won't desert you. Give me the bond, and I'll sell it for you. It'll be a little risky; still, I wasn't the one who stole it, and so I shall not be in as much danger as you."

"Thank you, Sam," said Joshua, considerably relieved to find his friend willing to incur the danger.

"Let me see. I'll take it at lunch time to-morrow. I can take an hour and a half, and pretend I was detained."

Sam was not disinterested. He had a plan for making a handsome commission out of the sale.

CHAPTER XX

IN DANGER

Joshua handed Sam the five-twenty bond for five hundred dollars the next morning.

"How much do you think you can sell it for, Sam?"

"I ought to get five hundred and fifty dollars for it."

"Five hundred and fifty dollars!" repeated Joshua, elated, for he supposed the bond would only bring its par value.

"But I don't expect to get so much."

"Why not?"

"The dealers will think it stolen, and will refuse to buy unless I sell it under price. It's better than keep the bond."

"Yes," said Joshua, hastily; "but get as much as you can."

"Trust me for that. I'll do better for you than you could; besides, running all the danger."

"Thank you, Sam. I don't know what I should do without you."

"I never desert a friend," said Sam, loftily. He should have added "while that friend has money."

At twelve o'clock Sam went downtown, and had no difficulty in disposing of the bond for five hundred and sixty dollars, the market price.

"How much of this can I venture to take?" he said to himself. Four hundred dollars he set apart for Joshua. The balance—a hundred and sixty dollars—he decided to retain as his commission.

He was half an hour late at the store, but received the sharp reprimand of his employer with equanimity, consol-

ing himself with the hundred and sixty dollars hidden in his pocket.

It was not until the six o'clock dinner that he met Joshua.

"Well," said the latter, eagerly, "did you sell the bond?"

"Yes."

"How much did you get?"

"I hope you won't be disappointed, Joshua, but I had to submit to be cheated. The old fellow felt sure it was stolen, when I refused to refer him to anybody."

"How much did that come to?" asked Joshua.

"Four hundred dollars."

"Then, I was cheated out of a hundred and fifty."

"It couldn't be helped. You'd rather have four hundred dollars than nothing, I suppose."

"Yes, of course; but the man was a swindler."

"Of course, he was," said Sam, cheerfully. "I'd like to kick him myself; but I'll tell you what, Joshua; nobody can prove that you took the money, but the bond could be proved against you, as your father no doubt remembers the number of it. Didn't I do right to sell, or would you rather have had me bring back the bond?"

"I am glad you sold it, only a feller doesn't like to be cheated."

"I shouldn't wonder if the old man thought that way, when he found the bond was gone," said Sam, slyly.

"You needn't speak of that!" said Joshua, irritably. "When would you advise me to start for the West?"

"To-morrow. The fact is, the old man is liable to be after you with a sharp stick any day, and the sooner you get out of his reach the better. You'd better buy a ticket for Chicago."

"I wish I knew somebody in Chicago," said Joshua.

"Oh, you'll get along well enough!" said Sam. "Plenty of fellows make money there. When you're a rich man, you can come back East again. You can pay up the old man what you took from him, and that'll make him all right."

"Ye-es," said Joshua, hesitatingly; "but it would be mean in him to take it, considering I am his only son."

"You'd get it back again some time, you know."

Though Mr. Drummond was far from being a model father, I by no means defend the disrespectful allusion to him as "the old man." Many boys are thus disrespectful in speech who really respect and love their fathers; but, even then, the custom is offensive to good taste and good feeling, and is always to be condemned.

"You owe me some money, you know, Sam," said Joshua. "Can't you pay me before I go?"

"Certainly," said Sam. "I'll do it now, if you can change a five. I raised some money from a fellow."

So saying, he tendered Joshua a five-dollar bill from the hundred and sixty, and the latter gave him back the change.

"Now, Joshua," said Sam, tucking the money into his vest pocket, "you must come to the theater with me this evening, at my expense. I want your last evening in New York to be a jolly one."

"Thank you," said Joshua, graciously; "I'd like to go."

So they went to Wallack's Theater, and had got quite interested in the performance, when, all at once, Joshua clutched his companion by the arm.

"What's the matter?" inquired the wondering Sam.

"Do you see that man?" said Joshua, pointing to a gentleman on the opposite side of the house.

"Yes, I see him. He ain't very handsome. What's his name?"

"It's a man from Stapleton. If he sees me, I'm lost!" and Joshua began to tremble. "Let us go out."

"It's a pity to lose the play," said Sam, reluctantly.

"But I'm in danger," said Joshua, nervously.

"I'll tell you what. We'll go out quietly, and go upstairs, where he can't see us."

"Do you think it will be safe?"

"Of course it will. Come along."

They left their seats in the parquet, and went upstairs.

"I am afraid he will see me when I go out."

"We can go five minutes before the play is over."

Satisfied with this arrangement, Joshua enjoyed the play, now that his anxiety was removed.

When it was evident that it was nearly over, Sam said: "We'd better be going, Joshua. We can get out before the grand rush, and your friend from Stapleton will be none the wiser."

"Yes, come along," said Joshua, eagerly.

But, the same thought of getting out before the grand rush occurred to Mr. Draper, and when the two boys emerged from the theater they met face to face.

"Why, Joshua Drummond!" said Mr. Draper. "How came you here? I didn't know you were here!"

"I've only been here a day or two," he answered.

"Are you going to live in New York?"

"Yes, I'm going to get a place in a store."

"You are in a store already, Sam?" said Mr. Draper to Joshua's companion.

"Yes, sir. I am in a store on Eighth Avenue."

"Do you like being in the city?"

"Oh, yes; I wouldn't go back to the country for anything."

"I am glad I met you both. I will tell your father I met you, Joshua."

"When are you going back to Stapleton?" Joshua asked, faintly.

"To-morrow night."

"And to-morrow night I shall be on my way out West," thought Joshua.

"Good night to you both."

"Good night."

"You had a narrow escape, Joshua," said Sam. "Now, I suppose I shall get into a scrape with your father for not telegraphing to him that I had met you."

The next evening Mr. Draper dropped into Jacob Drummond's store.

"Well, Mr. Drummond," said he, "I met your son in the city."

"You met Joshua?" exclaimed Mr. Drummond, eagerly pausing in cutting off a dress pattern. "Where?"

"At Wallack's Theater."

"At the theater! The young villain! Was he alone?"

"He was with Sam Crawford. What is the matter?"

"He left home without leave. I shall go up to-morrow and bring him back."

He went to New York the next day, and had an unsatisfactory interview with Sam. The latter admitted having seen Joshua, but did not like to betray him. He said he thought he had gone to Boston. Mystified and bewildered, Mr. Drummond was forced to go home without his son, who was now some distance on the way to Chicago. We must now go back to our principal hero, and inquire how Walter was getting on with his Western school.

An Eventful Monday

CHAPTER XXI

AN EVENTFUL MONDAY

And now to return to Walter Conrad, whom we left looking forward to commencing school as Mr. Barclay's successor, on Monday morning. It was certainly a difficult and responsible task for one who was in age but a schoolboy, especially as Walter had reason to believe that there were some who had resolved in advance to dispute his authority. Had he been of a nervous or timid character, he would have been led to back out at the eleventh hour. Monday morning came at length. So far as the weather was concerned, it opened auspiciously. The excitement of having a new teacher, more especially one who, as was generally supposed, would fail in discipline, caused the pupils to assemble earlier than usual on the green plot in front of the schoolhouse.

Among these was Peter Groot. It had always been found necessary by past teachers to appeal to force in this case. When he found that the teacher could "whip" him, he subsided into a sullen submission. But as Peter was a little older than the new teacher, and, as he himself supposed, considerably stronger, he looked forward with confidence to "licking" Walter, if the latter should endeavor to enforce the commands which he intended to disobey.

"How are you, Peter," said John Wall, on arriving at the schoolhouse, twenty minutes early. "How do you like having a new teacher?"

"I like it," said Peter, significantly.

"I suppose you're going to be a good boy, and mind all he says," said John, desirous of making trouble for Walter.

"Not much," said Peter.

"You ain't going to rebel, are you?" inquired John, smiling encouragingly.

"That depends on how the teacher behaves. He ain't goin' to order me round, and he'd better not try it," said Peter, emphatically. "He'll find he has waked up the wrong customer."

"He don't look as if he could manage you," said John.

"Manage me!" repeated Peter, contemptuously. "I can lick him with one hand."

"He may be stronger than he looks," said John, artfully, bent on stirring up Peter to open rebellion.

"He don't weigh as much as me, and I've got twice his muscle. Why, I could keep school better than he."

"I don't think I should like to come to school to you, Peter," said Alfred Clinton, laughing. "I'm afraid you'd break down on teaching fractions."

Peter did not relish the allusion.

"You'd better not be impudent, Alfred Clinton," he said, coloring, "or I may lick you."

"You'd better save your strength, for you may need it."

"Do you mean that I'll need it to lick the master?"

"I hope you won't make any trouble for him."

"On his account?"

"No; I looked at him carefully the other day, and I made up my mind about him."

"Did you?" said Peter, sneeringly. "Will you oblige me by telling me what you think about him?"

"I think that you'll find him a tougher customer to deal with than you think."

Peter burst into derisive laughter.

"What do you think of that, John?" demanded Peter.

John Wall did not in general affect the society of Peter,

but a common hatred often makes strange yoke-fellows; so now he was disposed to coöperate with Peter, in the hope that he would make trouble for Walter, whose independent spirit had occasioned his cordial dislike. When, therefore, Peter addressed him familiarly, he replied: "I'll bet on you, Peter."

"Of course you will; you'd be a fool not to," said Peter.

"He must be crazy," continued John, "or he would know better than to try keeping school here. I don't believe he knows much."

"I guess he knows enough to teach you," said Alfred Clinton, who had taken a fancy to the new teacher.

"Speak for yourself, Alfred Clinton," said John, superciliously. "I'm reading Cæsar."

"I know it," said Alfred, "but I shouldn't think you understood it very well, the way you recite."

"You're not qualified to judge," said John, in a lofty tone. "You're only a beginner in Latin. You don't know enough to criticise one who studies Cæsar."

"Maybe not," said Alfred, "but I know that *habeo* isn't of the first conjugation, as you called it in your last recitation."

"It was only a slip of the tongue. I knew well enough it was the third," returned John.

"Indeed, that's news," said Alfred, quietly. "I always supposed it was the second."

"That's what I meant," said John, coloring. "But I don't care to continue the conversation. I feel sure that the new teacher don't know much."

"I think he will know enough to teach either of us," said Alfred.

John pursed up his mouth, and was silent. He regarded Alfred, who was the son of a poor widow, as far below him in social position.

Just then up came Phineas Morton, a young man of twenty, and standing six feet in his stockings. He was several inches taller, and necessarily much stronger, than Walter, but, fortunately, he was very good-natured, and of a very different disposition from Peter Groot.

"Good morning, boys," he said, pleasantly; "hasn't the master come yet?"

"Not yet," said Peter. "I guess he don't feel in any hurry."

"Why not?"

"I guess he thinks he's undertaken a big job."

"Yes; it isn't easy to teach school. I shouldn't like it myself."

"You could do it better than he."

"Why could I?"

"You could lick any of us, easy."

"A teacher needs more than that."

"The master's a boy, compared with you," said Peter.

"I know it," said Phineas quietly. "If he knows enough to help me along in my studies, I would just as lief have him teacher as Mr. Barclay."

"Then, I wouldn't," said Peter.

"Nor I," said John, who, though he rather disliked Allen Barclay, disliked Walter considerably more.

"Why not?"

"I don't want to be ordered round by a boy. I don't believe he is as old as I am."

"I don't believe you would learn much under any teacher, Peter," said Phineas, laughing.

"Why not?" asked Peter, scowling.

"Why, learning isn't your strong point, you know."

"That's my strong point," said Peter, tapping the muscle of his right arm, significantly.

"You're about right," said Phineas; "you're stronger there than you are in the head."

A minute later one of the younger boys called out: "The master's coming!"

All eyes were turned upon Walter, who was ascending the hill, with several books under his arm. As he approached, Peter, with derisive politeness, took off his hat and bowed low.

Walter quietly raised his hat slightly in return, and said: "Good morning, boys."

He entered the schoolhouse, and the scholars followed him.

"He'll be sick of his bargain before the week's out," said Peter, aside, to John; "you'll see if he don't."

CHAPTER XXII

THE NEW TEACHER

To say that Walter felt quite cool and unconcerned, as he entered the schoolroom, and advanced to his place behind the teacher's desk, would not be entirely true. But, if he felt a little nervous and apprehensive, he had self-command enough not to show it. He looked calmly about him, and, fixing his eyes on the nearest boy, said:

"Will you go to the door and ring the bell?"

Alfred Clinton, for he was the one addressed, was ready and determined to coöperate with the young teacher in every way that might be in his power.

He advanced, respectfully, and, taking the bell, rang it from the door outside.

There was little need of the summons, however, this

morning. Led by curiosity, the habitual loiterers were all in their seats.

Walter rose, and, calmly surveying the fifty scholars, spoke as follows:

"Scholars, before entering upon our duties, it may be proper for me to say a few words. When I came to this place, it was not with the intention of teaching. You will easily judge, from my appearance, that I have not experience to fit me for the post, and am younger than some of you. But I have made up my mind to do my best, and I hope the relations between us will be mutually pleasant and profitable. I will do all I can to make them so. I will, in the first place, go round and take your names, and make inquiries as to the studies you wish to take up. To-morrow we shall be ready to begin in earnest, and go on regularly."

This speech was greeted with applause, in which, after a while, all joined, with two exceptions. These two were Peter Groot and John Wall. Peter leaned back in his seat, with both hands in his pockets, looking at Walter, with an impudent smile on his face, as much as to say, "I am quiet now, but I'll make it hot enough for you by and by." As for John, he regarded Walter with a supercilious glance. He was not likely to break out into open rebellion, not having the courage. He depended on his new friend, Peter, to take bolder measures.

Walter took the school register, and wrote down the name and age of each scholar, learned to what classes he belonged, and then went on. He met with perfectly respectful answers till he came to Peter Groot.

Peter sat, leaning back, with both hands in his pockets. Walter noticed it, and he had no difficulty in foreseeing trouble. But he did not care to precipitate matters.

"What is your name?" he asked.

Peter pretended not to hear.

"What is your name?" demanded Walter, in a quick, imperative tone.

Peter turned slowly, and answered: "Peter."

"What other name?"

"Groot."

"What is your age?"

"Sixteen. What is yours?"

Of course, the question was an impudent one, but Walter answered it.

"We are about the same age," he said, quietly.

"So I thought," said Peter, smiling meaningly.

"What branches do you study?"

"Reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography."

"Very well. You may come up in your usual classes." Walter advanced to the next desk.

"Your name is John Wall, I believe?" said Walter, writing it down.

"Yes."

"Your age?"

"Fifteen—'most sixteen."

"What do you study?"

"I study Cæsar," said John, in an important tone.

"Yes, I remember. How far did you go with Mr. Barclay?"

"I am at the fifth chapter in the second book."

"How much are you accustomed to take?"

"Fifteen lines."

"That is a short lesson."

"Did you take any more when you studied Cæsar?" asked John.

"From fifty to seventy-five lines," answered Walter, rather to the mortification of John. Then it occurred to the latter that it would be a good thing if he could

"stick" the new teacher. Accordingly, he opened his Cæsar at a passage in the preceding lesson, which he had found difficult, and said: "There is something here that I don't understand. Will you read it to me?"

"Certainly. What is the passage?"

Though Walter was a good scholar, as far as he had gone, I don't, of course, claim that he could read anywhere in Cæsar at sight. But this passage he understood perfectly well. He read it fluently, and John was disappointed to find that he had failed in his benevolent design. Indeed, he saw that Walter was probably a better Latin scholar than the previous teacher; and, though he ought to have been glad of this, he was so prejudiced against Walter, and so anxious to humiliate him, that he was sorry, instead.

"Whenever you meet with a difficulty, John," said Walter, after finishing the reading, "I shall be ready to help you."

He left John, and went to the next desk.

"He knows more than I thought he did," said John to himself, "but he can't manage this school. He'll have to give up before the week is out, I'll bet. Father ought to have known better than to give us a boy for a teacher."

Among the last, Walter came to the seat occupied by Phineas Morton. Phineas, the oldest pupil in the school, was twenty years of age, and six feet in height. There was a decided contrast between him and the youthful teacher, and Phineas felt a little mortified by it. He had been set to work early, and from twelve to eighteen had not gone to school at all. Then, becoming aware of his deficiencies, he came to school, and was, of course, placed in classes with boys much younger. But he submitted to this patiently, and had studied so faithfully that he was now in the highest class in all the English branches.

"I do not need your name," said Walter, politely. "I believe you are Phineas Morton?"

"Yes, sir," said Phineas.

"What is your age?"

"Twenty. Rather old to come to school," he added.

"One is never too old to learn, Mr. Morton," said Walter. "Some of our most prominent public men have only made a beginning after they have reached twenty-one," said Walter. "You are quite right not to mind your being older than the rest of the scholars."

"I have minded it a little, I am afraid," Phineas acknowledged; "but you have encouraged me, by what you have just said, and I shall not care hereafter."

When he had taken down the names of all the boys, Walter commenced with the girls. Here he had no trouble, for all were disposed to regard the young teacher with favor. It might have been, in part, because he was good-looking, but it was also, in part, because he was quiet and self-possessed, and appeared to understand his business."

CHAPTER XXIII

A STORM BREWING

When he had taken the names of all the scholars Walter said: "We shall not be able to enter upon our studies regularly till to-morrow. First of all I will hear you read. Mr. Morton, will you commence?"

Phineas read respectably till he came to the word "misled," which he pronounced as if it were mizzled. Instantly there was a shout of laughter from the other scholars, Peter's being louder than the rest.

Phineas looked abashed and mortified.

"Have I made a mistake?" he said, inquiringly.

"Yes," said Walter, who preserved his own gravity. "The word should be pronounced mis-led."

"I didn't know that."

"The mistake you made is not an uncommon one," said Walter; "I remember making it once myself."

The mortification of Phineas Morton was removed by this frank confession of his teacher.

"I take it for granted," continued our hero, "that those who have laughed just now will not object to be laughed at when they come to make mistakes."

At length it came to the turn of Peter Groot. He was by no means remarkable in scholarship, and particularly read in a stumbling, hesitating manner, which made it very improbable that he would ever win reputation as a public reader. In the passage he was reading occurred the geographical name, Straits of the Dardanelles. Peter ought not to have made any mistake in reading it. But he read it "Straits of the Darning Needles," which was so ludicrous that Walter had hard work not to join in the general chorus of laughter.

Peter looked up, scowling.

"You should say Straits of the Dardanelles, Peter," said Walter.

"That's what I said," growled Peter.

He saw that he had made a blunder quite as bad as Phineas, and it took away the satisfaction he expected to have in reminding his fellow-pupil of his. He didn't like Phineas Morton, mainly because he was unable to bully him. Besides, Phineas had more than once interfered to protect younger boys from the despotism of Peter.

When the reading was concluded, Walter rang the bell for recess. Phineas Morton came up to the teacher's desk.

"Thank you, Mr. Howard," he said, "for your kind-

ness about my mistake. Some teachers would have laughed at me."

"I suppose it is natural to laugh at our mistakes," returned Walter. "I was laughed at when I made the same one. But I know, from my own feelings, that it is not agreeable, and I don't laugh unless I can't help it. Peter's mistake was more amusing than yours. Though he was ready to laugh at you, I observed that he didn't enjoy being laughed at himself."

"Peter is a bad boy. I am afraid you will have trouble with him, Mr. Howard."

"So Mr. Barclay told me. I expect it, but I do not fear it. If Peter behaves well, I shall treat him well. If he undertakes to make trouble, I shall be ready for him."

"I am ready to stand by you, Mr. Howard," he said, in a low tone. "If you need any help, I will be on hand."

"Thank you, Mr. Morton," said Walter, gratefully. "If there is need of it, I will certainly accept your offer. But if there should be any difficulty between Peter and myself, I think I can hold my own without assistance."

"Peter is strong," suggested Phineas, doubtfully.

"I should judge so from his appearance, but strength is not all. Can he box?"

"No; he knows nothing of it."

"I do," said Walter, significantly. "If there shall be need of it, I mean to let him feel what I know about boxing."

Phineas smiled. "Peter will be troublesome till you best him in a fair fight. After that, all will go right."

Meanwhile Peter and John were standing together at one end of the playground.

"Do you think he'll stay long?" asked John, insinuatingly.

"Not more'n a week."

"Perhaps he will," said John.

"He can't keep order," said Peter. "I can lick him myself."

"Perhaps he is stronger than you think for," suggested John.

"Look here, John Wall, do you mean ter say you think he can lick me?"

"No, I don't believe he can."

"Of course he can't. Do you see that muscle?"

"You have got a good deal of muscle, Peter, that's a fact."

"Of course I have. Just feel it. Do you see that fist?"

"Yes."

"If the master should feel it, he wouldn't know what had happened to him. I could knock him higher'n a kite."

"I guess he's afraid of you, Peter. He didn't laugh at you when you made that mistake."

"I'd like to see him laugh at me," said Peter. "But I saw you laugh," he added.

"Did I?" said John.

"Yes, you did."

"You know a feller can't help laughing when he sees others."

"I don't know about that," said Peter, only half satisfied.

"You didn't make half as bad a mistake as Phineas Morton."

"Phineas is an old fool."

Probably Peter would not have said this, if he had known that the person of whom he was speaking was within hearing distance. He realized it, however, when he was suddenly tripped up, looking up in the face of Phineas.

"What did you do that for?" he demanded, angrily.

"To teach you better manners," said Phineas, coolly.

Peter was very angry.

"Why don't you take one of your size?" he said, sulkily, as he gathered himself slowly up from the ground.

"One reason is, because there isn't any one of my size in school."

"It's cowardly to attack a smaller fellow."

"Not when the smaller fellow sees fit to be impudent and insulting. But how long have you acted on that rule, Peter? Didn't I see you fighting yesterday with Alfred Johnson, who is a head shorter than you are?"

"He wouldn't lend me his ball."

"He wasn't obliged to, was he?"

"I hate a fellow that's so careful of his things."

"All right; I may want to borrow something of you some time. If you don't lend it, I am to knock you down, am I?"

Peter did not find it convenient to answer this question.

"Come along, John," he said.

John Wall followed him to a different part of the yard.

"I hate that Phineas Morton," said Peter. "He's a brute."

"I don't like him myself," said John.

"Just because he's so big, he wants to boss it over the rest of us," said Peter.

Now if there was anybody in school of whom it could be said that he wanted to "boss it" over his schoolfellows, it was Peter himself.

At this point the schoolbell rang, indicating that the recess was over.

The two boys entered a little later than the rest. Walter observed their companionship, and drew his own conclusions, knowing the enmity of both toward him. But he said nothing.

A Practical Joke

CHAPTER XXIV

A PRACTICAL JOKE

THE remainder of the day passed without incident. Soon after eight the next morning Peter called at the house of his new associate. He carried in his hand a covered basket, from which proceeded some signs of dissatisfaction of an unmistakable character.

"What have you got there, Peter?" asked John, curiously.

"Can't you tell?"

"A hen, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"It is a present for the teacher."

"What!" exclaimed John, in surprise.

"Are you surprised that I am going to give him a present?" said Peter.

"Yes. I thought you didn't like him."

"No more I do."

"Then why——"

"I'll tell you. I'm going to fasten the hen in his chair, so that when he comes he will find his seat occupied.

"Good!" said John. "He'll be mad."

"Of course he will."

"He may find out who put the hen there."

"That's what I want him to do."

"He may punish you."

"I'd like to see him do it," said Peter, wagging his head. "He'd find out he'd got a hard job on hand. Come, are you ready to go to school?"

"I don't generally go so soon."

"I want to be there early, so as to tie the hen.

"All right; I'll get my hat."

The two boys started for school, and arrived nearly half an hour early. They entered the house, and, by means of a stout cord, soon secured the cackling hen to the "master's" chair.

Soon some of the other scholars arrived. Most of them laughed, but Alfred Clinton ventured to remonstrate.

"You ought not to do that, Peter," he said.

"Well, have you got anything to say about it?" asked Peter, defiantly. "Do you want to fight? If you do, come on."

"I am not anxious to fight," said Alfred, quietly.

"I thought you wouldn't care about it," said Peter, significantly.

"I am not afraid of you, if that's what you mean."

"You look out, Alfred Clinton, or I may hurt you."

"Don't trouble yourself."

"I shall have to fight that boy some time," said Peter to John. "He's getting impudent."

"He ain't much," said John, contemptuously. "He and his mother are as poor as poverty. He's a proud beggar."

"So he is," said Peter, whose worldly circumstances were scarcely any better than Alfred's, his father being a mechanic, whose drunken habits rendered his income very precarious and fluctuating. He did not realize that John looked down upon him quite as much as he did on Alfred, but thought fit to conceal this feeling at present, on account of his hatred to Walter.

At last Walter was seen ascending the hill on which the schoolhouse was situated. The scholars who were grouped in front immediately entered, and took their seats.

Walter was a little surprised at their unusual prompt-

ness. One glance at the teacher's chair, on entering the schoolroom, showed him what had made the scholars take their seats so promptly.

He was too much of a boy still not to be amused. He turned to the scholars with a smile.

"I see you have got a new teacher," he said.

The scholars laughed, and the hen flapped her wings and cackled.

"I dare say," continued Walter, "the hen is competent to teach the one who put her there."

There was another laugh, but this time it was at Peter's expense. Peter did not join in the mirth.

"Besides," said Walter, "in this free country I don't approve of compulsion; therefore I shall release her. If her owner would like to take charge of her, he can come forward."

Walter took out his knife and was about to sever the string which secured the hen to the chair, when Peter, with a defiant air, rose from his seat, and advancing to the front, said: "That is my hen."

"Is it?" said Walter, not appearing surprised. "Didn't it give you considerable trouble to bring her here?"

"No," said Peter, regarding the teacher attentively, to see whether he was making game of him.

"How did you bring her—in your hand?"

"No, in a basket."

"That was better. Well, Peter, we are indebted to you for a good joke, and if you would like to carry the hen back now, I will excuse you for half an hour."

Peter was astonished at being thanked for a practical joke, which he thought would make the teacher "mad." Walter had turned the tables upon him. There wasn't much fun in transporting the hen back again alone.

"May John Wall go with me?" he asked.

"Yes, if he desires it," said Walter.

Peter looked toward John. The latter, after a little hesitation, decided to go.

Peter brought in the basket, and the hen, after a little trouble, was put in. Then the two boys, Peter and John, started away with her. Walter commenced the duties of the forenoon. If he had only flown into a passion, Peter would have felt repaid for his trouble. Now, as he trudged along the road, he was not quite sure whether he was not sorry for having attempted it.

"I thought he would be mad," he said at length.

"So did I," said John.

"Do you think he thought it was me?"

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder."

"Perhaps," said Peter, brightening up, "he was afraid of making a fuss about it."

"Very likely," said John.

"I think he is afraid of me," said Peter, complacently. "He must know that I am stronger than he."

"I guess you are right."

"That's the reason he turned it off as a joke. I guess he wants to keep on good terms with me."

"Only, you know he said that the hen was qualified to teach the one who put her there."

"Do you think he meant me then?" asked Peter, scowling.

"I guess he did."

"Then he insulted me."

"It does look like it," said John, who wanted to make mischief.

"I'll get even with him—you see if I don't," said Peter, angrily.

A Poor Grammarian

CHAPTER XXV

A POOR GRAMMARIAN

PETER would have liked to believe Walter afraid of him, but he was reluctantly forced to admit that there was no satisfactory evidence of this feeling as yet.

"He doesn't know how strong I am. He thinks he can lick me," he suggested to John.

"Very likely," acquiesced his companion.

"But don't you think I can lick him?"

"Of course you can."

"I am heavier than he."

"How much do you weigh?"

"A hundred and thirty pounds."

"That's good weight."

"How much do you think he weighs?"

"About a hundred and twenty."

This was a good guess, Walter weighing really but four pounds more. He was not quite so "chunky" as Peter, but he was quicker and more agile. Besides, as we know, he knew something of boxing; and of this Peter was absolutely ignorant. Peter's plan in fighting was to pitch in heavily, and as he was careful to fight only with those whom he knew to be smaller and weaker than himself, he had achieved a long list of victories. The natural result was to make him confident in his prowess, and a bully.

"I'd just as lief get into a fight with the master today," said Peter; "but there's one thing I'm afraid of."

"What's that?"

"I am afraid that old fool Phineas Morton would come to his help. It would be mean in Phineas."

"Of course it would," said John. "What makes you think he would interfere?"

"He don't like me. You saw what he did to-day—the brute!"

"You might try it some day when Phineas is absent."

"He ain't absent very often."

"He gets a headache sometimes, and gets dismissed."

"So he does. I wish he'd have a headache to-day."

They had nearly reached Peter's home when General Wall rode by in his chaise. Recognizing the boys and wondering why they were out during school hours, he stopped his horse and called out: "John, where are you going?"

"With Peter."

"Hasn't school commenced?"

"Yes."

"Then why are you not there?"

"We were in school, but the master let us go for half an hour."

"What for?"

"To carry home this hen."

"Whose hen is it?"

"Peter's."

"How came it at school?"

John looked at Peter, and the latter answered readily, not being overbashful, "I carried it there."

"What for?" asked the general, surprised.

"I tied it in the master's chair."

"What did he say?" asked General Wall, in some curiosity.

"He said," answered John, who took a little malicious satisfaction in annoying Peter, "that the hen was qualified to teach the one who brought her there."

"Very good," said the general, laughing. "He had you there, Peter."

Peter scowled, but did not reply.

"Was the teacher angry?"

"No; he took it as a joke, and told Peter he might carry the hen home."

"There was no need of your coming too, John."

"Peter wanted me."

General Wall was a little surprised at this. He knew his son and had heard him more than once speak in contemptuous terms of Peter.

"What made you tell your father what the master said of me?" demanded Peter, angrily, when General Wall had driven by.

"I didn't think you'd care," said John, not quite truthfully.

"Well, I do care," said Peter, sullenly, "and I don't want you to speak of it again."

"You won't mind after you've got even with him."

"No, but I haven't got even with him yet."

"You will, though."

"Of course I will. I wish I could to-day."

When the boys returned to the schoolhouse it was time for Peter's class in grammar to recite. The latter did not belong to the first class, but the second, and it happened that he was the oldest and largest scholar in his class, but not by any means the most proficient. He wanted to join the first class, that he might no longer be humiliated by being associated with those smaller and younger than himself. When, therefore, the second class in grammar took their places, he remained in his seat. Walter might not have noticed this, but one of the class spoke, saying: "Peter Groot belongs to this class."

Peter looked up and said: "No, I don't."

"Yes, he does."

"Have you been accustomed to recite in this class, Peter?" asked Walter.

"Yes."

"Then why do you not take your place?"

"I'm goin' into the first class," said Peter, defiantly.

"I have no objections to that, if you are qualified."

"I am qualified."

"That I can determine after one recitation. Take your place to-day with your old class, and then, if I judge you fit I will let you enter the first class."

Peter hesitated. He did not want to recite with his old class at all. However, he thought it best to submit for the present, and, rising, advanced to his place.

Presently it came to Peter's turn to parse.

"You may parse 'had been conquered,' Peter," said the young teacher.

"Had been conquered is an adverb," said Peter, hesitatingly.

"You surely cannot mean that!" said Walter.

"I thought it was an adverb."

"It is a verb. Go on and parse it."

The whole sentence read thus: "If the Americans had been conquered in their struggle for independence, the cause of political liberty and human progress would have been retarded by at least a century."

"It is a common active passive verb," said Peter, masculine gender, objective case, and governed by Americans."

This was so evidently absurd that the entire class burst into a shout of laughter, in which Walter had great difficulty in not joining.

"I am afraid you spoke without reflecting, Peter," he said. "The verb could not be both active and passive, and the rest of your description applies properly to nouns."

Peter's ideas of grammar were very far from clear.

At the end of the recitation, Walter said: "You may remain in this class, Peter. You are not qualified to enter the first class."

"Why not?" demanded Peter, in a surly tone.

"You must know as well as I do," said Walter, rather provoked. "If not, the rest of your class can tell you."

"I want to go into the first class," persisted Peter.

"I cannot consent to your doing so. Judging from your recitation to-day, I should say it would be better for you to join a lower class."

Peter was so astonished at this decided remark that he did not make any further remonstrance. There dawned upon him the conviction that Walter could not be afraid of him, or he would never have dared to speak to him in such terms.

CHAPTER XXVI

PUNISHING A BULLY

About an hour before the close of the afternoon school Phineas Morton went up to the teacher's desk and said: "I have a bad headache, Mr. Howard. If you will excuse me, I would like to go home."

"Certainly, Mr. Morton."

Phineas went out of the schoolroom. Peter Groot exchanged looks with John Wall. All had happened as he desired. Now he felt safe in precipitating a conflict.

His first overt act was to drop his slate heavily on the floor. Walter looked up, but said nothing. Five minutes later, Peter, having piled all his books near the edge of his desk, gave them a push and they, too, dropped on the floor.

"Be a little more careful, Peter," said Walter, mildly. "You are disturbing the school."

Peter mistook this mild tone for a confession of timidity, and it emboldened him. He threw up his head, and,

leaning back in his seat, stared insolently at the young teacher.

"It's coming," thought Walter. "Well, it's just as well now as at any other time."

"Peter, will you pick up your books?" he said, calmly.

Peter made no motion to obey, but sat still, staring insolently at the teacher.

"Didn't you hear me?" said Walter.

"Yes," said Peter, "I heard you."

"Then why don't you obey me?"

"I will pick them up when I get ready," said Peter, impudently.

"You appear to forget that I am the teacher of this school, and you are my scholar," said Walter.

"You are a boy like me," said Peter. "I ain't goin' to be ordered round by a boy no older than I am."

"I am aware," said Walter, quietly, "that I am only a boy, and that some of my pupils, probably yourself, are older than I am. I have had no trouble thus far with anyone but you. What is your object in making trouble?"

"I ain't goin' to be ordered round by a boy," said Peter.

"I don't intend to do any ordering, except what is absolutely necessary. But I intend to keep order," said Walter, firmly. "You can continue to attend school, or you can leave it. Take your choice."

"I am comin' to school," said Peter, "and I will behave as I have a mind to."

"Not if I can prevent it," said Walter, resolutely, his eyes flashing with anger.

"What are you goin' to do about it?" demanded Peter, insolently.

"Come out on the floor if you would like to be informed."

Punishing a Bully

"I shall stay where I am," said Peter, defiantly.

"I have no objection, but you must keep order."

Peter's answer to this was to throw his slate on the floor.

Walter felt that the time for forbearance was past. If he suffered this insolence to go unpunished his authority in the school was overthrown.

He walked up to Peter's desk, eying him in a quiet, determined manner.

"You have defied my authority," he said, "and insulted me before the rest of the scholars. You believe me to be unable to enforce my orders. Come out on the floor and I will convince you to the contrary."

"I am comfortable where I am," said Peter, glancing about him triumphantly.

"Then, as you don't accept my offer, I must force it upon you."

Walter, who now stood beside Peter's desk, seized him suddenly by the collar, and by a quick movement jerked him into the aisle between the desks. Peter had not anticipated this. The smile of triumph faded from his face, and his features were distorted with rage.

"You'll be sorry for this!" he screamed, adding an oath, which is better omitted. "I'll pay you up for it."

He knew how to fight after his style, and prepared to "pitch in." Walter had drawn back a little, so as to be clear of the desks, and Peter rushed. He lead for the young teacher's head, but Walter threw up his defense, and warded it off with the greatest ease. Peter again lead heavily. But this again was warded off. Walter wished to show Peter that his own efforts were futile. In proportion as Peter discovered the ill success of his attempts to hit his opponent his rage became more ungov-

ernable, and he began to curse and swear. At length, when he felt it to be time, Walter retaliated. One swift, well-planted blow, which Peter was utterly unable to ward off, and the troublesome pupil found himself lying upon his back on the floor of the schoolroom.

Peter was not a hero, but he was not altogether without pluck, and he was up again quickly.

Walter held himself in readiness. He wished this to be a decisive battle. "I will give Peter all the chance he wants," he said to himself. "He must find out once for all that I am more than his match, and then he will cease to trouble me."

Peter pitched in again. He saw that the teacher was more scientific than himself, but feeling that in strength he was quite his equal, he tried to grasp Walter around the waist, which would of course have given him a decided advantage, and neutralized Walter's superior science, but our hero was too wary for this. Taking advantage of Peter's unguarded state, he planted another heavy blow, which, like the first, prostrated his opponent.

The scholars looked on with intense interest. Not one except John Wall sympathized with Peter. When Peter went down a second time, there was a stamping of feet, intended as applause.

"Be kind enough not to applaud," said Walter, turning to them. "I am glad your sympathies are with me, but I hope you will not mortify your schoolfellow."

This manly request raised Walter still higher in the opinion of his pupils. They saw that he had no desire to triumph over Peter; that he was only influenced by the desire to maintain his authority. When Peter had again been knocked down, Walter addressed him calmly, "If you wish to keep on, Peter, I will accommodate you, but you must know by this time that you stand no chance of suc-

cess. I know something of boxing, and it is clear that you do not."

"I'm as strong as you are," growled Peter.

"You may be, but you don't know how to use your strength. Suppose we stop here. I shall bear you no grudge."

"That's fair, Peter," said half a dozen boys from their seats.

Peter did not answer, but he did not offer to renew the contest. He rose and walked quietly to his desk and seated himself, with his opinions of the "master's" prowess decidedly revolutionized. Walter walked back to the teacher's desk, and quietly called the next class. He made up his mind neither by look nor word to remind Peter of his defeat, but to do all he could to spare him humiliation. He wanted, if possible, to convert him from an enemy to a friend.

CHAPTER XXVII

REFORMATION

THE result of his conflict with the new teacher mortified Peter not a little. Had it been a close contest he would not have minded it so much. Peter had been tripped up by Phineas Morton, as we know, but the difference in size was such that it was no mortification. Now he recalled his boasts that he could "lick the master," with some shame, since it had turned out that he was no match for him.

When school was over, Peter slipped off alone. He was afraid they would twit him. Defeat is a test of friendship, and even John Wall, since the ignominious failure of Peter, was disposed to be less intimate with him. John was no

less anxious for the new teacher's failure, but he saw that Peter was not the one to bring it about.

The next day Peter was walking slowly along to school, not quite decided whether he would not play truant, when he heard himself called by name. Looking around, he recognized the last one he wished to meet—the teacher.

"Good morning, Peter," he said.

"Morning," muttered Peter.

"I suppose you are on your way to school. I am glad to have your company."

"Are you?" asked Peter, superciliously.

"You mustn't bear a grudge against me, Peter, for our little difficulty yesterday."

"You wouldn't have thrown me, if you hadn't known how to box," said Peter.

"No, I don't believe I should," said Walter, frankly. "You are pretty strong, Peter."

"I thought I was as strong as you," said Peter, thawing a little.

"I think you are, but strength isn't everything. Do you know anything about boxing?"

"No, I never had no chance to learn."

"I don't pretend to know much about it myself," said Walter. "I will teach you all I know, if you want to learn."

"Will you?" asked Peter, astonished.

"With pleasure. It will be good practice for me."

"I shouldn't think you would want to," said Peter.

"Why not?"

"Because you can lick me now; but if I knew as much about boxing as you, perhaps you couldn't."

"Oh," said Walter, laughing, "there won't be any need of it."

"Why not?"

"Because you are going to be my friend."

"How do you know?" said Peter; but Walter saw a difference in his tone.

"Because there is no reason why we should not be. I am a boy like yourself, and the only difference between us is, that I have a better education."

"I don't know very much," said Peter.

"But you want to know more, don't you?"

"Ye-es," said Peter, hesitatingly.

"Of course you do. You want to rise in the world, and you won't be likely to do it without education. It's the same way with me."

"Don't you know enough?" asked Peter.

"Far from enough. I want to go through college, but I must earn money enough first. My father failed, or I should still have been studying. Now, Peter, as long as I remain here, I will do all I can to help you on, if you will work yourself."

Peter was not wholly bad. There was something in him that responded to this magnanimity of the teacher, whom he had striven to annoy.

"I shouldn't think you'd be so kind to me, Mr. Howard," he said, "when I tried to trouble you so much."

"Oh, that's gone by, Peter! I depend upon the older scholars, such as you and Phineas Morton, to help me, instead of hindering me. Will you do it, Peter?"

"Yes, I will," said Peter.

"That's right. Then we are friends."

He offered his hand to Peter, and the latter took it. He felt flattered at being classed with Phineas Morton.

"If any of the boys make trouble, I'll help you, Mr. Howard," he volunteered.

"Thank you, Peter. With you and Phineas on my side, I am not afraid of any trouble."

Reformation

"When will you give me the first boxing lesson?" asked Peter.

"To-night, after school, if you like."

"All right, I'll stop."

Great were the surprise and curiosity of the scholars assembled in front of the schoolhouse when they saw Peter Groot and the "master" walking together, and apparently on friendly terms. When Walter had entered the schoolhouse, they crowded upon Peter with questions.

"Did he give you a scolding, Peter?" asked Charles Carney.

"Of course he didn't," said Peter.

"What did he say?"

"He promised to teach me to box."

"He did?" exclaimed Charles, in astonishment.

"Yes, he's goin' to give me my first lesson to-night, after school."

"And you don't hate him any more?"

"No; he's a tiptop feller. I'll lick any boy that says he ain't."

"That's the way to talk, Peter," said Phineas Morton. "We're together in that. If we stand by Mr. Howard, he'll get along."

"That's what he told me," said Peter, gratified at his rising importance. "I'm goin' to study hard, and see if I can't be somebody."

"Then you may count me your friend, Peter. We won't laugh at each other's mistakes hereafter, but we'll both see if we can't improve."

There was one, however, who was not pleased at Peter's change. This was John Wall. At recess he managed to speak to Peter alone.

"It seems to me you've changed since yesterday, Peter," he said, with a sneer.

"So I have," said Peter.

"Was it the licking the teacher gave you that changed you?" asked John, with the same tone.

"Look here, John Wall," said Peter, "if you say that again, I'll knock you over."

"I didn't think you were going back on me, after all you said. I thought it must be because you was afraid."

"I ain't afraid of you, as you'll find out. You're a mean feller, and a coward. You wanted me to get into a fight with the master, because you hated him, and didn't dare to fight him yourself. I like him a good deal better than I do you."

"You may if you want to," said John, mortified. "I'm a gentleman's son."

"You ain't a gentleman yourself, that's sure."

John walked away in dudgeon.

Meanwhile Phineas Morton had gone up to the teacher's desk.

"Have you recovered from your headache, Mr. Morton?" asked Walter.

"Yes, thank you, Mr. Howard. I find you gained a great victory while I was away."

Walter smiled.

"What surprises me is, that Peter has turned over to your side. I heard him threaten to lick any boy that said anything against you."

"Did he say that?" asked Walter.

"Yes; how did you manage it, Mr. Howard?"

"By letting him see that I was his friend."

"You won't have any more trouble now, Mr. Howard. Peter has been the ringleader in all school disturbances, and now that you have won him over all will go smoothly."

Phineas Morton's prediction was verified. Peter studied well, and began to improve rapidly in his studies.

Walter encouraged him in every way. He carried out his promise, and taught Peter what he knew of boxing.

So matters stood when Walter gained some information that led to important results.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A FORTUNE AT STAKE

After his victory over Peter, Walter had no further trouble. Peter had always been at the bottom of all opposition to the different teachers, and he had been instrumental in getting rid of more than one. It was the general testimony that not for years had such an interest been manifested in study by the pupils, or the discipline been more gentle, yet effectual. Our young hero won golden opinions from all.

He still boarded at the Portville House. Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones still seemed disposed to get up a flirtation with him. But Walter wisely thought that he was too young for that, nor were the attractions of Miss Jones, who was more than ten years his senior, sufficiently great to turn his head. Still he occasionally passed an evening in company with her and her brother, and was generally called upon to listen to some poetic effusion from the prolific pen of Miss Jones. One evening the poetess exhibited to her young visitor, with great complacence, a copy of a small weekly paper in which appeared, in a conspicuous place:

LINES ON AN AUTUMN LEAF,

BY MELINDA ATHANASIA JONES.

These she had sent to the editor with a year's subscription, which perhaps operated upon the editor's judgment.

"See what a kind notice the editor has of my poor verses," she said.

"'We welcome to our columns this week "Lines on an Autumn Leaf," by Miss Jones. The fair authoress will please accept our thanks.'"

"Read the lines, Melinda," said Ichabod, her brother.

"I don't know but Mr. Howard will find them tiresome," she said modestly.

"Please read them, Miss Jones," said Walter, politely.

Thus invited, the young lady read, in an affected voice, the verses.

"Melindy wrote that in half an hour, Mr. Howard," said the admiring Ichabod. "I timed her. I never knew her to do up a poem so quick before. Generally she has to stop a long time between the verses, and rolls her eyes, and bites the end of her pen handle; but this time she wrote it off like two-forty."

"The muses inspired you," suggested Walter.

"You are very kind to say so, Mr. Howard. The lines were written in a sad and pensive mood, as you will guess. But I find it sweet to be sad at times—don't you?"

"I don't think I do," said our hero.

"I'd rather be jolly, a good deal," said Ichabod.

"Tastes differ," said the hostess. "I am of a pensive, thoughtful temperament, and at times I seem to live in a world of my own. 'Twas so with Byron and Mrs. Hemans, I have been told."

"I am glad I ain't a poet," said Ichabod. "I shouldn't like to feel so."

"You never will, Ichabod," said his sister. "You are not gifted with the poetic temperament."

"No more I am. I never could make a rhyme, to save

my life. The first line comes sort of easy, but it's the second that is the sticker."

"Strange what differences are found in the same family, Mr. Howard," said Melinda, with a calm superiority. "Have you provoked the muse lately, Mr. Howard?" she asked.

"No, Miss Jones. If I should undertake to write verses after I get home from school, my mind would certainly stray away to fractions, or something equally prosaic."

"This is a pity. You should try to cultivate and develop your powers. Perhaps the editor of this paper would insert some of your verses."

"I don't think I shall offer any. Besides, I am afraid I could not reach the high standard which the paper has attained since you became a contributor."

"You are a sad flatterer, Mr. Howard," said the delighted Melinda.

"I assure you, Miss Jones, that I could not write anything like the lines on a 'dying leaf.'"

"Oh, I am sure you could, Mr. Howard. You are too modest. Those lines you once read me were so sweet."

"Now it is you that flatters, Miss Jones."

Nine weeks of the school term had passed, and two more would bring vacation. Nothing had been said to Walter about his teaching the following term, but he presumed it would be offered him, since his administration had been an undoubted success. In another way, however, he had not yet succeeded. He had not been able to learn anything more of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company, and this was the great object of his present visit to Portville. He was thinking over this, and wondering what course it was best for him to take, when Edward Atkins, one of his scholars, brought him a letter from the post office.

He opened it hastily, for he saw by the handwriting that it was from Mr. Shaw, his guardian.

"DEAR WALTER" (it commenced):—"I am sorry you have not yet been able to learn anything more definite about the affairs of the Mining Company. I am in receipt of another letter from Mr. Wall, offering three thousand dollars for your interest in the mine. He says that it will be necessary to decide at once, or the offer will be withdrawn. Now my impression is, that the last clause is only meant to force us to a decision that may be prejudicial to our interests. On the other hand, three thousand dollars, although far less than the sum your father invested, are not lightly to be rejected. With economy it would be more than enough to carry you through college, thus putting you in a way to earn an honorable living. Still, we do not want to be cheated by a designing man. I am not sure whether it would not be a good idea for you to visit the mines yourself, and form your own opinion from what you see. I understand that you will have a vacation soon. Suppose you devote that time to a journey to the mines, saying nothing, of course, in Portville, of your design.

"Let me know your decision in the matter as soon as possible. I will meanwhile write to Mr. Wall, postponing our decision, but promising to make one speedily.

"Truly your friend,

"CLEMENT SHAW."

Walter had scarcely finished reading this letter when General Wall was ushered into his room.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE MYSTERY OF THE MINE

WALTER hastened to place a chair for his visitor.

"Ahem! you are quite pleasantly situated, Mr. Howard," said the great man, sitting down.

"Yes, sir, I am quite satisfied with my boarding place."

"I hope you like our town, also."

"I have found my residence here very pleasant thus far."

"I must do you the justice to say that your services as a teacher have proved generally satisfactory."

"I am glad to hear you say so."

"You may depend upon it that public sentiment is strongly in your favor."

"Things have gone very smoothly. Peter Groot is now one of my strongest supporters."

"You have certainly succeeded remarkably well, Mr. Howard. I was at first led to fear that, on account of your youth, you would be unable to maintain the necessary discipline. How has John progressed?"

"He has made progress, General Wall, especially of late. I think he thought me too strict, but I wanted to make him thorough. He has good abilities, but at first he did not apply himself sufficiently."

"I think you are right, Mr. Howard," said General Wall, who was a sensible man. "You have pursued the right course with him. But my object in calling this evening was to ask you if you would agree to take the school next term."

"I hardly know what to say, General Wall. My plans are not fixed."

"I hope you will agree to do so. I shall be willing to

add five dollars a month to your salary from my own purse."

"That is liberal, General Wall. How long will vacation be?"

"Four weeks. During that time, if you are willing to teach my son an hour a day, I will pay your board here."

"If I were intending to remain in Portville I would accept the offer, but I shall spend the time in traveling."

"Indeed! In what direction?"

Walter answered vaguely, for he was not willing to let General Wall know that he meant to visit the mines.

"Then," said the visitor, rising to go, "I will consider that you are engaged to teach the next term."

"Yes, sir, on this condition, that if circumstances arise, I may be released upon notifying you."

"But such circumstances are not likely to arise, are they, Mr. Howard?"

"I think not."

"Well, I will trust that nothing will occur to prevent your remaining with us. Good evening."

"Good evening, sir."

"What would my classmates at the Essex Classical Institute think, if they should hear of my setting up as a Western schoolmaster?" he thought to himself. "We don't know what we can do till we try."

Next his thoughts reverted to Mr. Shaw's letter, and he wrote the following answer:

"My Dear Friend, Mr. Shaw:—I like your plan to visit the mines during my vacation, and I have decided to do so. General Wall, the chairman of the school trustees, has just called upon me, to engage me to teach the next term. Of course, my success pleases me, especially as there was some disposition to make trouble at first.

"If we can't do any better, we will take the three thousand dollars. If I get it, I will devote it to educating myself, as you suggest. I feel more and more anxious to obtain a good education.

"You will hear from me again as soon as I have any information to send. Give my regards to Mrs. Shaw, and consider me, with many thanks for your kind interest,

"Your sincere friend,

"WALTER CONRAD."

The next evening Walter, seated in the public room of an inn, overheard a conversation that interested him. It was between the landlord and a stout man with red whiskers, whom he had not seen before.

"Have you seen General Wall yet, Mr. Carter?" asked the landlord.

"Not yet. I went over there this afternoon, but found he had driven over to Plimpton. He wouldn't have gone, if he had known I was coming," he said, in a satisfied way.

"The mine is going to turn out well, then?"

"No doubt of it, and between you and me, our friend Wall is going to make a fortune."

"Is that so?"

"Why, he has managed to buy in for himself and friends about all the original shares, at two cents on a dollar."

"I shouldn't have thought they would sell out."

"Bless you, they knew nothing of the mine; thought it was bu'st up, worth nothing. We knew all the while that the mine was good, but took good care not to find anything of value till we had run down the stock, and bought it for a song. We needed the money of the other stockholders to carry the thing on. Now we're all ready to go ahead. There is only one cause of delay."

"What is that?"

"There is a party at the East that owns a thousand shares; we have tried to secure it, but he fights shy."

"It's worth—how much is it worth?"

"We'll give fifty dollars a share sooner than not get it. But there won't be any need of that. He don't know the value of his shares."

"Well, you're in luck," said the landlord. "I only wish I had some shares myself. You wouldn't give me the address of that Eastern party, would you?"

"I rather think not," said the red-whiskered man, slapping the landlord on the shoulder. "You're a deep one, but you don't get round me quite so easy."

"When are you going out to the mines again?"

"In a week or two. I want to see General Wall, and ascertain if he has succeeded in buying up those Eastern shares first."

"To whom do they belong?"

"They were bought by a man named Conrad. He died, leaving a son—a mere boy—in charge of a village lawyer as guardian. The lawyer is a slow, cautious man, and we haven't succeeded in getting him round yet."

"Are they working the mine now?"

"Yes; but we are not doing very much till that is decided. What time is it?"

"Eight o'clock."

"The general was to be home at eight. Can you let me have breakfast at half past six?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carter."

"All right. Just send somebody in time to wake me up for it. I am liable to oversleep myself."

"I won't forget."

The man with the red whiskers rose, and, putting on his hat, took his way to the residence of General Wall. It

may be imagined with what feelings Walter listened to the details of the plot by which he was to have lost his property. It was clear that the despised mining stock was worth fifty thousand dollars, and with the information he had acquired he could doubtless obtain that sum. He would be rich once more!

CHAPTER XXX

A DISCOURAGING SEARCH

When we took leave of Joshua Drummond, he was about to start for Chicago. Joshua knew his father, and understood how he must be affected by his running away, and more than all by the loss of the government bond. In Chicago he would feel safe, and accordingly he bought a ticket to that city. He had never traveled, and dreaded the experience; but his apprehensions were soon succeeded by greater confidence, and in due time he landed in the busy Western city.

He first went to a hotel, but was dismayed on finding the charge to be three dollars per day. In his opinion this was enough for a week's board. He remembered Sam's advice to seek out a cheap boarding house. From a copy of the Chicago *Tribune* in the reading room of the hotel, he took down the numbers of three houses, and started out in search of them.

The first was a large and handsome house, on a fashionable street. The second was cheap and dirty. The third was a respectable-looking place, and would just suit him, so he thought.

"How much do you charge for board?" he asked the landlady.

"Well," said Mrs. Foster, "our price ranges from five to twelve dollars."

"I would like a room for five dollars," said Joshua.

"We have but one room vacant at present—a third-story back—and if it is occupied alone, we must charge eight dollars."

"I couldn't pay so much; I can't afford it," said Joshua, decidedly.

"Haven't you a friend you could get to room with you? In that case, I will charge ten dollars for the two."

"I don't know anybody in Chicago; I am a stranger here."

"Would you mind rooming with another gentleman?"

"I would rather not," said Joshua, reluctantly.

"I tell you what you can do," said the landlady, after a pause; "you may go into the room at once, and pay me five dollars a week, on condition that if I find another gentleman to room with you, you will agree to take him in with you."

"I might not like him."

"I don't take any but respectable gentlemen," said Mrs. Foster. "You may be sure that I won't ask you to take any improper person to room with you. However, do as you please."

Joshua thought it over. He would prefer, of course, to room alone, unless he could have some friend like Sam Crawford for his roommate. He liked money better than privacy, and he had only four hundred dollars left. Besides, it might be some time before another person applied for board, and meanwhile he would have the entire room for only five dollars.

"I think I will take the room," he said, "and you can put another gentleman with me. When can I come in?"

"I will have the room ready for you this afternoon."

A Discouraging Search

"All right. I will come."

Joshua lost no time in transferring himself to Mrs. Foster's boarding house.

"There's some difference between three dollars a day and five a week," he said to himself. "Now all I want is to get a place, so that I can lay by my four hundred dollars. I'll look around to-morrow."

The next day Joshua commenced his rounds. Wherever he saw the sign "A Boy Wanted," he went in. At one place he came near being engaged.

"How old are you?" he was asked.

"Eighteen."

"You look younger. We don't need a clerk so old."

"Won't I do?"

"You might. But we pay only three dollars a week."

"Three dollars a week! Why, my board costs me five dollars, and I have to pay for washing besides. Then there's clothes."

"Have you ever been in a place before?"

"No."

"Then, as you have no experience, you cannot expect to make your expenses the first year."

Joshua's countenance fell. His father would do better by him than that. At home he got his board, such as it was, and was offered a little besides. What would Sam Crawford say!

"Can't you give me more?"

"No, if you choose to come for three dollars we will take you a week on trial."

"I can't afford it," he said; "I must look around a little more."

The next place at which he made application was a dry goods store.

"I see you want a clerk," he said.

A Discouraging Search

Joshua happened to be the first applicant here.

"Yes; have you experience?"

Now Joshua had tended a little in his father's store, when the other clerk was at dinner.

"Yes," he said, "I have had experience."

"Where?"

"In my father's store."

"Where is your father's store?"

"In Stapleton."

"Never heard of it. Is it much of a place?"

"It's rather small."

"What sort of a store does your father keep?"

"He keeps dry goods, and other things."

"I'm afraid your experience there wouldn't fit you for employment with us. However, I will examine you a little."

The shopkeeper led Joshua to the counter, on which was piled a variety of goods, and asked for their names, and what he supposed to be their prices. His ignorance proved to be so complete that his questioner saw at once that he would never do for their trade.

"I am sorry to say that you won't suit us," he said. "We should have to teach you everything."

Joshua was rather discouraged by this failure. He didn't care very much about working, to be sure.

"When the old man dies," he thought, "I won't do anything. I'll sell out the store. I shall have enough to live upon, and it won't be any use troubling myself with work."

Joshua's application continued unsuccessful, and he began to get discouraged.

On the afternoon of the third day Mrs. Foster knocked at his door. "Mr. Drummond," she said, "there's a gentelman below that I have told of this room, and he will

come up and look at it. I thought I'd come and speak to you about it first."

Of course, Joshua could make no objection. Three minutes later the landlady reappeared, followed by the gentleman referred to.

CHAPTER XXXI

JOSHUA'S ROOMMATE

"Mr. Drummond, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Remington," said the landlady.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Drummond."

"How do you do?" said Joshua, awkwardly.

"Mrs. Foster says you will be willing to take a roommate. I am sure we should get on well together. At first, I was a little doubtful, but now that I have seen you I shall be glad to take the room."

"I should like it, too," said Joshua, much flattered.

"Five dollars a week, I think you said, Mrs. Foster?"

"Yes, sir. It would be eight dollars if you roomed alone."

"Precisely. We shall be worth three dollars a week to each other. That is what I call a good arrangement, to secure an agreeable roommate, and be paid for it."

The newcomer was a middle-sized man, of easy manners and fluent speech. Joshua was quite captivated by his politeness and compliments. He thought he would like his company.

Mr. Remington moved to his new quarters in the evening about eight o'clock. Joshua was alone, finding the time hang rather heavily upon his hands.

"Have you been long in Chicago, Mr. Drummond?" asked Remington.

"Only four days."

"You came from the East, I suppose?"

"From New York."

"Do you expect to stay here long?"

"Well," said Joshua, hesitatingly, "that depends on whether I can get a place. I am looking for one."

"Indeed! I thought you already in business."

"Did you?"

"Yes," you have a business air about you."

Joshua was quite pleased at the compliment.

"I have been in my father's store some," he said.

"To be sure. Well, a young man of your appearance ought to find a situation very quick. Did you ever think of going into business for yourself?"

"That takes a good deal of money, don't it?"

"Not so very much."

"I have only got four hundred dollars," said Joshua.

"It isn't much, to be sure. Still you might obtain a partnership in a small business for that."

"What sort of business?" asked Joshua, interested.

"I am not prepared to say on the instant, but I will think the matter over, and see what I can do for you."

"I wish you would. You see I don't know anybody here, and that goes against me."

"To be sure. I was about to propose something to you, but I don't know that you would think it worth your while."

"What is it?" said Joshua, eagerly.

"I keep a fancy goods store, and need an assistant, but I can only offer six dollars a week. You might be willing to take up with that till something better offers."

"Yes, I'll take it," said Joshua, promptly.

"Of course, I know that it is not enough for a young man of your business experience and abilities, Mr. Drummond, but if I can do better by you after a while, I will."

Joshua knew that he was without experience, and was not sure about his abilities, but he did know that it would not do to draw upon his principal continually.

"How lucky I am!" he thought. "Mr. Remington seems such a perfect gentleman. If my father had only treated me that way, I never would have left home."

"What are you going to do this evening, Mr. Drummond?" said his new friend.

"I don't know."

"Suppose we have a game of billiards."

"I don't know how to play."

"Then I'll teach you. You're old enough to learn and everybody plays nowadays."

"Does it cost much to learn?" questioned Joshua.

"Not much; but of course I pay, as I invite you."

Joshua made no further objections, but left the house in company with Mr. Remington, who took his arm, and talked sociably, like an old friend.

After a five minutes' walk they reached the billiard hall.

"I think we will try a pocket table. It is easier for a beginner. Select a cue, Mr. Drummond."

Joshua didn't know what a cue was, but, following his companion's example, selected one from a rack.

"Now," said Mr. Remington, after the balls were placed, "the principle of the game is very simple. With this ball, you must try to hit two others. If you succeed in doing it, you count three, or if you succeed in sending either ball into any one of the four pockets, you count three. If you do both, it counts you six. One hundred is the game. I will take the first shot, which is difficult for a beginner, and then you take your turn."

He made the shot, but without counting. Next Joshua, under his direction, made a shot, and by what billiard

players call a "scratch," hit two balls, sending one into a pocket.

"Bravo! good shot! You have played before."

"I never saw a billiard table before," said Joshua, elated. "Now it is your turn."

"No, since you succeeded, you are to keep on. I foresee that you will make an excellent player."

"It's a first-rate game," said Joshua.

"Yes; I was sure you would like it; now it is my turn."

Remington, who was really a skillful player, "played off," and helped his adversary to such an extent that he made a respectable score.

"Come," said Remington, at the close of the game," "you must be thirsty. Let us have something to drink."

Joshua understood that his companion proposed to bear the expense, and therefore made no objection.

"What will you have, Drummond?"

"What are you going to take?"

"A sherry cobbler."

"I'll take one, too."

"Two sherry cobblers, and mind you make them strong."

Joshua imbibed the drink through a straw, in imitation of his companion. Not being used to liquor of any kind, it exhilarated him, and made him feel happy and sanguine.

"This is seeing life," he thought. "I've come to the right place. I guess I'll write to Sam and let him know how I'm getting along."

"Well, Drummond," said Mr. Remington, "if you're ready, we'll go back to our room. You know you'll have to go to business to-morrow."

"All right, Mr. Remington. Do you think you can raise my salary soon?"

"No doubt of it. I've taken a fancy to you, and shall push you right along."

"I'm sure I'm much obliged to you."

"I have been in the habit of judging men, and as soon as I saw you I felt sure that you would suit me."

"Did you?" said Joshua, flattered.

"At once. Of course, I did not know but you might already be engaged in business. To let you into a little secret, I've got a nephew who is expecting the place. But, though I would like to oblige him, he would not suit me at all. He hasn't got the 'snap' in him. It takes a smart man to succeed in Chicago."

All this was very gratifying to Joshua. Nobody had ever taken a fancy to him before; yet here was a stranger, a man of discrimination and business experience, who had selected him in preference to his own nephew. No wonder Joshua felt elated.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE "CHIEF" SALESMAN

The next morning Joshua went to his new place of business. One circumstance attracted his attention. His employer's name was Remington, but the name on the sign was

JOHN FORBES.

"I thought this was your store," said he.

"So it is."

"But your name isn't Forbes."

"Oh," said Remington, "you noticed the sign. That's easily explained. I bought the business of Mr. Forbes, but as his name was well known in the neighborhood, I thought it best to keep the old name. Do you see?"

"Yes, I understand."

"What do you think that my profits were last year?"

"Two thousand dollars," hazarded Joshua.

"Six," answered Mr. Remington.

"What, six thousand dollars?"

"Certainly. You see we turn our goods over quickly. This isn't the busy season, but that will soon be here, and then the store will be crowded with customers from morning till night."

As the entire stock in trade probably did not exceed two or three thousand dollars in value, this was rather a hard statement to believe.

Mr. Remington gave his new clerk instructions as to the locality of the goods, and the prices, and he took his place behind the counter, proud of being a city salesman.

"It's rather quiet this morning," said Mr. Remington, laying down the morning paper.

Joshua assented.

"You see it isn't the busy season. That makes a great difference."

"I suppose it does."

"You'd hardly know the place two months hence. You must make up your mind to work, then, Drummond."

When half past twelve came, his employer said, "I'm going to dinner. When I come back, you can go."

So Joshua was left alone. He felt a little hungry himself. Still he had a feeling of importance in being left in sole charge of the store. As there was nothing else in particular to do, he went to the desk, and wrote the following letter to his friend, Sam Crawford, in New York:

"CHICAGO, Sept.—, 186—

"DEAR SAM: I seize a few moments from business to write you an account of how I am getting along. I have not been a week in Chicago, yet am already chief sales-

man in one of the principal stores here. I like my employer very much, and he seems to have taken a great fancy to me. His nephew was very anxious to obtain the situation, but he seemed to think I had good business abilities, and gave it to me instead.

"I have been about the city some, and like it. I think I shall make it my home. I am writing at noon, when we have few customers. I like this store better than yours. Last evening I played a game of billiards with Mr. Remington. He said I did finely for the first time, and thinks I would make an excellent player.

"But I must leave off to wait on a customer"—it was an old woman, who wanted a paper of pins—"and must close for this time.

"Your friend,

"JOSHUA DRUMMOND.

"P. S.—Have you seen anything of the old man since I left New York? Don't let anybody know I am in Chicago. I only get twelve dollars a week now"—this again was a slight exaggeration—"but I expect to have my salary raised soon."

When Sam received this letter, it surprised him

"Well, that beats all!" he exclaimed, "that such a greenhorn as Joshua Drummond should get a situation in Chicago within a week; at twelve dollars a week, too! If such a greenhorn can get twelve dollars, I ought to get eighteen or twenty. I wonder whether it would pay me to go out there."

It will be seen that Sam had no suspicion of the falseness of Joshua's statements. He contented himself with writing Joshua to look round, and, if he saw an opening for a clerk with several years' experience, to let him know.

"I would be willing to come for my present salary—twenty dollars a week," he wrote. "My present employer is willing I should go away until I am twenty-one, when I will come back, and go into partnership with him. He thinks it will be of advantage to me to become acquainted with Western trade. Besides, I should like to be with you. We might room together, you know."

It made Joshua feel rather important to have Sam apply to him for a situation, and he at once wrote back, saying that he would let him know at once if he heard of any vacancy. "But I am afraid," he added, "that we can't room together. The fact is, I and Mr. Remington room together, and he would be disappointed to have me leave him. But you might get a room in the same house. They charge eight dollars a week board; it is nicer than your boarding place in New York, though that will do very well."

"That Remington must be a fool!" thought Sam. "He seems perfectly taken up with Joshua, and I am sure he's about as stupid a fellow as I ever set eyes on."

So the result was that Sam, toiling in an obscure Eighth Avenue store for eight dollars a week, felt very much wronged to think that Joshua had at one bound stepped into a more desirable situation than himself. If he could only have known the real state of the case, and how much Joshua had exaggerated the advantages of his position, he would have been very much comforted.

CHAPTER XXXIII

IN PARTNERSHIP

At the end of the week Joshua received the six dollars promised him, with great satisfaction.

"I wish it were more," said Mr. Remington, as he paid it to him. "I am thinking of some new arrangements by which I shall be able to do better by you."

Joshua began to build castles in the air, and form sanguine pictures of the future, when all at once his dreams were rudely broken in upon.

It was three mornings afterwards that Mr. Remington called him to the desk.

"Drummond," he said, "I've something to say to you."

Of course, Joshua gave immediate attention.

"You remember that I told you something of a nephew, my sister's child, who expects the place I gave to you."

"Yes," said Joshua, uneasily.

"Well, it appears that my sister is very much disturbed that I refused to give it to her son. I have just received a letter from her. Here it is."

"Shall I read it?"

"Yes."

Joshua took the letter, and read as follows:

"My Dear Brother: I think you have acted most unkindly in refusing to receive my Henry into your employ, and taking instead a stranger. I think the poor boy had a right to expect something better at your hands. I hope you may yet change your mind, and discharge this stranger.

"I will tell you what I will do. I have heard you say that you are cramped for capital to enlarge your business; now, if you will discharge this stranger, and will take Henry, I will agree to let you have a thousand dollars with him, in return for which you can give him a slight interest in the business. Please let me hear from you at once. Your sister,

"Cornelia Barker."

"You see in what a position I am placed, Drummond."

"Yes, sir."

"I would rather have you than my nephew."

"I shall be sorry to go," said Joshua.

"And I to part with you. But perhaps we can make an arrangement."

Joshua brightened up.

"My sister offers to put a thousand dollars into the business, in return for which my nephew is to have a small interest in the business; now, if you could do the same, I would prefer to arrange with you."

"I can't. I have only four hundred dollars."

"Couldn't you raise more?"

Joshua shook his head.

"It is a very small sum," returned Mr. Remington, doubtfully.

Joshua said nothing, and his employer appeared to be thinking busily.

"Drummond," he said, suddenly, "I am going to make you a proposal that I wouldn't make to anyone else."

Of course, Joshua listened intently.

"If you think well to put your four hundred dollars into the business, I'll decline taking my nephew, raise your salary to ten dollars a week, and give you one tenth interest in my business."

"How much do you think that would be, sir?"

"One tenth of the profits, at the lowest estimate, would come to six hundred dollars a year."

"And ten dollars a week besides?"

"Yes."

Joshua rapidly calculated that his income would amount, in that case, to over a thousand dollars a year. What a triumph that would be over Sam, and how handsomely he could live, and yet save money! Why, the

very first year he could save the four hundred dollars he was now investing. Suppose he refused: he would lose his place, and have to live on his principal.

"I'll do it," he said.

"Very well, Drummond, I'll draw up the papers, and you can pay me the money."

In fifteen minutes Joshua, who always carried the money with him, had paid it over into Mr. Remington's hands, and received instead a paper, in which was expressed, with great particularity, the agreement which had been spoken of.

"My sister will be very angry," said Mr. Remington, "but I can't help it. Why should I take my nephew into my employ, when he has not a particle of business capacity? It is too much to ask."

As Joshua was to profit by the refusal, he agreed perfectly with Mr. Remington. His heart glowed with exultation as he thought of his changed circumstances. Why, he was really a partner in the concern, in virtue of his one tenth interest. Was ever rise so rapid? Reflecting that Mr. Remington had taken him at six hundred dollars less than was offered with his nephew, he began to entertain quite a lofty opinion of his business abilities, and put on some very amusing airs behind the counter, which his senior partner secretly laughed at.

"Drummond," said Mr. Remington the next day, "I must leave you in charge of the store for a day or two. I am called into the country on business—to collect a bill of a hundred dollars due us. As you share the profits, you are interested, too. Can you manage alone?"

"Oh, yes," said Joshua, confidently.

"I don't expect to be gone over two days."

So the next day and the next also Joshua was alone.

On the second, an elderly man, with a carpetbag, walked into the store. He looked at Joshua with some surprise.

"Where is Mr. Remington?" he said.

"He is away for a day or two."

"Where is he gone?"

"Into the country, on business."

"And who are you?"

"I am his partner," said Joshua, loftily.

"His what!" exclaimed the stranger, in visible amazement.

"His partner!"

"In what?"

"In this business."

"You must be crazy."

"I have bought an interest in the business," said Joshua. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, this beats all. I come back to my own store, after a month's absence, and am coolly told by a boy that he has bought an interest in the business."

"Who are you?" asked Joshua, amazed.

"I am the man whose name is over the door—John Forbes."

"Mr. Remington told me he had bought you out, but he kept the name, because it was known to customers."

"Then Mr. Remington deceived you."

"Isn't he in the business?"

"He was only my clerk. I left him in charge while I was away."

It dawned upon Joshua now. All his dreams were dissipated. He had been cruelly swindled out of his four hundred dollars. It was all a pretense about the nephew. Good heavens! he was ruined, and almost penniless. He turned pale and sick at heart.

"How much money did you let Remington have?" asked Mr. Forbes.

"Four hundred dollars. Can't I—don't you think I shall be able to get it back?"

"Not a cent. The rascal is far away by this time, you may be sure."

"What shall I do?" asked Joshua, in dismay.

"Well, you may stay here until the end of the week. I am sorry for you, but can't help you. I am afraid that villain, Remington, has carried off some of my cash also."

It proved to be true. Mr. Forbes was a sufferer also. The police were put on the track of the swindler, but Remington managed to elude all inquiries. Where he got away with his ill-gotten gains could not be discovered.

As for Joshua, Mr. Forbes unluckily formed a different idea of his business capacity from Mr. Remington. He discovered that our unhappy fugitive knew little or nothing of the goods in stock, and got quite out of patience with his numerous blunders. He did not believe in paying six dollars a week to such an inexperienced novice, when he could obtain for half the money a substitute who would at least know as much. So, at the end of the week, Joshua received notice that his services were no longer required.

"But what shall I do?" he asked, in anguish. "Mr. Remington carried off all my money."

"Oh, you'll get along somehow!" said the unfeeling Forbes. "You ain't fit for my business, so, of course, you can't expect me to keep you."

Joshua returned to his boarding house with a heavy heart. He would have only three dollars left after paying his board bill, and what should he do if he could not get another situation?

A Humble Position

CHAPTER XXXIV

A HUMBLE POSITION

JOSHUA realized with anguish the desperate situation to which he was reduced. The money he had taken from his father, and which at the time he considered a small fortune, had all melted away, and nothing remained to him save a portion of his last week's wages. He had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, and been fleeced by abler and more experienced rogues than himself.

What should he do? He had not money enough to go back to New York, even if he had wished it. He must stay in Chicago, and find something to do, if possible. But suppose he should fail? This possibility—probability, I might rather say—suggested itself to the unhappy Joshua, and he shuddered at the fate which might befall him. He could remain a week at his boarding place before board would be demanded, and he decided to do so, though he was not quite sure whether he might not be arrested if he failed at the end of that to pay his board bill.

"But I may get a place before that time," he thought.

At any rate, there seemed nothing else to do. So, prudently omitting to say anything about the critical state of his finances, he continued to retain his room, mentioning to Mrs. Foster that Mr. Remington had been called away on business for a few days. Not wishing to have it known that he had lost his place, he absented himself during the usual business hours, spending his time in wandering about the city in search of a situation.

It so happened, however, that there was a lull in business, and there was even less chance for him than usual. Everywhere he received the same answer. No help was

wanted. In one or two cases, where he saw upon a window, "Boy Wanted," he found himself too late.

On Saturday morning he was wandering about listlessly, dreading the bill which his landlady would render at night, when he chanced to step into a bowling alley.

"Where's the boy to set up the pins?" asked a young man, who had entered just before with a friend.

"He's sick," said the proprietor. "I must get another in his place."

"Get one in a hurry, then, for my friend and I want a game."

Joshua heard what was said, and it gave him an idea.

"I'll set up the pins," he said.

"Go ahead, then, Johnny."

Joshua walked down to the end of the alley, and set to work. There was no difficulty about it, of course, and he performed the work satisfactorily. The young men played two games, occupying about half an hour. When it was over they paid for the games, and, calling Joshua, gave him twenty cents.

As they went out others came in.

"Look here, boy," said the proprietor of the establishment, "if you choose to stay here and set up pins, you can do it."

"I'd like to do it," said Joshua.

The position was not a very dignified one, but it was better than starving, and Joshua had been afraid that such a fate was in store for him.

"I don't pay no wages," said the man; "but the gentlemen that play will mostly give you something."

"All right," said Joshua.

So he remained through the day. By that time he had picked up seventy-five cents. Had all paid him, he would

have had more; but some neglected it, and he was not allowed to ask anything. He came back in the evening, as desired, and picked up fifty cents more.

"At this rate I can make a living," he thought, with a feeling of relief. "But I wouldn't have Sam know what I was doing for anything."

He had enough to settle his board bill and about a dollar over. So he paid it without explaining anything of his change of circumstances.

"When do you expect Mr. Remington back?" asked the landlady.

"I don't know," said Joshua.

"You are working for him, I believe?"

"Yes; but I have been offered another situation, and I think I shall take it."

During the next week, Joshua made seven dollars at his new business, and was able to pay his board bill. He was heartily tired of the bowling alley, where he received treatment which he considered derogatory to one of his age, the son of a rich man; but it was of no use to say anything. He could not afford to lose this place, the only plank that lay between him and starvation. So he bore in silence all the curses he received from the proprietor of the place, when, as was frequently the case, that gentleman was excited by liquor, and kept steadily at work. Indeed, humble as was Joshua's present position, there is at least this to be said, that for the first time in his life he was earning his living by honest labor.

When he paid his second bill, Mrs. Foster asked him again when Mr. Remington would return.

"I don't know, ma'am," he said; "I've left his store."

"What for?"

"He cheated me out of my money," answered Joshua, truly, "and I don't think he means to come back at all."

"But I can't afford to let you have this room alone for five dollars a week."

"I can't pay any more."

"There is a gentleman going to give up the hall bedroom on the third floor; you can have that for five dollars."

"I will take it, then, for I can't pay any more."

So Joshua made the change. About this time, he received a letter from Sam, asking him if he had heard of any good opening in Chicago for him. Joshua wrote back that business was very dull at present, but when he heard of anything he would write.

"I am getting on pretty well," he wrote; "but there are some things about my situation I don't like; I find it very expensive living here, and I don't save up any money. I shall change my business as soon as I can."

But about the nature of the business in which he was engaged, Joshua wrote nothing. Had Sam known his true position, he would have been spared the jealousy he felt of his friend's supposed success, and cured of any desire to try his luck in Chicago.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE EVIDENCE OF POPULARITY

The day came for Walter's examination. It was pleasant, and the Portville people were out in full force. Conspicuous among them were General Wall and Squire Griffiths, the latter looking exceedingly wise with his stiff iron-gray hair rising erect over his brow like a palisade.

Walter conducted the examination, but after every recitation inquired of the trustees if they had any questions to ask. Once in a while General Wall asked one, but in

general contented himself with saying, blandly, "The recitation has been quite satisfactory, Mr. Howard."

After the recitation in geography, Squire Griffiths, who had studied up one or two questions in the atlas before coming, thought it time to take part.

"Can you tell me," he said, straightening himself up with dignity, after a preparatory cough, "can you tell me where is the river Nigger?"

I have attempted to indicate the squire's pronunciation.

There was a little titter in the class, and Walter himself, though he preserved his gravity, looked a little red in the face.

"Answer the gentleman's question," he said.

"In Africa," said one of the girls.

"Quite right," said the squire, nodding wisely.

"Where is the Island of Madagascar?"

"In the Mediterranean Sea," answered promptly the poorest scholar in the class.

Walter was about to correct the mistake, when, to his surprise, Squire Griffiths said: "Correct, Mr. Howard, your class is quite proficient. I have no more questions to ask."

"First class in arithmetic," called Walter, hurriedly, evidently anxious to cover up the squire's mistake.

It was generally agreed that the examination passed off satisfactorily. A few of the boys declaimed, and some of the girls read compositions. When the end was reached, Walter called on General Wall to make a speech; the latter did so. He was a little pompous and condescending in his manner, but what he said was grammatical, and complimentary to the teacher.

"Won't you make a few remarks, Squire Griffiths?" said Walter.

The Evidence of Popularity

The squire rose, and, putting one hand under his coat-tail, glanced impressively around him, through his iron-bowed spectacles, and spoke as follows:

"My Young Friends: I am gratterfied to meet you on this occasion. As one of the school trustees, it was my duty to come, and see what purficiency you had made in your studies. I have listened to your recitations with —ahem—with gratterfication. I have been most gratterfied by your purficiency in joggrify"—here some of the scholars were seen to smile—"joggrify was allers my favorite study when I was a lad and went to school. But when I was a youngster we didn't have so good schools as you have. The teachers wasn't so well eddicated. But we did as well as we could. I shall always be glad that I got an eddication when I was young. But for my improvin' my time, I shouldn't have riz to be one of the school trustees. I hope, my young friends, you will improve the importunities the town has given you to get a good eddication. If you study hard, you will get up in the world, and your feller-citizens will respect you. I congratterlate your teacher on your purficiency, especially in joggrify. It is one of the most important studies you have. If Christopher Columbus hadn't studied joggrify when he was a boy, how could he have discovered America, and if he hadn't discovered it, where would we be at this moment?" Here the orator paused, as if for a response; but none being made, he went on: "But I didn't mean to speak so long. I congratterlate you on having so good a teacher, and I am gratterfied to say that he will be your teacher next term."

Here the scholars applauded, and Walter was really pleased by this evidence of his popularity. Squire Griffiths was also pleased, for in his foolish vanity he sup-

posed that it was he who had been applauded, and not the allusion to Walter.

"My young friends," he continued, "I thank you for your respectful attention to my remarks. Go on as you have begun and you will never regret it. Let your motto be, 'Excelsior!'"

With this effective ending he sat down, and the boys mischievously applauded, greatly to the "gratterfication" of the squire, who secretly thought that he had done himself great credit. He was one of those vain and pompous old men who like to hear themselves talk, and are always ready to assume any responsibility, wholly unaware of their own deficiencies. But Squire Griffiths was well to do in worldly affairs, and the town offices which were given him were a tribute to his money, and not to his ability. Of course, it was a glaring absurdity to put such a man in charge of the schools, but fortunately his associates in office were men of greater education than himself.

Among the spectators was Miss Melinda Jones, the poetess. Considering her literary claims, she could not well be absent from an occasion of this character. Besides, we know the interest she felt in the teacher.

At the close of the exercises, she came to our hero to tender her congratulations.

"Mr. Howard," she said, "I can hardly tell you how much I have enjoyed this day. It carried me back to my girlhood days, when I, too, was one of the eager aspirants for knowledge. Oh, could I but have enjoyed the instructions of a superior teacher like yourself, how happy should I have been!"

"You flatter me, Miss Jones."

"Indeed, I do not. I leave that to the men, who are,

alas! sad flatterers, as we poor girls know too well. The recitations were beautiful. I could have listened for hours longer."

"I fancy you would have got hungry after a while, if indeed poetesses are ever hungry."

"Now, Mr. Howard, I shall really scold you," said Melinda, who was always delighted to be recognized as a poetess.

"I am sorry I did not call upon you for a speech, Miss Jones; I would if I had thought of it."

"I should positively have sunk into the ground, if you had been so cruel. You can't think how diffident I am, Mr. Howard."

"Diffidence and genius are generally found in company."

"Oh, you sad flatterer!" said Miss Jones, tossing her ringlets in delight.

But the conversation must not be prolonged. Miss Jones was hoping to secure Walter's escort home; but he was backward about offering it, and finally she was obliged to go home with her brother.

The next day Walter left Portville for the mines.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE CLOSE OF THE STORY

We do not propose to accompany Walter to the mines; it is sufficient to say that on arriving there he found a complete confirmation of the story to which he had been a listener. The Great Metropolitan Mine was a success! It promised to be one of the most profitable in the entire mining region. There were considerable signs of activity, and as soon as General Wall and his clique obtained the

entire control, they were going to work in earnest. So much Walter picked up on the ground. Of course, he did not reveal his real name, but still figured as Gilbert Howard.

Walter remained three days, during which he gathered all the information he desired; then he took the cars for Portville. Less than a fortnight from the time of his departure, he was set down by the stage at the door of the Portville Hotel.

"Back again, Mr. Howard?" said the landlord. "Your vacation is not over yet, is it?"

"Business called me back," said Walter.

"This is indeed a delightful surprise, Mr. Howard," said Miss Melinda Jones. "We didn't expect you for a fortnight yet."

"I couldn't remain so long away from you, Miss Jones," said Walter, roguishly.

"Oh, you wicked flatterer!" exclaimed Melinda, shaking her ringlets with delight, for she had faith in the power of her own attractions, and was half inclined to believe this statement true. "I have missed you ever so much."

"Now it is you who are the flatterer."

"It's true; isn't it, Ichabod?"

"Melinda had no appetite when you were gone, Mr. Howard," said the brother. "She was all the time writin' poetry."

"Won't you come to my bower this evening, Mr. Howard? We will commune with the muses."

"I am sorry, Miss Jones, but I must call on General Wall this evening."

"Then let it be to-morrow evening."

"I won't promise, but if I can, I will come."

General Wall was sitting at his desk, making a calculation of the profits that would accrue to him from the

Great Metropolitan Mining Company. His calculation appeared to be a satisfactory one, judging from his complacent look. He was interrupted by the entrance of the servant ushering in Walter. Not having heard of our hero's return, he was surprised to see him.

"Good evening, Mr. Howard," he said. "I had not heard of your return. When did you get back?"

"This evening."

"You expected to be absent longer, did you not?"

"Yes, sir, but I accomplished the object of my journey, and had no inducement to remain longer."

"As it's over a fortnight before school begins, if you choose to give John private lessons, I shall be glad to have you do so," said the general. "I will pay you five dollars a week."

General Wall looked as if he expected his offer to be accepted with thanks. Surely it must be an object for an ill-paid school teacher like Walter to earn five dollars a week during his vacation.

"Will John be willing to study in vacation?" asked Walter.

"No doubt. I will see that he makes no objections."

General Wall intended to obtain his son's consent by the offer of a handsome present, knowing that the desire of improvement would not alone be sufficient. What was his surprise when Walter answered, "I shall be obliged to decline your proposal, General Wall!"

"You don't care about working in vacation, perhaps, Mr. Howard? Or are you going off again on another journey?"

"I have a different reason, sir—a reason which will also oblige me to disappoint you about the school. I shall not be able to teach next term, but must ask you to find another teacher."

"Really, Mr. Howard, I hope you are not in earnest," said the general, surprised and disappointed. "Have you secured another position?"

"No, sir, I do not intend to teach again—at any rate, for some years."

"Are you going to leave Portville?"

"Yes, sir, but before I go I have some business which I should like to settle with you."

"Business—to settle with me!" repeated General Wall, in surprise.

"Yes, sir, to begin with, I have a confession to make."

General Wall looked suspicious. What was it that Walter was intending to confess? Was he a thief, or had he violated the laws any way? He was completely mystified.

"Proceed, Mr. Howard," he said. "I can't say that I apprehend your meaning."

"In the first place, then, I have no claim to the name by which you called me."

"Is not your name Howard?"

"No, sir."

"What then?"

"I am Walter Conrad."

"Conrad!" exclaimed General Wall, starting and looking disturbed. "Surely you are not—" and he came to a pause.

"I am the son of Mr. Conrad, whom you induced to buy a thousand shares in the Great Metropolitan Mining Company."

"Ah, indeed!" said General Wall, a little nervously. "That was indeed a disastrous speculation. I lost by it heavily."

"It was the cause of my poor father's death," said Walter, faltering for a moment.

"A most unfortunate affair," muttered the general; "but"—here he rallied—"I am glad to say, my young friend, that it will not prove a total loss. I and a few others are going to see if we can't revive it and make it pay something. I have already written to Mr. Clement Shaw—your guardian, is he not?—offering three thousand dollars for your shares. We may lose by it, but the money will go into good hands. I hope you are empowered to accept the offer."

"General Wall," said Walter, firmly, "don't you consider the shares worth more?"

"I am hardly justified in offering so much."

"Then I will keep the shares."

"Better think it over, my young friend. It is not by any means certain that the shares are worth anything."

"I will take the risk," said Walter, coolly. "I have just returned from visiting the mines."

General Wall listened to this statement with dismay. He found the negotiations more difficult than he had anticipated.

"Well," said he, after a pause, "have you any offer to make?"

I will sell the shares for sixty thousand dollars."

"You must be crazy," said the general, in excitement.

"I have no fears on that subject," said our hero, coolly. "But I may as well tell you, General Wall, that I am entirely acquainted with your plan for obtaining complete control of the stock. I know you have succeeded in buying up most of it at little or nothing, and that you will, probably, realize a fortune out of it. But my eyes are open. They were opened three weeks since, when I overheard, at the Portville House, a conversation between the landlord and an agent of yours, who gave

full details of the conspiracy into which you had entered to defraud the original owners of stock. I learned that you had succeeded with all except myself. The result of this revelation was, that I determined to visit the mines, and see for myself. I spent three days there, and I have returned to tell you that you may have the stock for sixty thousand dollars, or I will keep it. I know it is worth more than I ask, but I live in the East, and I prefer to have my money invested there."

General Wall had risen, and was pacing the room in some agitation.

"The revelation you have made has taken me by surprise, Mr.—Conrad. I will think over what you have said, and call upon you at the hotel to-morrow."

"Very well, sir. You won't forget about looking up a new teacher?"

"Oh, ah—yes—I had nearly forgotten that."

Negotiation was protracted for some days. At length General Wall acceded to Walter's terms, and agreed to purchase the stock at the price named—sixty thousand dollars! ten thousand down, and the balance payable monthly. Walter instantly telegraphed the good news to Mr. Shaw, his faithful friend, and received his heartiest congratulations. The report got about that Walter had inherited a fortune, and Miss Jones was more devoted than ever. But she shook her ringlets to no purpose. Walter was not to be fascinated.

When the business was completed, our hero started for the East. He had striven under difficult circumstances, and he had succeeded. He felt proud and happy, and grateful to God for having so ordered events as to lead to this fortune.

He stopped over one day in Chicago. Stepping into the bowling alley connected with the hotel, what was his

surprise when, in the boy who set up the pins, shabby and ill clad, he recognized Joshua Drummond!

"Joshua!" he exclaimed, in amazement. "What brings you here?"

Joshua turned scarlet with shame and mortification. Walter, whom he had once looked down upon, was handsomely dressed, a gentleman in appearance, while he looked like a beggar.

"I have been very unlucky," he whined.

"Surely, you don't like this business?"

"I have to like it. I should starve if I didn't."

"Are you so reduced?"

"I have no money, except what I earn here."

"Would you go home if you could?"

"My father would not receive me. He is angry on account of the money I took. But it didn't do me any good. I was swindled out of it."

"I am going to take you home," said Walter, resolutely. "It isn't fit that you should be in such a business. I will undertake to reconcile your father."

"I haven't money to pay my fare."

"I have plenty. I have succeeded in getting back a good share of my property, and am going back to the Essex Classical Institute, to finish preparing for college. If you would like it, I will pay your expenses there one year. You won't be the worse off for another year's schooling."

"You are a good fellow, Cousin Walter," said Joshua, stirred at last to gratitude. "I should like it much better than going back to Stapleton."

Walter bought Joshua some new clothes, and together they returned to the East. Mr. Drummond at first refused to receive his son, but when Walter revealed his own good fortune, and offered to support his cousin at

school for a year, his sternness relaxed, and reconciliation took place, much to the delight of Mrs. Drummond, who, bad as Joshua had behaved, could not forget her only son. I am glad to say that Joshua was improved by his trials. He acquitted himself fairly at school, and is now employed in his father's store, Mr. Drummond, at Walter's solicitation, paying him ten dollars a week for his services, besides, of course, board. Let us hope he will continue to do well.

A few words in conclusion. Walter is now in college, and stands very near the head of the senior class. It is his purpose to study law, and though his fortune is already made, we have reason to believe that he will work hard and acquire distinction. He knows what it is to Strive and Succeed. General Wall made a good deal of money out of the Great Metropolitan Mining Company; but, unluckily for himself, he invested it in other mines of less worth, and lost all. He is to-day a poor man, and his son John will have to make his own way in the world. Peter Groot is learning the carpenter's trade, and seems likely to become a respectable, if not brilliant, member of society. Alfred Clinton has just entered a Western college. His old teacher, our hero, has kindly offered to defray the expenses of his collegiate education, and Alfred is longing for the time when he can relieve his mother from work, and surround her old age with comfort. It is an honorable ambition, and likely to be gratified.

The next volume in this series will be

TRY AND TRUST;

OR,

THE STORY OF A BOUND BOY.