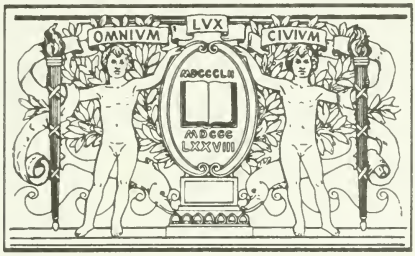
STRIVE AND SUCCEED

ALGER



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Xmas 1915

STRIVE AND SUCCEED

OR

THE PROGRESS OF WALTER CONRAD

BY

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

AUTHOR OF "ERIE TRAIN BOY," "YOUNG ACROBAT,"
"ONLY AN IRISH BOY," "BOUND TO RISE,"
"STRONG AND STEADY," "JULIUS,
THE STREET BOY," ETC.

NEW YORK
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TO

MY YOUNG FRIENDS,

ISABELLA AND EDWIN,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

"STRIVE AND SUCCEED" is reprinted from the pages of *Young Israel,* a New York juvenile magazine, to which it was contributed as a serial. It is complete in itself, and can be read independently; but those who have read its predecessor, "Strong and Steady," may be interested to learn that it traces the subsequent career of Walter Conrad, showing how he continued to paddle his own canoe, and chronicles the adventures of Joshua Drummond after his flight from home.

As Walter's success as a teacher at the West may seem to some improbable, in view of his youth, I am led to say that I know of more than one case equally remarkable, in particular that of a gentleman since prominent as a politician. The moral of the book is contained in the title. As a rule of action, I recommend it confidently to all my young readers.

NEW YORK, Oct. 1, 1872.

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?"

"It is the next station."

"Is that the place to take the stage for Portville?"

"Yes."

"Can you tell me how far I shall have to ride in the stage?"

"A matter of ten miles or thereabouts."

"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 "Strong and Steady." For the benefit of such of my present readers as have not read this volume, I will sketch his history in brief.

Walter Conrad, then, 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. Walter 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, finding he could get nothing out of him, took a dislike to him. Walter finally left Mr. Drummond's employ, and, led by his love of adventure, accepted an offer to travel 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.

Such is Walter's story, though, for the present, 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 slackening its speed, came to a stop.

"Benton!" called the conductor, rapidly, half opening the door.

"I am near my journey's end," thought Walter.

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 house. 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, who was about to take his seat.

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

"No, General Wall," said Abner, respectfully. "I didn't see it anywhere on the road."

"That is very strange," muttered Mr. Wall, discontentedly. "I told Henry to drive over for me. Are you sure you might not have passed without seeing it?"

"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?"

The driver came to the door, and, opening it, looked in.

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

John Wall evidently did not fancy this arrangement. The fact was that 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-look-

ing, and on the strength of his father's wealth gave himself airs of superiority to which he was not entitled. 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."

"I ain't going to spoil my clothes," growled the discontented boy.

"Here is an umbrella for you," said his father.

Meanwhile John had been peering into the coach and espied Walter on the back seat. Accustomed to regard his own convenience as a matter of more importance than that of anybody else, 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 having a sense of what was due to himself, and 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, rather disgusted at John's selfishness. "But I must be starting. So if you're going 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.

"Is he going to Portville?"

"Yes, so he told me."

"Do you know where he is going to stop?"

"No, he didn't tell me."

"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."

"Who's he?"

"A Latin author"

"You don't say! You must know a mighty lot."

"Oh, it ain't hard when you're used to it," said John, condescendingly.

The rain subsided, and John had the satisfaction of saving his clothes from injury, so that he ended the journey in a more amiable frame of mind than could have been anticipated.

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. Our hero examined him with some attention. This, then, was the man who had ruined his father by his plausible misrepresentations—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, who, it was safe to predict, would never win popularity unless his manners were greatly changed for the better.

"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.

"It's a nice place," said the other.

"Yes, a pretty good place. I didn't need it, but Mr. Newton wanted to sell, and I accommodated him."

"How's that mining company coming out?" was the next question. 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., and based his offer upon this. Supposing only 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 afterward 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."

"I don't believe that," thought Walter.

"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. "I mean to come out of it as well as I can."

"'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, so much influence does wealth exert even over those who don't expect to gain anything by their subservience to it.

"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. "It ain't easy to get forehanded."

"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."

The conversation now took another turn, in which Walter was not so much interested. He wondered whether General Wall really meant honestly by the farmer, or whether he

only wanted to get his money into his possession.

He was not naturally suspicious, but knowing what he did of Wall he felt inclined to doubt whether he was quite as disinterested as he appeared.

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 woollen 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 woollen gloves," said the general, who wanted to be popular, and so avoided putting on airs, "or no gloves at all," looking around to observe the effect of his republican speech. "Kid gloves do not make a man any better."

Meanwhile John had taken the vacant place. But it happened to be on the front seat, and so, of course, he had to ride backward. Now John fancied that he should pre-

er to sit on the back seat, as it would enable him to look out of the window, besides being on the whole more agreeable. Walter, having his choice of seats, had on entering taken one of the back ones. John conceived the idea of exchanging with him, without considering that our hero might possibly prefer to retain his, to which he was fairly entitled by prior possession.

"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 seats 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.

John was indignant at the refusal. That he, the son of General Wall, should have to sit in an inferior seat, while a boy who did not wear kid gloves occupied a better one, was very vexatious. He frowned at Walter, but the latter was by no means annihilated by the frown. Indeed, from what he was able to judge of John Wall, he felt a degree of satisfaction in disappointing him.

"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 woollen 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."

"Have you got any relations there?"

"Not that I know of."

"Are you going to stay long?"

"That depends on circumstances."

"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. It did not occur to him that it is a poor rule that will not work both ways.

"What is your business?" John asked, preferring to question rather than be questioned. "Are you a peddler?"

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

John glared at his questioner, feeling deeply insulted, and did not deign a reply. That he, the son of General Wall, the richest man in Portville, should be asked if he were a peddler was something his pride could not brook. Walter ought to have been annihilated by his look, but he stood it unflinchingly, secretly amused at the effectual manner in which he had silenced his questioner.

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, a hotel of moderate size, yet large enough to accommodate all the travelers likely to stand in need of shelter.

Walter got out, and taking his carpetbag, which was handed down from the roof, where it had been stored with other parcels, 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 at the same time the office, and asked if he could be accommodated with 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."

"Will you go up now?"

"Yes, I think so. How soon will supper be ready?"

"In half an hour."

"Very well, I'll be down."

Walter entered himself in the hotel register as Gilbert Howard, the name he had assumed. 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 there seemed a very good chance of doing so. Indeed, he had already learned something from the conversation he had overheard in the stage.

After washing his face and hands, he descended to the public room, and in a short time supper was ready. It was not a luxurious supper, but a good, plain meal, to which his appetite enabled him to do full justice.

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 had something to do with a manufacturing establishment recently opened, and was boarding at the hotel with his wife, until he could find a suitable house. There were

also a young man, employed as 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. Unfortunately it did not produce the desired effect. He coughed at intervals during the meal, and the hard, dry cough had an alarming sound.

"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. By way of further introduction, I will mention that 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, nor had he given up his intention of resuming his studies at some time. 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, strictly speaking, one's education

is never complete, and those who attain eminence in any branch are willing to confess themselves perpetual learners.

But, while these speculations were very pleasant, the five thousand dollars were not yet in his possession. To gain them he must learn more of General Wall and his schemes, and to this object he resolved to devote himself in earnest. He had no settled plan. Indeed, without considerably more knowledge of how the land lay it was impossible to decide upon any. He must be guided by circumstances, ready to avail himself of any favorable turn which affairs might take.

"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 sen-

sitive to cold, and so of late, as the weather has become colder, I have had 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."

Here he gave a brief account of the altercation between himself and John.

"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. "The climate does not agree with me, and I shall not be willing to run the risk of wintering here. 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."

"Are they mostly boys?"

"There are about thirty boys—rather more than half."

"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."

This was reassuring. Walter knew that, in case he should be accepted as a teacher, he could not hope to cope with those two or three years older than himself. But if he could rely

or the co-operation of the older pupils, he might get along.

"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."

"Where did you teach?"

"In my native town, in Vermont. It was a winter district school of about forty scholars."

"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, and the object of his present visit to Portville. He would have been as willing to confide in Allen Barclay as any one, but he thought his best course would be to make a confidant of no one, but to work out his plans by himself.

"From what you have told me," said Allen Barclay, "I think you have a chance of succeeding, in spite of your youth. I shall be really glad to be relieved of the school, for I feel that every day I spend here is injurious to my health. I didn't like to have the school closed, however, in the middle of the term."

"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. This class consists of two girls and two boys."

"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 to-morrow, and stay all the forenoon. The Latin recitations come then. Thus you will see the scholars, and become acquainted with my way of management, and can form a better idea of whether you would like to undertake it."

This struck Walter as an excellent suggestion, and he at once accepted the invitation.

"That will be much the best way," he re-

plied. "I suppose the school commences at nine o'clock."

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

The conversation now passed to other subjects, and 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."

"You will hardly find the scholars as far advanced," said Barclay, "or the teacher," he added, with a smile.

"That would certainly be true if I were teacher," returned Walter.

"What do you say to a little walk before it is time to go to school?" asked the teacher. "I generally walk for half an hour or more, as an offset to the long confinement of school."

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

The two put on their hats, and walked up the road slowly.

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 larger and more pretentious than he had yet seen.

"That is the nicest house in town, and it be-

longs to the man who is reputed to be the richest man in town."

"General Wall?" said Walter, inquiringly.

"The same."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"You have seen him, so that I need not describe his personal appearance. He is a popular man, and I think tries to make himself agreeable in order to gain influence."

"You say he is rich?"

"He is thought to be."

"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 something of a politician, and I hear that he hopes some day to go to Congress. In fact, he is a pushing man, and likely to make his influence felt."

"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."

"I have no doubt you got the correct impression of him. I like him as little as any of my scholars."

While they were thus speaking, General

Wall opened the front door of his house, and they met him at a short distance from 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."

General Wall walked on with a self-satisfied air, as if he took a good deal of credit to himself for honoring the poor teacher with so much notice. He glanced at Walter, whom he recognized as his fellow-traveler of the night before, and concluded, from seeing him with Allen Barclay, that he was a friend or relative of the teacher.

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, impelled by a hard knock from the bat, he felt a strong impulse to join in the game. When a student at the Essex Institute he had played ball a good deal, and 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 injurious to my health. It increases my cough. For that matter, how-

ever, 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."

"There's the master," called out one of the players.

"Give me another ball," said the boy at the bat. "The bell won't ring just yet."

So the game continued.

Among those who were watching the game, Walter noticed John Wall. John was more carefully dressed than any of the other boys, many of whom had taken off their coats, and 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 sepa-

rated 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.

All his associations with schools were in the character of a scholar, and he felt a little out of place. It seemed to him that he ought to be seated at one of the desks.

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

A boy of twelve advanced to the teacher's desk, and took from his hand 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 bandbox, 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 remarkably clear and simple way of explaining the leading principles of arithmetic. Allen Barclay, as Walter quickly perceived, was deficient in the art of teaching. He did not know how to explain difficulties in a plain, simple way. Walter felt desirous more than once of coming to his assistance, but of course could not do so.

"I believe I should like to teach," he thought to himself. "It must be interesting."

At last the classes in arithmetic finished their recitations.

"You will now have a chance to hear John Wall recite," said the teacher, in a low voice. Walter's interest was at once enlisted, partly because he was fond of Latin, and partly because he knew something already of John, and wished to see how he would acquit himself.

"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 knowledge 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! I am a long way ahead of everybody else in school. They can't any of them hold a candle to me."

"Where does your lesson commence, Mr. Wall?" asked the teacher.

"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," John condescended to acknowledge.

"*Uti,*" explained the teacher, "is not from the verb *utor,* as you appear to have taken it, and, if it were, could not be translated passively. 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. I hardly know where to begin to correct you. What part of speech is *item?*"

"A pronoun."

"What does it mean?"

"The same."

"Will you decline it?"

"*Item—eatum—item.*"

"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 ren-

dered actively. Without specifying all the mistakes, I will translate for you, 'and likewise was informed by the letters of Labienus.' *Certior fieba*t means, literally, 'was made more certain;' but we cannot always translate literally."

It would be tedious to follow John through his blundering recitation. He made fewer mistakes in the passages that succeeded, but it was easy to see that he knew very little Latin. His lesson comprised the whole of the first section, and was on the whole the worst recitation to which Walter had ever listened. He 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 mistakes; but it was enough for him that he

could report himself as studying Cæsar, and he appeared to think it of no importance how he got along.

Other classes succeeded, and the session at length ended.

"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, if I should take the place."

"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."

"I leave the matter in your hands, then. Who are the trustees?"

"General Wall is the principal one, and I will call to see him this evening. 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, a man who was selected because he is rather prominent in town affairs, 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, and was competent and useful, but he got unpopular by taking sides in a local dispute, and was left off."

"I suppose teachers are examined by the trustees so that they may discover whether they are competent."

"Yes, but the examinations don't amount to much, as you can judge from the composition of the Board of Trustees."

"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."

In accordance with his determination, Allen Barclay knocked at the door of General Wall's residence about an hour after supper.

"Is the general in?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir; will you come in?"

"I would like to see him a few minutes."

He was ushered into the sitting-room, and 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."

"You haven't much reason as a parent to feel proud," thought Allen Barclay; but there are some thoughts that are best unspoken.

"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 the cough with which I have been troubled for a year past, instead of improving, as I hoped it would, is increasing, and 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 as well as English. I want my son John to go on in the same liberal course which I have projected for him," said the general, rather pompously.

"It is on this account that I have delayed

mentioning the matter before, but I now think 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. In Latin he is as far advanced as I am. He was educated at an Eastern institution of high rank."

"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. He is looking round for some business to occupy him. 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."

"What is his name?"

"Gilbert Howard."

"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; but this again was one of the things which he thought it would not be best to express.

"I think he will be a smart man," continued the general.

"So I hope," said Allen Barclay.

"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. But he only said, "It won't do for a lawyer to be too mild and unselfish."

"Just my idea, Mr. Barclay. A milk-and-water sort of a man won't succeed."

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, out of which he had to pay his board, by no means his equal in the social scale; and financially speaking, certainly, Allen Barclay could make no great pretensions; 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.

Considering the manner in which he got on, or rather did not get on, in Latin, John might have supposed that Mr. Barclay had called to speak on the subject to his father; but he was too conceited to think he was doing poorly, and never dreamed that, if he were, the teacher would have the temerity to complain of him.

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

"He is further advanced in Latin than any other," answered the teacher.

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

"A good deal of benefit may be derived from the study, I think," said Barclay. "But John is not likely to know enough to be of much advantage to him," was his inward reflection.

"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."

There was something in this remark which caught John's attention. Who was the young man referred to, and what connection could his scholarship have with his continuing the study of 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?"

"Do you mean the one that wouldn't give up his seat to me?"

"As he took the seat first, he had the best right to it. He is the one I mean."

"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 tomorrow evening, and see if he is qualified."

"He can't keep school," said John.

"Why not, my son?"

"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 felt rather flattered by this reference to his influence, but nevertheless he did not like the idea of having Walter for a teacher. Mr. Barclay, though he entertained no very flattering opinion of John, was worldly wise, and had shown him 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 for him. He didn't mean to help him, at any rate.

CHAPTER VII.

A NOVEL SITUATION.

"You are to be examined to-morrow evening at General Wall's, Mr. Howard," reported Allen Barclay to Walter, who was waiting the result of his visit.

"Does General Wall know that I am the one whom he met in the stage?" inquired Walter.

"Yes, he mentioned it himself."

"What did he say when you first mentioned 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; but you need not trouble yourself. 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."

"Did he know anything about the plan of my teaching?"

"Yes; his father mentioned it to him."

"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 paid," said Barclay.

It was true. Walter had not thought of this, as he had another object in view of much more importance, and chiefly desired the school because it would give him an excuse to remain in Portville without suspicions as to his real motive. However, he felt some interest in the matter, and inquired as to the amount he might expect.

"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."

"That will satisfy me," said Walter. "I made more as a book agent, but then it was harder work."

"I hope you will find the position agreeable. I shall feel relieved to give up the school. I ought to have done it before."

Allen Barclay was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which confirmed his statement in an emphatic manner. He inherited a consumptive tendency, and it seemed probable that, do what he would, he would be short-lived.

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 which he would be called upon to teach. He found the task of refreshing his memory comparatively an easy one, for he had been good in all his studies. By the time Allen Barclay returned from school he had completed his review.

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

"In literary pursuits, Mr. Barclay. I have been examining myself in the different branches of study, and 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."

"Very well."

Seven o'clock found Walter knocking at the door of the chairman of the school trustees. He felt tolerably composed. Still it was a novel situation, and the undertaking he contemplated might well be formidable to one so young and inexperienced. But Walter was not a timid boy. He had plenty of pluck, and he meant to do his best, whatever might be the issue. As to the examination, he did not feel much alarmed.

The servant had her orders, and ushered him at once into the presence of General Wall, who seemed to be alone.

"Good-evening, Mr. Howard," said the chairman of the trustees. "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."

"Where were you educated?"

"At the Essex Classical Institute, in the State of New York."

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

"Yes, sir."

"My son, whom you saw in the stage the other evening, 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, but knew it would not do.

"My son is studying Cæsar."

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

"I am glad to hear it. It is my desire that John should not lose any time. In fact, 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, and weighs a hundred and ninety-five pounds. 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, and weighed but one hundred and twenty-eight pounds. 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, who commanded the general respect and obedience of the students, 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, answering the implication. "But he tells me that he succeeded as well in his first school, though he was less than a year older than I am now."

"That is encouraging. 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, as he has to visit a patient five miles distant. 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.

But General Wall did not specify whether this was the one he referred to, and Walter was left in doubt.

"Do you know when Mr. Barclay wishes to cease teaching?" inquired General Wall.

"I think at once. He has a severe cough, and he thinks the climate here does not suit him."

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

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

His father took the letter with some eagerness and opened it. He 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 latter had imagined that the executor of Mr. Conrad's estate would be glad to realize so much from what he might have concluded to be a worthless claim. 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, just touching it, and muttering "Good-evening" in a not very gracious manner.

"I foresee that he won't prove a very agreeable scholar," thought Walter.

At this moment a knock was heard at the door.

"That must be Squire Griffiths," said General Wall. "John, you may go to the door and let him in."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCHOOL TRUSTEE.

Squire Griffiths was a small man, with stiff gray hair, which he usually brushed in such a manner that it stood up straight in front, forming a palisade, so to speak. 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, advancing to meet him. "This is Mr. Howard, the young man whom Mr. Barclay has recommended to fill his place."

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, rather 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 hope I am qualified, and if I undertake the school I shall do my best to succeed."

"Of course," said the squire. "I expected you'd say that. Why, there's 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 at this point; "but everybody has to begin, and some succeed very well from the first. Mr. Howard is a good Latin scholar, and that is in his favor."

"I don't think much of Latin, for my part," 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."

"Was Cæsar a Latin?" asked Squire Griffiths.

"He used the Latin language," said Walter,

"Well, maybe it's all right to study Latin," said the squire, "though I've lived man and boy more'n sixty year, and have got along without it."

Squire Griffiths had rather a limited idea of the range of education, and thought if a boy could read and write and cipher, he was prepared to go out into the world.

"Latin is considered indispensable to a thorough education," said General Wall.

"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," said Walter.

General Wall was evidently disposed to employ Walter. He feared that if he was not engaged some teacher would be procured who would be unable to carry John forward in the advanced course upon which he had entered.

"Well, Squire Griffiths, shall we proceed to the examination?" he suggested. "Dr. Owens will be unable to attend our meeting this evening, so that duty will be thrown upon us."

"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," said the general. "Here's a book. You can open it anywhere, and read."

The book chanced to be an historical work, written in a style clear and flowing. 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, who was a considerably better scholar than his associate, 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."

The squire indulged in no further questioning, and General Wall said, "Will you ask a few words in spelling, Squire Griffiths?"

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, as if he hardly anticipated a correct answer to so difficult a question.

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, glad to have got out of his quandary so well.

"What are the two great rivers of Africa, Mr. Howard?" asked the General.

"The Nile and the Niger."

"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. I am sorry to say, however, that the assertion was without foundation, as he had never before heard of Sahara, to his knowledge.

"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 clear-

ing his throat. He asked this question with confidence, because he happened to know the answer.

"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."

The examination closed with a few questions in arithmetic, which were satisfactorily answered.

"Mr. Howard," said General Wall, "we are satisfied with the result of the examination. We consider you competent to teach, so far as your education is concerned. 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 on his return from the examination, "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," answered Allen Barclay, laughing, "though he looks so with his glasses on. Well, I am glad you came out all right. When shall you be ready to commence?"

"I will go in on Monday morning."

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

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

"Thank you for the compliment. I like Portville well enough, but the air is too bracing. 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, mystified.

"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."

"I won't say whether I am or not. Be that as it may, I resign her willingly to you."

"She pays me very little attention compared with you."

"You flatter me. If I have attracted her attention, it is only as a schoolmaster. 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?" exhibiting a small *billet,* written on pink paper.

"What is it?"

"I will read it. You will see that it concerns both of us."

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

"Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones presents her compliments 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. It is a poetic designation, that's all."

"Who will be present?"

"Only her brother."

"Is he poetical too?"

"Far from it. He won't take much part in the conversation. Such remarks as he may venture to make will be prosaic enough."

"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 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, and thought it would do well enough to answer verbally when we met to-morrow morning at the breakfast table."

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

"Certainly, Mr. Howard. I shall be very glad to have you do so."

"I will write it, and, as the answer should come from you, you can copy it if you like."

"Very well. You will find pens and paper on the table."

Walter sat down to the table with a twinkle of merriment in his eyes, 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, reading it aloud to his companion.

"You have beaten her with her own weapons," said Barclay, laughing. "She will be delighted. I hope, by the way, that you will carry some Russia salve, in case the burns should prove severe."

"The burns are only metaphorical. They won't be uncomfortable."

"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."

Walter sat down again, and copied his epistolary effort in his best hand.

"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. I have just sent him. We will get him to carry it this evening."

"Very well."

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. "I s'pose it's very important, Mr. Barclay?"

"No, it's only about an invitation."

Edward nodded knowingly, as if to say, "I know all about it."

"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. It won't affect me particularly, as I am going away so soon."

"I am safe enough," said Walter.

"How do you make that out?"

"I mean that I am too young to give countenance to any such reports."

"I am not sure about that. You look older than you are."

"How much older?" asked Walter, who liked to be considered above his real age.

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

"I saw false mustaches 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."

"I rather think it would," said Walter, laughing. "Well, I will save my seventy-five cents, and wait till nature provides me with the genuine article, warranted to stick fast."

"That will be better, I think."

"Have you any idea as to Miss Jones' age?" inquired Walter.

"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. I shall not soon forget her look of anger and

annoyance. She took occasion the next day to refer to herself as twenty-one; but, as the boys say, it was too thin. However, she fancies we are all deceived, and I allow her to think that I consider her youthful."

"What sort of an evening shall we have?"

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

"Does she write poetry?"

"She calls it poetry."

"What do you call it?"

"I can't find any appropriate name."

"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 have no doubt she has offered her verses in various directions, but editors are flinty-hearted sometimes, and I fear they 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."

"Is that a compliment? Thank you," said Walter, with a low bow.

When he went to bed that night, there were two events to which he looked forward with interest. One was, his entrance upon his duties as teacher on Monday morning; the other, his visit to the bower of Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones on the following evening.

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 at a fair valuation, and arranged to move into his room and receive board on the same terms. Saturday, as in some of the Eastern States, was a half-holiday. As it would be his last day in school, Mr. Barclay, after the school had come to order, 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, so that you need not lose by the change. I am happy to say that my successor has been found. Mr. Howard, who is now present, will

take my place on Monday. He is thoroughly qualified for the position, and if you co-operate 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 felt a little embarrassed, and flushed as he met the united gaze. He felt that he had undertaken a "big job," but his courage rose with the occasion, and he determined to spare no effort to succeed.

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

"Is it necessary?" returned Walter, who had not prepared himself for a speech.

"I think it will be expected."

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. I shall do my best to advance you in your studies, and hope to treat you all fairly and justly. 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. Among these was John Wall, who surveyed the new teacher with a supercilious air. Walter noticed this, but it did not trouble him much. If no one chose to trouble him except John, he knew he could get along.

When school was over, Mr. Barclay said: "If the scholars will remain a few minutes, I shall be glad to introduce them individually to Mr. Howard."

Walter rose, and one by one the scholars came up. 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 scrutinized 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, and judge whether he or she was

likely to prove agreeable and friendly or otherwise. 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. He was apparently fourteen. He was a beginner in Latin, but, as far as he had gone, was a far more thorough scholar than John Wall. As Walter's hand touched his, each felt instinctively that he had found a friend, though only the usual formal words passed between them.

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. As to obeying a little chap like the master, he made up his mind that he would do it only so far as it suited him.

"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 the school and not within hearing of either of the teachers.

"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."

"Are you going to be disorderly?"

"I guess I won't trouble him, if he don't trouble me," said Peter.

"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."

"He won't ask anything unreasonable of you," said Alfred.

"He'd better not," said Peter Groot, significantly.

"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."

It will be seen from this conversation that Peter's ideas as to the relation between teacher and scholar were very rudimentary. The "master," to him, 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 by several inches, 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, which, though heavy, was friendly and good-natured. He might not be a very active friend,

but 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."

"He does errands out of school and whatever work he can find, in order to assist his mother. I wish he might have a college education. It was at my suggestion that he commenced Latin, and he does better in it than any of his class. I am sure you will enjoy teaching him."

"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."

"So he needs to be conquered into good behavior?" said Walter.

"It's about so." And Barclay looked at our hero with a natural doubt whether he would be able to cope with the troublesome scholar.

"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—what is his name?"

"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."

"You needn't fear open violence from him,

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

"At any rate, the die is cast; I have agreed to take the school, and I shall do what I can to succeed.

" *'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 wanted to produce a good impression upon them. Her vocation, so she thought, was that of an authoress. She had sent several poems to the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine* at various times, but with singular unanimity both periodicals had "respectfully declined" them all. Melinda understood the reason well enough.

"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? You could send 'em to somebody there."

"Thank you, I wouldn't stoop to the subter-

fuge," said Melinda, reciting melodramatic ally:

"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," confessed Melinda. "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.

Her brother obeyed the command. 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.

She lifted her eyes slowly, appearing wrapt in meditation.

"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."

"Indeed, Mr. Howard, I am glad to hear that. You and me will be congenial."

"You flatter me, Miss Jones," said Walter, looking sober, but wanting to laugh.

"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, whom Melinda was in the habit of ordering around, 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. They were written this afternoon, in a fit of inspiration. 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.

"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 wings to soar aloft,—
I am tired of living here."

"It takes Melinda to string off the rhymes," said Ichabod, who took his sister at her own valuation, and firmly believed her to be a genius. "She writes 'em just as easy!"

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

"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 she just read."

"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."

This she said, anxious to draw out expressions of admiration.

"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."

"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.

In fact he had written a few verses, at Mr. Barclay's suggestion, "for the fun of it," in order to contribute his quota to the feast of reason expected in the evening.

"But I hope you will excuse my reading it," he added, with affected bashfulness.

"Indeed I will not. Mr. Barclay, help me to persuade Mr. Howard."

Walter finally yielded, as he intended to do all the while, but on condition that Mr. Barclay would read the poem. This being accepted, 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.

"By Jove! that's my style of poetry," said Mr. Jones, energetically. "I like that better than yours, Melindy."

"Oh, it don't compare with your sister's,

Mr. Jones," said Walter, modestly. "It doesn't soar to such lofty heights."

"Now, Mr. Howard, I think it excellent," said Miss Jones, who was delighted at the praise of her own production. "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. "Mr. Jones and myself unluckily cannot soar with you and Mr. Howard. We can only look on in silent admiration."

"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."

But it is unnecessary to detail the rest of the conversation. Later in the evening some nuts, apples and raisins were passed around, to which Melinda did full justice, notwithstanding her unsatisfied longings and the solitude of her soul.

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 "Strong and Steady" 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. When Joshua asked for more, he told him he might go to work in a shoeshop, or in his own store, though in the latter case he only agreed to pay him fifty cents. But 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."

Joshua felt immensely wealthy with the proceeds of the robbery, amounting, at the price of bonds, to over six hundred dollars. Accustomed to the paltry sum of twenty-five cents a week, never having had in his possession more than a dollar at a time, and seldom that, it is not surprising that he should have regarded six hundred dollars as a small fortune. He knew nothing of the city and its dangers. He had an idea that he should easily get a situation in a week or two, which time he proposed to spend in seeing life.

When he reached New York, he left the depot and went out into the street. 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. His first desire was to find out where Sam lived. 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, but where that avenue was he had not the least idea.

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, whose hands indicated his profession.

"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, reflecting that the sum asked represented what hitherto had been his entire weekly allowance.

"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 boot-

black, not caring to offend a possible customer by commenting on his verdant appearance.

"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'."

"Do you?" asked Joshua, brightening up.

"Yes. He always gives me twenty cents. He wouldn't go round with no such lookin' boots as yours. They ain't respectable here in the city."

Joshua believed all this. He was not yet accustomed to the "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" of city street Arabs, and he decided to have his boots blacked notwithstanding the price, which he could not help regarding as very steep. He was anxious to conform, as speedily as possible, to city fashions, and, if it was not respectable to walk about in unpolished boots, he decided to have them blacked, so that his friend Sam might not feel ashamed of him when he came into his store.

"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."

"Do you have a license?" asked Joshua, with curiosity.

"In course I do."

"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, who was gathering valuable information with great rapidity.

"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. They were made of cowhide, for Jacob Drummond was not in the habit of spending much for the outfit of his son, and they had never been well polished since they were new. At length, however, they were polished, and certainly were greatly improved by the process, though in shape they would hardly have been taken for the work of a fashionable city bootmaker.

"There," said the young Arab, surveying his work complacently, "now they look respectable."

"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 it is needless to say that 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 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 should lose money."

"How much do you want?"

"A dollar. It's worth a dollar to go so fur. I might lose half a dozen shines."

The boy would have stood out for a dollar but for the fact that another bootblack had come up—one of his rivals in business—and he was afraid he might offer to go for less. Accordingly he hastened to strike a bargain.

"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. It was a considerable walk, and to Joshua an interesting one. As he noted block after block of elegant buildings 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 omnibus.

"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 with the money he had extracted from Joshua by false pretenses.

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 by that enterprising young gentleman. Like most of the shoe stores on this avenue, it had a liberal stock of boots exposed outside, at prices low enough to attract the attention of those passing. Within it was narrow, but deep. There was a counter on one side, with two or three sofas in the open space for the accommodation of customers who wished to try on shoes. Behind the counter were two shopmen, while one outside was fitting a boy with boots. Joshua looked about him, but failed to recognize the friend of whom he was in quest.

"Perhaps he has gone out a little while," thought Joshua. "I will inquire."

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.

Joshua did not infer from this answer the true state of the case.

"Is he coming in soon?" he asked.

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

Something in his tone excited doubt in Joshua's mind.

"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 or friend to instruct him in what he ought to do.

"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, to whom it occurred that when he found Sam the latter would sell to him cheaper on the score of acquaintance.

"Take a card," said the salesman, "and give us a call when you need a pair."

Joshua took the card and put it in his pocket. 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, who had not contemplated another meeting with the customer he had deceived, decided to brazen it out, and deny all knowledge of the affair.

"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 ques-

tion, but, looking closely at the boy before him, he was convinced that he was right.

"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 just look 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. He's a bad boy, Pat is—he'll lie as fast as he can talk."

Joshua was at last convinced that he had made a mistake. He was completely taken in by the young rascal, who proceeded to follow up his deception.

"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 want me to give you a shine?"

"No," said Joshua, hastily drawing back his foot, upon which the bootblack was about to commence operations. "They don't need any more blacking."

"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 thought, very justly, that this was something in which he required no help, and did not therefore feel disposed to throw away any more money. He 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.

We are often very near the truth without suspecting it. 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 had lived all his lifetime in a country village, where everybody knew everybody else, and this will help to account for his limited knowledge of life.

"I wish I had Sam's letter," he said to himself; "it would save me a good deal of trouble."

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 hump-back?"

"What?"

"With a hump between his shoulders?"

"No."

"Then it can't be the Crawford I know."

Joshua was deeply disappointed. The young man had drawn him on till he believed that Sam was practically found. Now, discovery seemed as remote as ever. 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 asked as before, but succeeded in eliciting no information. 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 had not made a mistake about the street. He began to feel lonely, not for the lack of human faces, for he had met hundreds of persons, but 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. Then he judged that it would be useless to go any farther. What if he should be unable to find Sam at all? It was an alarming suggestion, for he depended upon his friend to get him a place, and make him acquainted with the ways of the city. 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. Besides, there was a possibility of his meeting Sam on the street.

It was fortunate for him that he decided to walk. About Thirtieth street he met the one of 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. All I could remember was that you lived somewhere on Eighth avenue."

"How long are you going to stay in the city?" asked his friend.

"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?" asked his friend.

"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, but thought it best not to appear to know that the money was dishonestly acquired. "The main thing is that you've got the money. Now, my dear fellow," he continued, with a remarkable increase of cordiality, "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 any-

body 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. "You are a friend of mine, and of course I feel an interest in you."

This was quite true; Sam did feel an interest in Joshua, now that he had ascertained his ability to pay his own expenses. Otherwise, it is to be feared that the interest would have been considerably less.

"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."

To this proposal Joshua willingly acceded. He had walked till he was tired, and was quite willing to rest before going further.

"How do you happen to be out of the store at this time?" asked Joshua.

"I came out on a little business," said Sam, loftily. "But it is time for me to go back. They can't get along without me."

To this Joshua listened with pleasure, for he looked forward to the time when he, too,

should be finally settled in business like his friend, for whom he had a high respect, not being aware how insignificant his position was.

"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 ascendancy 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, and realized that he had had a long ...mp for nothing.

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; however, Joshua was not accustomed to seeing superior goods, as the people of Stapleton did not, in general, wear the best French kid.

"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."

Joshua yielded to his friend's superior knowledge of what was necessary in the city, and tried on several pairs, till at last one was found which Sam declared to be just right for him.

"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, for he foresaw that his visitor would be likely to spend considerable time there. He wished, besides, to obtain an extra evening off duty, meaning to accompany Joshua to the theatre at the latter's expense. He did not expect that Joshua, who inherited, as he knew, a mean disposition from his father, would voluntarily 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.

In pursuance of this plan, he soon after went up to the desk behind which Mr. Craven was standing.

"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, whose devotion to friendship was not wholly disinterested.

"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, returning to his country friend; "I am off for the evening. We'll go to the theatre 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. It was occupied by clerks and salesmen employed, like Sam, on Eighth avenue, and the price and accommodations were both adapted to the small salaries which, as a rule, they received. The hall was covered with oilcloth, dirty, and in places worn away, while the stair-carpeting was of the same material.

Sam opened the door with a latchkey, and led the way upstairs.

"Come up to my room, Joshua," he said. "While you are fixing your hair, I'll go down and 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 in-

ferior 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. There's a brush and comb; you can be fixing your hair, while I run down and see about a seat at the table for you."

Joshua proceeded to arrange his toilet, while Sam did as proposed. He returned in a couple of minutes and announced his success.

"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."

"That seems strange, Sam."

"Oh, you'll get used to it very soon."

"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. He was

not used to it yet, but had no doubt he should like it after a while.

"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 mistress 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; and she really was glad, for a new boarder was a welcome addition to her household. "Sit down there, if you please, next to Mr. Crawford."

Joshua took his seat as directed, and the waitress came to receive her orders.

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

"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, and neither he nor any of his family had ever been in danger of gout or dyspepsia. So to Joshua the fare at Mrs. Jones' boarding house seemed excellent. His wanderings had given him quite an appetite, and he did substantial justice to the food before him.

When they rose from the table Mrs. Jones said, "I will come upstairs immediately, Mr. Crawford, and show you and your friend the large room next to yours."

"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."

"Does he? 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. I'll help you get a place by my influence," continued Sam, loftily.

By this time Mrs. Jones made her appearance at the head of the stairs. She opened the door of an 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. Two cheap prints in pine frames gave an elegant, artistic look to the apartment. Joshua was not, however, as favorably impressed with it as with the dinner.

"How'll this do, Joshua?" said Sam.

"Very well, I think."

"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 theatre."

"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.

"You can buy one to-morrow or next day. I wonder if there is a closet? Oh, yes, here's one. 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, and under the auspices of Sam Crawford the fund of money, which he considered as so large, was not likely to last long. 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.

"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. Now, I'm not going to permit this. 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. He did not think that his son, for whom he felt contempt in spite of the relationship, had spirit enough to take such a step; and, besides, he knew that he could not go far without money.

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! I am not in the least troubled about him. 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 afterward he hurried downstairs, pale with passion.

"What do you think your son has done?" he demanded of his startled wife.

"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, having selected Niblo's Theatre as the one which on the whole seemed most attractive, left their boarding house at a quarter past seven o'clock.

"Shall we walk?" asked Joshua.

"No," said Sam; "it's too far. We should get there late."

"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. They were lucky enough to find just two seats unoccupied, which they at once took.

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 for both."

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

They reached the theatre some minutes before the performance commenced. There was a popular play to be performed, and 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 afterward."

"How much will they be?"

"Two dollars."

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

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

Thus exhorted, Joshua took his place in the line, and in due time purchased the tickets.

"Now, come along," said Sam, seizing him by the arm. "It's about time for the performance to commence."

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 afterward. 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, and he made no objection to the delay.

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

"That's the orchestra."

"When does the show begin?"

"You mustn't call it a show, Joshua," said Sam, "or people will think you green. Say the play, or the performance."

"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. It interested him so much that he temporarily forgot how much it had cost him. He asked various questions of Sam, which led the latter to smile, though but a year before he had been quite as unsophisticated. It is not my intention, however, to follow the course of the performance. Suffice it to say that at a quarter to eleven o'clock the curtain fell, and the audience rose and made their way out of the theatre.

"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."

"There's some difference between Stapleton and New York."

"I know it, but——"

"You must enlarge your ideas, Joshua. People make money here fast, and they spend it fast. Country people 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. However, you're in the city now, and are better off. 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. "Come along."

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."

They were soon brought, and speedily disposed of.

"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."

Joshua likewise ate his plate of fried oysters with relish.

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. See, I've got ten cents more, enough to pay for our fare home."

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

"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."

"That isn't fair. I didn't order the oysters."

"You ate part of them. There won't be any trouble. I'll pay you as soon as we get back to the room."

"I wish we hadn't come in," said Joshua, uncomfortably.

"Why? It won't do you any harm to lend me the money for an hour."

"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 was now half-past eleven o'clock.

"It is time we were getting home, Joshua," said Sam. "We'll cross Broadway, and take the University place cars. 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. Not much like the city."

"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, and rightly reflecting that the reception he would get from his father would be a disagreeably warm one.

"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!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the gratified Joshua. "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?" said Joshua, looking at his companion with new respect. "Does he make much money?"

"Made fifteen thousand dollars last year. Half of that'll be pretty nice for me, won't it?"

I need not remark that 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. But he had a purpose to serve in imposing upon his companion's credulity.

"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."

Here a car came along, and the two jumped on board.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUBTLE FLATTERY.

THE two boys reached their boarding house as the clock struck twelve.

"The best thing we can do is to get to bed as soon as possible," said Sam, as they entered the room and locked the door.

"You might as well pay me what you owe me," suggested Joshua, who did not intend Sam to forget his indebtedness.

"Oh, yes!" said Sam. "Let me find my pocketbook."

He felt in the pocket of his "other pants," but of course did not find what was not there. To let the reader into a secret, he had, before leaving for the theatre, carefully locked it up in his trunk, where it was even now, as he very well knew.

"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."

"I call that a good deal."

"It's more than I like to lose, to be sure."

"Then, you can't pay me what you owe me?" said Joshua, soberly.

"Not just now. In fact, I must wait till the end of the week, when 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, in a tone indicating his enjoyment of the joke.

"No," returned Joshua, slowly; but he would have much preferred to receive payment there and then.

"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, and was to be taken into partnership at twenty-one by his employer, and thenceforth to be a prosperous business man, with a large income, he was reassured, and did not doubt that he should be paid.

"Well, Joshua, what are you going to do with yourself?" asked Sam the next morning, as they rose from breakfast.

"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 in the store."

"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 suppose 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, to ascertain the safety of his money.

"Plenty of danger. If I am in danger of being robbed, you are much more so, not being used to the city. 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 don't think I'll ride in the cars—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."

As proposed, Joshua accompanied his friend to the shoe store, and entered, but, after a few minutes, went out to see what he could of the city. He wandered about for two hours, looking in at shop windows, and examining with curiosity the many unusual objects which everywhere met his view. It was interesting, but it was also tiresome, particularly as he

walked everywhere. At length, his attention was drawn to a car going uptown, on which was printed its destination, "Central Park." Joshua had heard a good deal of Central Park in his country home, and he naturally was curious to see it. 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, with the other promenaders, and by and by 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."

"It is a fine day to enjoy the park."

"Yes," said Joshua.

"I suppose you live in the city?"

"Yes; that is, I do now," answered Joshua, flattered again at being mistaken for an old resident of New York.

"I am a stranger in the city," said the other; "I live in the country. I came up here on a little business. 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 as he classed himself among the city people.

"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, with curiosity.

"I was walking just above here, when I found this in the path."

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," and he pointed

to the chain, which also was, to all appearances, gold.

"I wish I had been as lucky," said Joshua, gazing at the watch and chain 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 must go out of this city in an hour."

"I can't afford to give fifty dollars," said Joshua.

"I might take a little less," said the stranger, "considering that I found it; but it's well worth fifty dollars, or seventy-five, for that matter."

"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, "but 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. The old man is awful mean. If he had treated me right, I shouldn't have had to help myself; that's certain."

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, on the whole, to keep it, for the present, at least, and not to sell unless he should stand in need of money. That would not probably be for a long time, as five hundred dollars seemed quite a fortune to him. Besides, in a short time, probably, he would

get a place, with a salary large enough to pay his expenses.

Joshua wandered about the park a short time, but returned to his boarding house in time for lunch. Here he met Sam Crawford. The latter looked with surprise at the watch and chain so ostentatiously displayed by his friend.

"Where did you get that watch and chain?" he asked.

"I bought it," said Joshua, in a tone of importance. "I made a pretty good bargain, too."

"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. If any money was to be spent, he wanted to have something to do with it.

"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 took it in his hands, and looked at it, but, not being a professional, he could not tell whether it was genuine or not.

"I shouldn't wonder if you had got swin-

dled," 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 in the park, 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. I don't believe it is gold."

"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."

It must be confessed that 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. The watch and chain looked all right. He could not help thinking that it was gold, after all.

When lunch was over, he went out with Sam. Two blocks distant, there was 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, after a slight examination, 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, after a pause.

"How much is the whole thing worth?"

"Three or four dollars, at the outside. The works are good for nothing. It won't keep good time. If you want a really good gold watch, I will show you some."

"Not to-day," said Sam. "I may be getting one soon; then I will call on you."

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. How much did you give for the watch? Forty dollars?"

"Yes," answered Joshua, wincing.

"Then it's forty dollars thrown away, for the watch won't go, and it will never do you any good."

"I should like to sell it for as much as I gave," said Joshua, not very honestly. "I might go out 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. Evidently, the city was full of snares and swindlers of which he had no idea, and it wouldn't do for him to lose forty dollars very often. 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. He decided henceforth to beware of plausible strangers, especially if they professed to hail from the country.

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," said his wife.

"I have reason to be. I suppose," he added, with a sneer, "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. You certainly might have afforded him a dollar a week. 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, who wants to live without work."

"He was willing to work. He has told me more than once 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 often to speak to me 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. My mind is made up. I shall go to New York to-morrow, Mrs. Drummond. 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. She felt that her husband had treated him too much like a young boy, not having sufficient consideration for the fact that in age he was now bordering upon manhood.

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, and, now that his son had robbed him, his anger was strongly stirred against him.

"If I get hold of him, I'll flog him within an inch of his life," he muttered, between his closed teeth. "The ungrateful villain! to make me such a return for supporting him in idleness all his life!"

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, though deeply incensed against Joshua, he wished, rather, 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, and thought it not at all unlikely that he would be robbed.

Not knowing where else to go, he walked toward the Astor House. 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 was walking about on Eighth avenue at this time, and 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 for some hours, since it was not probable that it would occur to him to go to Central Park.

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, on a previous visit to New York, 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. "He may put me on the track of Joshua."

Taking the Eighth avenue cars at the Astor House, half an hour brought him to the shoe store so fortunate as to have secured the services of Mr. Crawford. 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, disappointed.

"When did he come up?" asked Sam. "I wonder he didn't come to see me."

"He's a young villain!" exclaimed Mr. Drummond, in excitement.

"What has he done?" asked Sam, curious to

hear the story, of which he could readily guess the nature.

"He's run away with several hundred dollars of my money," said Mr. Drummond, sternly. "It'll be a sorry day for him when I get hold of him!"

"Just as I thought," said Sam to himself. "How could he do such a thing?" he said, aloud. "I didn't think that of Joshua."

"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, which was, to some extent, true, so far as Joshua's present whereabouts were concerned.

"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, most of all. Well, good-by. It won't do for me to miss the afternoon train home."

"The old man's precious mad!" said Sam to himself, as he entered the store. "I would not like to stand in Joshua's shoes when his affectionate papa gets hold of him. 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. I must see how I can get as much out of him as possible, and that soon."

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."

Joshua waited till his friend signified that he was ready.

"Where have you been, Joshua?" he asked.

"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, scanning his friend's face.

"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."

"Did he ask after me?" inquired Joshua, nervously.

"You bet he did!" answered Sam, significantly.

"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. In fact, he didn't seem affectionate."

"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. He's going to give you a warm reception when that time comes."

"You didn't tell him where I was, did you?" said Joshua, in alarm.

"Of course not. I pretended I didn't know anything about you. 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, uneasily.

"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 if I would."

"Did he?"

"Yes," answered Sam.

He was about to mention how much, but it occurred to him that, if he didn't mention the smallness of the sum, he would get more credit for disinterested friendship.

"How much?"

"Oh, no doubt he would come down handsomely; but, as I had no intention of betraying you, I didn't inquire."

"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. Your father won't think of looking for you there. Of course, I don't want to part with you, but 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."

This was a very uncomfortable suggestion,

and Joshua began to find his dream of happiness in a city unsubstantial.

"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 already. When you came to sell the bond, the police might be all ready to nab you."

"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 quite so disinterested in this offer of service as Joshua supposed. 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?" he asked.

"I ought to get five hundred and fifty dollars for it," said Sam.

"Five hundred and fifty dollars!" repeated Joshua, elated, for he knew nothing about the money market, and supposed the bond would only bring its par value. But the next words of Sam lowered his spirits.

"That's what the bond is worth, but I don't expect to get so much."

"Why not?"

"The dealers will think it is stolen, and will refuse to buy unless I sell it under price. It's better to do that than keep the bond."

"Yes," said Joshua, hastily; "sell it any way, but get as much as you can."

"Trust me for that," said Sam. "I'll do better for you than you could do for yourself; 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 left the store, ostensibly to get lunch, but really to sell the bond. He 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.

After a little consideration, he divided the sum into two parts. Four hundred dollars he set apart for Joshua. The balance—a hundred and sixty dollars—he decided to retain as his commission. He relied upon Joshua's verdancy to help him in this barefaced swindle, and had his story all ready for his credulous mind.

He was half an hour late at the store, but received the sharp reprimand of his employer with equanimity, consoling himself with the hundred and sixty dollars he had 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 in proof of my right to sell the bond. He wanted to get it for seventy-five cents on the dollar, but I got him up to eighty."

"How much did that come to?" asked Joshua, who was not strong in mathematics.

"Four hundred dollars."

"Then I was cheated out of a hundred and fifty," said Joshua, disappointed.

"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, you may think yourself lucky to get off as well as you have. 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. I'll go round with you to-night, and inquire the price of tickets. You'd better buy a ticket for Chicago."

"I wish I knew somebody in Chicago," said Joshua, whose inexperience as a traveler made him shrink from such a long journey.

"Oh, you'll get along well enough!" said Sam. "Just try to find some cheap boarding house when you get out there, and then go around and look for a place in a store. 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; so what's the odds?"

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 that was owing me."

So saying, he tendered Joshua a five-dollar bill from the hundred and sixty he had reserved as his commission, and the latter gave him back the change. This raised Joshua's spirits somewhat, and enhanced his idea of Sam's honesty, as he had begun to fear he should lose the money.

"Now, Joshua," said Sam, tucking the money into his vest pocket, "you must come to the theatre 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 Theatre, 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, in a row near the stage.

"Yes, I see him. He ain't very handsome. What's his name?"

"It's a man from Stapleton, a neighbor of ours. 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, where they took back seats, inferior to those they had occupied below, but out of range of the man from Stapleton.

"I am afraid he will see me when I go out," said Joshua.

"We can go five minutes before the play is over," said Sam.

Satisfied with this arrangement, Joshua stayed on, and enjoyed the play, now that his anxiety was removed.

The play went on, but about a quarter to eleven, 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, as Burns has it, "The best-laid schemes of mice and men oft gang aglee." The same thought of getting out before the grand rush occurred to Mr. Draper, of Stapleton, and when the two boys emerged from the theatre they met face to face.

"Why, Joshua Drummond!" said Mr. Draper, in surprise. "How came you here? I didn't know you were here!"

"Then he hasn't heard," thought Joshua, recovering, in a measure, from his temporary panic.

"I've only been here a day or two," he answered.

"Are you going to live in New York?"

"Yes," said Joshua. "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."

This proposal was not agreeable to Joshua, for obvious reasons; but, of course, he did not dare to say so.

"When are you going back to Stapleton?" he 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. "It's lucky he didn't know about your leaving home without leave. I didn't recognize him when you first pointed him out to me. Now I suppose I shall get into a scrape with

your father for not telegraphing to him that I had met you. It's pretty clear that the sooner you leave New York, the better."

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 Theatre."

"At the theatre! 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 said he did not like to betray him. He said that he had tried to induce Joshua to return home, but that the latter had refused. He said he did not know where he was now, but 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. Having accompanied him thus far, we must now go back to our principal hero, and inquire how Walter was getting on with his Western school.

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, but Walter was resolute and plucky. He had a modest self-reliance, which his brief experience as a book agent had confirmed. The spirit in which he approached his new vocation may be inferred from his own remark to Allen Barclay, at the end of the tenth chapter: "At any rate, the die is cast; I have agreed to take the school, and I shall do what I can to succeed.

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

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, even among the more orderly scholars, 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, already described as more likely than any other to prove troublesome. 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. Allen Barclay had been compelled to flog him on the second day, and he did it so effectually that Peter never needed a second lesson. But as, both in appearance and reality, 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 going 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, glancing at Peter's sturdy form. "I guess you're as strong as he is."

"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," said Peter. "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."

Alfred referred to an occurrence of the previous week, where Peter, who was by no means as strong mentally as physically, showed the most lamentable ignorance. He did not relish the allusion.

"You'd better not be impudent, Alfred Clinton," he said, coloring, "or I may lick you."

"Don't trouble yourself," said Alfred, indif-

ferently. "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," said Alfred.

"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, who was, in feeling, a young aristocrat, did not in general affect the society of Peter, nor care to be considered intimate with him, but a common hatred often makes strange yoke-fellows; so now he was disposed to co-operate with Peter, and be gracious to him, 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 overlooked what, under other circumstances, would have been disagreeable to him, and replied: "I'll bet on you, Peter."

"Of course you will; you'd be a fool not to," said Peter.

John did not quite like the way in which he expressed it, but, for the reason before mentioned, did not show it.

"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, and felt like defending him.

"Speak for yourself, Alfred Clinton," said John, superciliously. "I'm reading Cæsar."

He drew himself up, as he spoke, in a way intended to impress the boys that one who was reading Cæsar must be a very advanced Latin scholar.

"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, not quite liking the turn the conversation had taken.

"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, and did not often condescend to exchange as many words with him as at present. Indeed, John looked upon himself as superior in social rank to any of his schoolmates, but was condescending enough to associate with the sons of the leading men on terms of equality.

Just then up came Phineas Morton, who was already been referred to as 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. He's got to know something. I don't know enough to teach this school," said Phineas, modestly.

"The master's a boy compared with you," said Peter, who would have liked to receive the co-operation of Phineas.

"I know it," said Phineas, quietly, "but he looks as if he might know something. 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."

Peter did not like this remark, but he knew that it would be of no use to show his anger. He was a bully in the case of younger boys, but he very well knew that Phineas could

manage him with one hand, as he boasted he could manage the new teacher.

Phineas went into the schoolhouse after his last remark, and 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. It was a novel situation for a boy not quite sixteen, and he felt it to be such. If for a moment he regretted having assumed so grave a responsibility, it was not strange. But, if Walter felt a little nervous and apprehensive, he had self-command enough not to show it. He looked calmly about him, meeting the expectant glances of all the scholars, 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, has already been alluded to as an excellent student, and a boy of fine disposition. He was ready and determined to co-operate 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.

There was a general silence and pause of expectation. The scholars were sitting in judgment on the new teacher, and wondering how he would proceed.

Walter rose, and, calmly surveying the fifty scholars whose charge he had assumed, 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 know how it has happened that I have undertaken to do so. 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 favorably received by the generality of the scholars. It 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, look-

ing 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, but he did not intend to trouble himself to be respectful, but to treat the new teacher with a cool disdain and assumption of superiority, which, though disagreeable, would not subject him to censure. He depended on his new friend, Peter, to take bolder measures.

Walter took the school register, and went to the nearest desk. He took down the name and age of the scholar, and learned to what classes he belonged, and then went on. He met with perfectly respectful answers till he came to Peter Groot.

Peter sat in the position already described, 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. Whenever it came, he meant to be ready.

"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?"

"Pretty much all."

"That is not definite enough."

"Reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography."

"Very well. You may come up in your usual classes."

Walter advanced to the next desk, which chanced to be that of John Wall.

"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."

"You may go on where you left off. How much are you accustomed to take?"

"Fifteen lines."

"That is a short lesson, but perhaps it will be well not to take any more till I find out whether you are able to do so."

"Did you take any more when you studied Cæsar?" asked John, who privately thought fifteen lines a very good lesson.

"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; that is, to convict him of ignorance. 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?"

It was a passage which Walter would have been able to read at any rate, but he had the additional advantage of having read it over the week before in Mr. Barclay's book, and so, of course, it was very familiar. 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. But I strongly advise you not to apply to me until you have done your best to make it out yourself. That will do you more good. You may recite your first lesson to-morrow."

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 has already been mentioned as the oldest pupil in the school. He 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 decided to make them up, as far as he could. So he came to school, and was, of course, placed in classes with boys much younger. But he submitted to this patiently, knowing that it was necessary, and had studied so faith-

fully since that he was now in the highest class in all the English branches. Latin he did not study.

"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. "I hope to be studying when I am older than you are now."

"I didn't feel the importance of study when I was younger," said Phineas. "If I had, I should not have been so ignorant now."

"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 so much hereafter."

"I am glad to hear you say this, Mr. Morton. Now, you will be kind enough to tell me what studies you are pursuing?"

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. We will occupy the rest of the forenoon by such tasks as do not require preparation. First of all I will hear you read. Mr. Morton, will you commence?"

Phineas Morton rose, and, opening his book, began to read. He 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, though but for the general laughter he would not have known that a mistake had been made.

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. It is the participle of the verb mislead."

"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. Peter tried to get up a laugh at Walter's expense, but failed ignominiously.

"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."

Phineas went on, and finished his reading without further mistakes. At length it came to the turn of Peter Groot. As we have already said, 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. It so happened that in the passage he was reading occurred the geographical name, Straits of the Dardanelles. Now, this was a common term, and 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, for, though he was ready enough to laugh at others, he did not enjoy being laughed at.

"You should say Straits of the Dardanelles, Peter," said Walter.

"That's what I said," growled Peter, with a cloudy brow, looking around him with displeasure.

"We all understood you 'darning needles.' You may go on."

Peter continued sullenly, and sat down at the end. 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, on account of his superior size, he was unable to bully him. Besides, Phineas had more than once interfered to protect younger boys from the despotism of Peter, and the latter had been compelled to respect the remonstrances of the oldest pupil.

When the reading was concluded, Walter rang the bell for recess. Nearly all the scholars went out. Phineas Morton came up to the teacher's desk.

"Thank you, Mr. Howard," he said, "for your kindness 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 ob-

served 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."

There was a firmness in Walter's tone, and a determination in his manner, which tended to reassure Phineas; still, as he looked at Walter's youthful form and thought of Peter's strength, he was not entirely without apprehension.

"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, for he knew how to value such assistance as the stalwart oldest pupil could render. "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. "I am glad to hear that, Mr. Howard," he said. "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.

"What do you think of the new teacher, Peter?" asked John.

"He's nothing but a boy," returned Peter, contemptuously.

"Do you think he'll stay long?" asked John, insinuatingly.

"Not more'n a week."

"Perhaps he will," said John, intent upon drawing Peter on.

"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?" said Peter, facing about.

"No, I don't believe he can."

"Of course he can't. Do you see that muscle?" and Peter stiffened his arm in a way that my boy readers will understand.

"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."

"Very likely you could."

"There ain't any likely about it. It's a sure thing."

"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, his vanity and conceit getting worse under the flattery of John. "But I saw you laugh," he added, in a tone of displeasure.

"Did I?" said John.

"Yes, you did."

"Then it was because the other boys laughed. You know a fellow 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, and found himself lying on his back, looking up in the face of Phineas.

"What did you do that for?" he demanded, angrily.

"To teach you better manners," said Phineas, coolly. "When you feel like calling me

names, you had better look round first to make sure that I am not near by."

Peter was very angry. He would gladly have retaliated, but one look at the broad shoulders and stalwart form of Phineas was enough to discourage any such attempt.

"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. Circumstances altered cases, and it didn't seem quite the same when he took the case to himself.

"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. John knew this, but it was his interest at present to flatter Peter, since both cherished a common dislike for the new teacher, and John depended upon his companion, who was bolder than himself, to make trouble.

At this point the schoolbell rang, indicating that the recess was over.

"There goes the bell," said John. "Shall we go in?"

"I'm in no hurry," said Peter. "I'd just as lief go home. He couldn't do anything to me."

"Are you going home?"

"No, I want to see how he gets along. When I get ready, you'll see fun."

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.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A PRACTICAL JOKE.

THE remainder of the day passed without incident. Peter was no less determined to make trouble, but had not decided in what manner to do it. He was content to bide his time. He sat idle, but watchful, apparently "taking stock" of the young teacher, and making up his mind about him.

Soon after eight the next morning Peter called at the house of his new associate. John observed with surprise that 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's 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 hen to the "master's" chair. The poor bird did not appreciate or enjoy the high dignity which had been forced upon her. She probably thought that her personal wishes ought to have been consulted in the choice of a profession. She began to give vent to her dissatisfaction in the manner characteristic of her kind.

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.

"What makes you think I did it?"

"I know well enough."

"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 think that's a poor way to settle a dispute."

"I thought you wouldn't care about it," said Peter, significantly.

"I am not afraid of you, if that's what you mean."

"You'd better shut up your mouth."

"I admire your elegant style of conversation."

"It suits me."

"Yes, it does suit you. It wouldn't suit anybody else."

"What do you mean?" said Peter, suspiciously.

"It is too much trouble to explain all I say. You are not very quick at understanding."

"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, contemptu-

ously. "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.

As may naturally be supposed, the arrival of the young teacher was looked forward to with eager anticipation on the part of the scholars. They wanted to see how he would regard the occupation of his seat. Most thought he would be "mad."

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 promptness, but when he was still in the entry he heard the hen, and guessed the trick that had been attempted. 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, by way of asserting her position, flapped her wings and uttered a cry.

"I dare say," continued Walter, "the hen is competent to teach the one who put her there, but I am afraid she wouldn't prove generally satisfactory."

There was another laugh, but this time it was at Peter's expense. Peter did not join in the mirth. It always made him angry to feel that he was the subject of mirth, or ridicule, and his face showed his anger.

"Besides," said Walter, "in this free country I don't approve of compulsion, and the hen is evidently unwilling to assume the duties of teacher; therefore I shall release her. If her owner is present and 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. But there was nothing in the young teacher's manner to indicate this.

"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."

He rose from his seat, and came forward.

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, and he began to ask himself whether the success of his joke was sufficient to pay him for the trouble he had incurred. There wasn't much fun in transporting the hen back again alone. Still he felt that it would be rather hard to keep it secure until school was over.

"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. He was not particularly afraid of losing half an hour of school, and it would give him a chance for consultation with Peter.

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. By the coolness and good nature with which he had met the trick attempted to be played upon him, he had disarmed his adversaries, strengthened his hold upon the other pupils, and now remained master of the situation. 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'd be mad," he said at length.

"So did I," said John.

"He's a queer fellow; I don't know what to make of him."

"He didn't seem surprised when you came forward, and said the hen was yours."

"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.

CHAPTER XXV.

A POOR GRAMMARIAN.

PETER hardly knew what to think of the new teacher. He 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. The young teacher's manner was by no means aggressive, but there was a firmness and self-possession about him that indicated anything but timidity. At length he came to a satisfactory conclusion.

"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. I only weigh a hundred and twelve."

"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; but of this Peter was absolutely ignorant. Peter's plan in fighting was to pitch in heavily, and as he generally tackled those who knew no more than himself of the "noble art of self-defence," and 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. He had convinced himself that Walter was his inferior in physical strength, and was sure he could master him in a conflict.

"I'd just as lief get into a fight with the master to-day," 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. I couldn't fight with such a big fellow as that. 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!"

"Yes."

"Besides, the master's been tryin' to get him on his side."

"Because he's afraid of you?"

"It's likely."

"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."

While this conversation was proceeding the boys had been walking in the direction of Peter's house. They had nearly reached there 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."

Then for the first time General Wall's attention was attracted to the covered basket, the occupant of which took the opportunity of indicating her presence.

"Whose hen is it?"

"Peter's."

"How came it at school?"

John looked at Peter, and the latter an-

swered readily, not being overbashful, "I carried it there."

"What for?" asked the general, surprised.

"I tied it in the master's chair."

"You wanted to play a trick upon him, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"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. The joke was at his expense, and he did not relish it. He felt angry with John for repeating the offensive remark, and with his father for laughing at it.

"Was the teacher angry?" was the next question.

"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, whose company he now appeared to seek. However, he said nothing further, except to

caution Peter against playing any further tricks, and enjoining upon both boys to return to school as soon as possible.

"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."

There was some more conversation of this character, but it did not vary in substance from what has already been reported.

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 had applied to Mr. Barclay to let him join the first class, which request was very promptly refused. Peter did not dare to make a fuss, knowing that Mr. Barclay had the physical strength to enforce his decision. But with Walter he believed it to be different. He therefore proposed to make a transfer, that he might no longer be humiliated by being as

sociated 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. But he reflected that, even if the teacher decided against him, he could refuse to obey him, and this would bring on the collision and trial of strength which he desired. He knew very well that he was not qualified for promotion, and had no doubt the teacher would so decide, unless he was afraid to do so. On the whole, therefore, 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." He went on to correct Peter's mistakes, and tried to draw out of him what he ought to say, but with only partial success. Peter's ideas of grammar were very far from clear. He was not well grounded in the fundamental principles of this branch of study, and was

not even qualified to keep up with the second class.

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. He was very angry and equally mortified, but in addition to these feelings 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. Are you often troubled in that way?"

"About once a week. It affects me so that I cannot study while it lasts."

"You had better go. I hope you will soon recover."

"Thank you, sir."

Phineas went back to his seat, took a couple of books from his desk, and 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. The noise was such as to draw general attention. Walter looked up, but as he had no evidence that the disturbance was intentional, he said nothing. Five min-

utes 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, as much to say: "What are you going to do about it?"

"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.

Walter found it difficult to restrain his temper at this open insolence, but he succeeded by an effort.

"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. But that does not alter the fact that I am your teacher. The trustees knew my age when they apppointed me teacher. They placed me here not only to teach, but to keep good order. I have had no trouble thus far with any one 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, and I will do my best to advance you in your studies, or you can leave it, if you are unwilling to be orderly. 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."

"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. In that case he might as well retire at once. Moral suasion was thrown away upon Peter Groot. He must understand what was meant by physical suasion.

"Scholars," said Walter, "I am sorry for what is about to happen, but I call you to witness that it has been forced upon me."

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 scholare. 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. He was astonished and indignant beyond measure. 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" in his customary manner. Walter had drawn back a little, so as to be clear of the desks, and Peter followed him up. He aimed a blow at the young teacher's head, which would have been likely to give him a headache, but Walter had assumed an attitude of defence, and fended it off with the greatest ease. Peter quickly followed up the blow by another quite as vigorous. But this again was warded off. Walter did not immediately act offensively. He wished before doing so 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 ungovernable, 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.

Walter remained standing, a little flushed, but otherwise calm, and made no attempt to prevent Peter's rising. Peter was not a hero, but he was not altogether without pluck, and he was up again quickly and ready to renew the contest.

Walter held himself in readiness, but did not speak. 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, but he was unable to profit by the lessons he had learned. He saw that the teacher was more scientific than himself, but feeling that in strength he was quite his equal, he did not understand why he could not match him. 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. Not one was sorry to see the insolent boy receiving his deserts. Some of the better class had feared that the new teacher would prove unequal to the encounter, but a very short time undeceived them. 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, who, I hope, will some time be ashamed of the course which he is now taking."

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 renewed the contest, and again been thrown, 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 success. 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, and forget all that has happened. I shall bear you no grudge, and shall only expect the same of you that I do from the other scholars."

"That's fair, Peter," said half a dozen boys from their seats.

Peter did not answer, but on the other hand 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 might have felt a little excited by the conflict in which he had just been engaged, but, if so, he did not betray it in his manner. He was very glad that the ordeal was over, and that his efforts were crowned with success. He had known boys like Peter before, and he felt confident that he should have no more trouble with him. 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, but the advantage was all on Walter's side from the first, and, what was worse, all the scholars could see it. 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, not caring for the company of his school companions. He was afraid they would twit him with his defeat. Defeat is a test of friendship, and even John Wall, since the ignominious failure of Peter, was disposed to be less intimate with him. He had been drawn toward him by the hope that he could successfully rebel against Walter's authority. 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.

"He wants to crow over me," he thought, hastily.

But Walter advanced, smiling cordially.

"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, walking unwillingly by the side of his victor.

Walter saw his feelings, and was resolved to change them, if possible.

"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 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 my-

self," said Walter. "Still, I know something about the first principles. 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. It gave him a feeling of importance to be called upon by the master for help.

"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."

"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. They had speculated upon what course Peter would pursue, and whether he would venture to continue his annoyances, but they were far from imagining that there would be such a speedy reconciliation. Even now they hardly believed the evidence of their senses. 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 tonight, 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."

Among those who listened with astonishment to this sudden change of tone on Peter's part was Phineas Morton, who had recovered from his headache, and had just heard an account of what had taken place the afternoon previous.

"That's the way to talk, Peter," said Phineas. "We're together in that. If we stand by Mr. Howard he'll get along."

"That's what he told me," said Peter, grati-

fied 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."

Thus was Peter confirmed in his good resolutions. Walter had managed to strike the right chord, and produced a complete revulsion of feeling in his once rebellious pupil.

There was one, however, who was not pleased at Peter's change. This was John Wall. He did not want the new teacher to secure friends, and he was sorry for Peter's defection. 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, mor-

tified. "I'm a gentleman's son, and I can get as many friends as I like."

"You ain't a gentleman yourself, that's sure."

John walked away in dudgeon. He saw that Peter had gone over to the enemy, and that Walter had conquered. There was no hope now of breaking down his authority. Whether he liked it or not, he must submit to be taught by a boy, and one that he did not like.

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."

"There's a good deal in that," said Phineas, thoughtfully. "But Peter's a hard case. I didn't think you could manage him."

"There is a good side to every one, if you can only find it."

"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. For the remainder of the day, and for weeks to come, Peter exhibited an astonishing change. He studied well, and began to improve rapidly in his studies. He was a boy of good capacity, but had been perversely unwilling to exert himself hitherto. Walter encouraged him in every way, and strove to make him ambitious. He carried out his promise, and taught Peter what he knew of boxing, sending to a neighboring large town for boxing gloves. Peter learned rapidly, but Walter also profited by the practice he obtained, and kept a slight superiority over his pupil.

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 who from time to time had been employed, and he had been instrumental in getting rid of more than one. Now he was converted into a friend and supporter of the administration, through Walter's pluck and judicious management, and things went on smoothly. 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, in securing order. Our young hero won golden opinions from all.

He still boarded at the Portville House, occupying the same room which his predecessor had left to him. Miss Melinda Athanasia Jones still continued her attentions to the new teacher, and 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 on such occasions was generally called upon to listen to some poetic effusion from the prolific pen of Miss Jones. In general they were in manuscript, editors generally not appreciating Miss Jones' poems. One evening, however, the poetess exhibited to her young visitor, with great complacency, a copy of a small weekly paper published at a neighboring township, 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 to the paper, which perhaps operated upon the editor's judgment, and led to a flattering editorial reference to the verses. Miss Jones called Walter's attention to it.

"See what a kind notice the editor has of my poor verses," she said, reading aloud the following paragraph:

"'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 following verses, which it is to be hoped the reader will admire:

"O yellow dying leaf,
Thy life has been very brief,
Only a summer day,
And now thou art wasting away.
But yesterday thou wert green,
And didst grace the woodland scene,
And the song of the tuneful bird
Under thy shadow was heard.
Now thou art yellow and sere,
For it is the fall of the year,
And soon thou wilt fall from the tree,
And thy place will vacant be.
Thou wilt be trampled under foot,
Beneath the wayfarer's boot.
Even such, it seems to me,
My journey of life must be.
Green in the early spring,
And the flowers their fragrance fling,
But when the autumn days appear,
Toward the close of the year,
Withered my roses will be,
And my leaves will fall from the tree,
And the winds will moan—will moan—
And I shall be overthrown!

Oh, it makes me pensive and sad,
As I view thee, dying leaf,
And sorrow rends my heart,
And sighs afford relief."

"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."

"Because I gave my heart to it, Ichabod," explained his sister. "The lines seemed to flow right from my pen."

"The muses inspired you," suggested Walter.

"You are very kind to say so, Mr. Howard. I am too humble to think so. 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 my thoughts go roaming away from the world around me, and 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. "You see how different Ichabod and I are."

"Very true, Miss Jones," said Walter; though, to tell the truth, he preferred the illiterate and prosaic Ichabod, with his absence of pretension, to his "gifted" sister.

"Have you provoked the muse lately, Mr. Howard?" she asked.

"No, Miss Jones. I find school teaching unfavorable to poetry. If I should undertake to write verses after I get home from school, my mind would certainly stray away to fractions, or the boundaries of States, or something equally prosaic."

"That 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. I must wait till I get more leisure. 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."

I am afraid Walter was not quite justifiable in so ministering to the vanity of Miss Jones, since, of course, he was not sincere. He perhaps thought it required by politeness, but it is desirable to be as sincere as possible, of course avoiding rudeness.

Nine weeks of the school term had passed, and two more would bring a vacation of a month. 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, as our readers know, 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.

"I was passing by, Mr. Howard," he said, "and I thought I would bring you this letter."

"Thank you, Edward. You are very kind."

He opened it hastily, for he saw by the post-mark and 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, as it would guide us in a decision which we shall soon be compelled to make. I am in receipt of another letter from Mr. Wall, offering three thousand dollars, or three dollars per share, 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, it is not to be lightly accepted. 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. You might, at any rate, report to me, and between us we would come to some decision. 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.

"I am glad to see you, General Wall," he said.

"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. I have occasion to know from my official relation to the school."

"Things have gone very smoothly. I believe the relations between the scholars and myself

have been very friendly. Peter Groot was at first inclined to make trouble, but he 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, though I knew that your scholarship was all that was needed. But the result has proved that my fears were groundless. How has John progressed?"

"He has made progress, General Wall, especially of late. I think he has been dissatisfied with me at times, and 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. I want him to become a thorough scholar. 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, and I think it very possible that I may be willing to remain here. 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, in which they were mutually interested.

"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, rendering it impossible, 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."

Walter was gratified to receive so decided a mark of approval from the chairman of the trustees. He had undertaken a task in which few boys of his age would have succeeded, but his pluck and good judgment had carried him through.

"What would my classmates at the Essex Classical Institute think, if they should hear

of my setting up as a Western schoolmaster? They would be amused, I am sure," he thought to himself. "We don't know what we can do till we try. I have heard that said often, and now I know it to be so."

Next his thoughts reverted to Mr. Shaw's letter, given in the last chapter, and he wrote the following answer:

"My Dear Friend, Mr. Shaw:—I was very glad to get your letter, which I have considered carefully. I like your plan for me to visit the mines during my vacation, and I have decided to do so. I shall have four weeks, and that will be quite sufficient. General Wall, the chairman of the school trustees, has just called upon me, to engage me to teach the next term. He offers to pay me five dollars a month extra out of his own pocket. Of course, my success pleases me, especially as there was some disposition to make trouble at first. But I conciliated the ringleader, after beating him in a fair fight, and now he is my friend.

"If we can't do any better, we will take the three thousand dollars; but I hope that we may be able to obtain more. 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 re-

gards to Mrs. Shaw, and consider me, with many thanks for your kind interest,

"Your sincere friend,

"WALTER CONRAD."

The next evening Walter was seated in the public room of the inn, when he 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.

"I suppose you bring good news, then?" said the other.

"Yes, I do."

"The mine is going to turn out well, then?"

"No doubt of it. It is an excellent mine, and between you and me, our friend Wall is going to make a fortune, or he will, if he plays his cards right."

"Is that so?"

"There's no doubt of it. Why, he has managed to buy in for himself and friends about all the original shares, at two cents on a dollar, and he controls the whole thing."

"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. Most of them were glad to realize anything at all. You see we've kept the thing quiet. 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, offering three thousand dollars; 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, and will sell out for five thousand sure. We don't want to be too much in a hurry about it, or it might excite suspicion."

"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."

"I suppose you've got enough shares to make you independent, Mr. Carter?"

"I had a hundred, but I managed to pick up five hundred more, at two dollars apiece. I wouldn't sell 'em for fifty dollars a share."

"When are you going out to the mines again?"

"In a week or two. I've got to go home to St. Paul, to see my family and transact a little business, and then I shall go back. 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, or hadn't, at last accounts from the general. I may have to go East and interview him myself."

"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—so his wife said. I think I will go up there, as I want to be off in the morning stage, if possible. 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! How this would affect his plans he could not yet determine. One thing he did, however. He wrote another letter to Mr. Shaw, giving him a full account of what he had overheard, and asking his advice in the matter.

CHAPTER XXX.

A DISCOURAGING SEARCH.

WHEN we took leave of Joshua Drummond, several chapters back, he was about to start for Chicago. New York was too near Stapleton to make it a safe place of residence. 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, and decided to seek one out without delay. He picked up a copy of the Chicago *Tribune* in the reading-room of the hotel, and took down the numbers of three houses where board was offered

to the public. He put down the numbers on a piece of paper, and started out in search of them.

The first was a large and handsome house, on a fashionable street. It is needless to say that Joshua found the prices altogether above the figure he was willing to pay. 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, for that was her name, "our price varies according to the room. It 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—but it is of good size, 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."

"My rent is heavy," continued the landlady, "and I ought to get ten dollars for the room, or eight dollars for one."

"I can't pay it. I must go somewhere else."

"Would you mind rooming with another gentleman?"

"I would rather not," said Joshua, reluctantly.

"Then, if you room alone, you must expect to pay for the privilege."

"I don't know any gentleman to room with."

"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. I would just as lief let the room to you alone at eight dollars a week. I should make just as much money, and very likely more."

Joshua thought it over, and the more he thought of it, the more inclined he was to accept Mrs. Foster's proposal. He would prefer, of course, to room alone, unless he could have some friend like Sam Crawford for his roommate. But he was by no means inclined to pay three dollars a week extra for the privilege. He liked money better than privacy, and besides, he had only four hundred dollars left, and he felt that he could not afford it.

Besides, again, 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?"

"How soon do you want to come?"

"Right away. I can't afford to stay at a hotel—it costs too much."

"I will have the room ready for you this afternoon."

"All right. I will come."

Joshua lost no time in transferring himself to Mrs. Foster's boarding house. He felt in very good spirits when he thought how much his expenses would be diminished by the change.

"There's some difference between three dollars a day and five a week," he said to himself. "I think it will suit me very well. 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. How much wages do you expect?"

"I don't know what they usually pay."

"Well, we haven't very much for a boy to do. He will have an easy place."

Joshua liked this. He wanted an easy place.

"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, who represented that he got a thousand dollars a year, say, if he should learn that he, Joshua, was working for three dollars a week!

"Can't you give me more?"

"No, if you choose to come for three dollars we will take you a week on trial."

Joshua shook his head.

"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.

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, and he thought it might help his cause to answer in the affirmative.

"Yes," he said, "I have had experience."

"In this city?"

"No, not in this city," Joshua was compelled to admit.

"Where, then?"

"In my father's store."

"Where is your father's store?"

"In Stapleton."

"Where's Stapleton?"

"In New York State."

"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, which had been taken out to show customers, and asked for their names, and what he supposed to be their prices. Now, Joshua had never taken any pains to become acquainted with his father's business and knew next to nothing

about it. 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 from the beginning. What we want is a competent salesman."

Joshua was rather discouraged by this failure. He saw that he was by no means so well qualified to make his way in the city as he supposed. He didn't care very much about working, to be sure. What he would have liked was, a competent income without the necessity of doing anything. In that case he thought he could enjoy himself.

"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."

I hope none of my young readers have imbibed Joshua's pernicious ideas. If so, they stand a chance of leading a very useless and unprofitable life.

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 gentleman below that has applied for board. I have told him 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 make your acquaintance, Mr. Drummond," said the newcomer, politely.

"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, flattered by the stranger's words.

"Then it is agreed; I will come to-night 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, Mr. Drummond. 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, who was not much accustomed to the world, was quite captivated by his politeness and compliments, and the prospect of having him for a roommate was rather pleasant than otherwise. He was tired of solitude, having no friend in Chicago, and thought he would like 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."

"Ah, indeed! Big place that."

"Yes, it is."

"Do you expect to say here long?"

"Well," said Joshua, hesitatingly, "that depends on whether I can get a place. I am looking for something to do."

"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."

"To be sure. I knew you must have some experience. Well, a young man of your appearance ought to find a situation very quick."

"I've been looking around for two or three days, but I can't find anything yet."

"That's because you are a stranger. 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. "Of course, that isn't enough."

"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 find more to do than I like. I 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, for his fruitless applications for employment had made him ready to accept anything at all decent.

"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, and was thankful to accept the salary offered.

"How lucky I am!" he thought. "Mr. Remington seems such a perfect gentleman. I think we shall get along first-rate. 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 go round the corner, and 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 socially, like an old friend. Joshua was more and more charmed with him.

After a five minutes' walk they reached the

billiard hall. It was a large room, containing twelve tables.

"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 against the wall.

"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, haven't you, Mr. Drummond?"

"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."

It would be wearisome to detail the progress of the game. Remington, who was really a skillful player, "played off," and helped his adversary to such an extent that he made a respectable score. Joshua was elated, and found the billiard-room a much more attractive place to spend the evening than his room at the boarding house.

"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 enough."

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. He had never liked Chicago so well before.

"This is seeing life," he thought. "I've come to the right place. I haven't been here a week, and got a situation already. I guess I'll write to Sam in a day or two, and let him know how I'm getting along. I'm glad I left Stapleton."

"Well, Drummond," said Mr. Remington, who had become more familiar as their ac-

quaintance progressed, "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. If you had been, I would not have offered you an engagement, as I would scorn to take a good clerk from another man. To let you into a little secret, I've got a nephew who is expecting the place. I suppose he will be angry when he hears I have taken a stranger. But, though I would like to oblige him, he would not suit me at all. He hasn't got the 'snap' in him. He'll never make a good business man. 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; nobody had ever detected his superior business abilities; 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 round with his roommate to his new place of business. The shop was a small one, with a moderate stock of fancy goods. There was one little circumstance that 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, a little surprised.

"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."

"You see it isn't a large place," said Mr Remington, as they entered, "but I do a pretty

good business. What do you think, now, that my clear profits were last year?"

"Two thousand dollars," hazarded Joshua, who was used to the small incomes of a country trader.

"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 at most, three thousand dollars in value, this was rather a hard statement to believe; but then Joshua was fresh from the country, and rather unsophisticated.

Mr. Remington gave his new clerk some 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. He was not compelled to work very hard. There was seldom more than one customer in the store at a time, and none bought heavily.

"It's rather quiet this morning," said Mr. Remington, laying down the morning paper, over which he had spent an hour without interruption.

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. They'll keep you running, I assure you."

Joshua was not particularly fond of work, as we know, but it occurred to him that it would not be quite so dull if he had more customers to wait upon, and was rather enlivened by the prospect of a busier time.

When half-past twelve came, his employer said, "I'm going to dinner. I shall be gone an hour. 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"—Joshua wrote this with great complacence—"to write you an account of how I am getting along. I have not been a week in Chicago, yet am already chief salesman in one of the principal stores here." (I am afraid our friend Joshua purposely exaggerated in this statement.) "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, and some time Mr. Remington will probably take me into partnership. I am writing at noon, when we have few customers. I like this store better than yours. I am sorry we are not in the same city, as I should like to go round with you. 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, and I am not quite sure whether he was entirely pleased with his friend's good fortune.

"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! Why, he don't know a cane from a broomstick, and yet he gets half as much again as I do. Chicago must be a good place to go. 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. In fact, he did not give him credit for the ability to deceive him. He really thought, therefore, that Joshua obtained the sum he claimed. Still he had prudence enough not to give up a certainty for an uncertainty, and 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."

This was adroitly written, so that Joshua need not doubt the truth of representations he had made in New York. They answered the purpose. So the two were mutually deceived by the representations of the other.

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."

You see Sam and Joshua were intimate friends, and intimate friends are very apt to notice each other's faults, and to judge them most severely, are they not? What is the use of having friends if you can't abuse them?

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. If he had been a disinterested friend he would have rejoiced at the good fortune of Joshua; but then he was not disinterested.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN PARTNERSHIP.

At the end of the week Joshua received the six dollars promised him. He received it with great satisfaction. It was a tangible evidence that he was a clerk on salary.

"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."

This was encouraging, and Joshua was led to hope that he might, ere long, receive the sum which he claimed to get in his letter to Sam. He began to build castles in the air, and form sanguine pictures of what the future was to bring him, when all at once his dreams were rudely broken in upon.

It was three mornings afterward 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."

Rather disturbed in mind, 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, not to mention myself, had a right to expect something better at your hands. Certainly, so near a relation ought to be preferred to a stranger. I could not believe it when I first heard of your very unkind treatment. I hope you may yet change your mind, and discharge this stranger, who can have no claim upon you.

"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."

"He is going to discharge me," thought Joshua, very much disturbed, as he finished reading the letter.

"You see in what a position I am placed, Drummond," said Mr. Remington.

"Yes, sir."

"I would rather have you than my nephew. You have more business capacity than he."

"I shall be sorry to go," said Joshua, very much disappointed and mortified.

"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 any one 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?"

"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 pretence 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." t

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?

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 purficient. 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 squire rose, and, putting one hand under his coattail, 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 supposed 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 asso-

ciates 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 did not 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 mor-

tification. 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.

THE END.