

A BOY OF TO-DAY



BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE HOUSE ON THE BLUFF," ETC.



"AN HONEST TALE SPEEDS BEST, BEING PLAINLY TOLD"

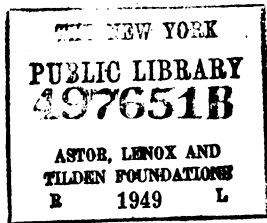
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A FORE-WORD.

THERE are a great many people in the world, and most of them are very plain people. Events happen to all of us every day, and most of them are absolutely commonplace events. The interest and value of our lives are according to the sincerity and clean-mindedness with which we live them.

There is one grand paramount profession which all the children of Adam must pursue, simply in virtue of being here in this world: the Profession of Living. Just as each member of any of what are called "the learned professions" may be a shabby, scurvy trickster, and disgrace his calling, or may rise to its best heights and add to its renown, so the profession of living can be well or ill pursued—can be made a pitiful travesty, or can shine brighter and brighter, running up unto those glorious places where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God.

THE AUTHOR.

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A BOY OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER I.

HE ARRIVES.

“ Here at the portal thou dost wait,
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the future's undiscovered land.”

NINE o'clock on a June morning. Breakfast had been over for three hours. In the barnyard was the flutter of pigeons' wings, their incessant cooing; the sharp voices of guinea fowls, the low complainings of young turkeys, the cluck and cackle of hens, the triumphant crowing of cocks. Down from the hillside pasture drifted, mellowed by distance, the calls of sheep and cattle and horses; in the door-yard the bees boomed and hummed over the old-fashioned flowers that ran in straight gay ribbons from steps to gate.

The kitchen, which was sitting-room as well, was “redd up.” The stove shone, the floor was spotless, the braided mats well shaken, the chairs had patchwork cushions, there were white

curtains, and there was a posy in a brown mug on a window-sill.

D'rexy stood by the baking-table making pies. D'rexy's smoothly-banded hair was showing streaks of grey, and her face had lost whatever color it had claimed in youth. Not that D'rexy cared, or even noted it; there were also some wrinkles about her eyes and mouth; she was of middle height and not thin; comely one would call D'rexy, in her clean calico frock, her fresh collar and immaculate apron: D'rexy respected herself and her belongings. Something in her smooth forehead and gentle eyes suggested that D'rexy preferred not to quarrel with fate or affairs, and usually gave other people their way; but there also were firmly put-in lines about the brow, chin, and lips which betokened that D'rexy, like the continent of Europe, might have her Gibraltar and her Waterloo. Moreover, there was a hint of pathos and disappointment in her face, as if there had been something lost out of her life, or never found therein. D'rexy proceeded with her pie-making with the precision of a machine; it was mechanical—she had made numberless pies. A door stood wide open into another room, and by a window sat a woman older and smaller than the pie-maker, a white-haired woman, in a black alpaca gown; she was knitting a blue sash, and beside her on

a stand lay a large open Bible ; her knitting was as mechanical as the pie-making—Aunt Espey Totten had knit numberless stockings. As she knit she bent now and again to the printed page, and her lips moved ; there was nothing mechanical in her Bible study, it was her daily “feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined ;” she was learning her morning lesson. Aunt Espey was one of those who, if all Bibles were lost, could reconstruct a large portion from memory.

A step on the door-stone. D'rexy looked about ; a stout young man in a new ready-made suit stood there, with a big old-time carpet-bag in his hand. D'rexy turned back to her work ; evidently it was the usual lightning-rod man, or the patent-gate man, or the new-kind-of-corn or clover man, or the pump architect. If he and his kind, with their wheedling tongues, had given the Sinnet Farm a wide berth, Urias Sinnet would have had more money in the bank.

“Are you Mrs. D'rexy Sinnet?” asked the stranger.

“Yes.” Evidently this was not the man she had thought, but another just as evil—the “enlarge-your-picture” man, or the patent churn, the new carpet-sweeper, the “all-modern-improvements sewing-machine,” or the new cooking utensils, rolling-pin, or scissors man, and D'rexy resolved not to look at him.

"Sister of Mrs. Selina Leslie?" said the man.

"Yes." Now D'rexy was all interest, and made two steps forward. "Yes! Seliny! Has she come to—"

"She's dead—two weeks ago!" It came remorselessly, and D'rexy stood still, her eyes growing big and deep. She made no sound, shed no tears; she had been living a life of repression for—well, always! Time enough for the tears when she could get away into Aunt Espey's room and cry her heart out, and Aunt Espey's soft, even voice could deal out the Promises and the Consolation verses. No tears, but the pathos in her face was tragedy now, and the young man recognized it. "I hate to bring you bad news, I truly do. But she made a good end, and she's better off, you know. She died at my aunt's home in Lessing, and as I was there—I make two trips West a year, drummer for Notion House in New York—why, I said I'd come out of my way, as we all ought to do some good in this world, to bring you the kid. She left you her little chap;" and so saying the drummer looked about for his charge. The charge had tarried to tear up a coreopsis by the roots, and now appeared in a flutter of spotted calico behind the drummer's legs. The man seized him, holding him at arm's length to keep the fat grimy fingers from his own new plaid

trousers, and setting him on the threshold, performed the proper introduction: "Angus Leslie his name is; he's a good little kid; looks rather mussy just now—such a long trip, you see, and he a'n't used to it. He looked nicer when he started. Here's his grip-sack, and here's a letter your sister left you."

Without a word D'rexy gathered the child up in her arms, and grasped the letter. Then hospitality, as mechanical as her pie-making, asserted itself in the usual formula, "Wont you set by and have something to eat? Will you stop to dinner with us?"

"Could n't possibly. Thank you all the same. I've lost time now coming, but you see I had to come. I've got a rig at the gate. Good morning, ma'am. Sorry to bring bad news; but the kid's nice, you'll like him."

He was gone. D'rexy dropped into 'Rias Sinnett's big rocking-chair and hugged her new possession close, "mussy" garments, coreopsis-root, flowers, and all. The child submitted quietly for a little. Then he began to struggle. He was uncomfortable: his plentiful yellow hair was rough and matted; it seemed to have been shampooed with a stick of moist candy; he was not accustomed to having his shoes held crookedly by one button, and his stocking-tops dangling loose at his ankles. He had been treated

to oranges, ginger-cake, taffy and apples; the skin on his round pink dimpled face felt as if varnished with the memorials of this feasting; he had also devoured doughnuts, pop-corn, pie, and ham, and his digestive apparatus, unaccustomed to such supplies, was in rebellion; add to this, it is uncomfortable to have a soft skin, and the bosom of one's little garments made a receptacle for peanut shells, tooth-picks, bits of paper and a chestnut or so. Naturally the new boy's discomfort expressed itself in wiggling himself to the floor, and giving grunts of dissatisfaction.

"What you need," said D'rexy, "is a good bath and some clean clothes, and you 'll get both as soon as I put those pies into the oven."

Aunt Espey had laid her knitting upon her Bible and was looking on. She did not offer to take charge of either the pies or the baby. She knew that in this accumulation of activities lay D'rexy's help.

Presently the oven door closed upon the pies, and the baking-table was cleared. D'rexy brought a small tub and put therein warm water. undressed the newly arrived, set him in the water, and gave him a rag and a piece of soap to occupy himself with. Then taking a low chair near him, she unpacked the carpet-bag and laid its contents in neat piles on the floor about her. As she did so, the tears began to roll over

her face. This soft, chubby darling was Selina's boy; these little garments had evidently all been made by Selina's busy hands; how often had she made little dresses and aprons for Selina, and had washed Selina's graceful child-form, and rocked her to sleep in her arms. She and Selina, first and last members of a large family, with all between them dead and gone! Her mother had given little Selina to her, when that mother, dear good mother! was dying; and now Selina had gone over the river to find her mother, and also had given her a little child. The tears came faster; she could not see to wash the baby who was splashing away at a great rate in the big tub. Aunt Espey stood behind her chair and gently stroked her arm. "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.' 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.' He gives with one hand, D'rexy, while he takes with the other. He took Selina, and he sends you the little boy for your comfort."

D'rexy wiped her face on the warm garments she had just stripped from the child, and kneeling by the tub scoured her new treasure vigorously. When she had him on her lap dry

and partly dressed, she began to comb his wet hair, and lo, it fell from the comb in great silken shining rings! "Oh, Aunt Espey!" she cried, it curls! his hair curls!" It was as the voice of a child delighted with a new doll. But D'rexy Sinnet's had been a work-a-day life, dolls and all other superfluities having been left out thereof.

When the refreshed and re-dressed child had fallen asleep in her arms, she carried him in for a nap on Aunt Espey's bed. The fresh pretty little one looked like an arbutus blooming among last year's dry leaves, as he lay on Aunt Espey's big old-time bed: it had a feather-tick, patch-work quilts, a tester, and a valance, and Aunt Espey ascended to it by two steps made of cherrywood and covered with drugget. All the furniture of the room was of ancient fashion: there was a rag carpet woven "hit-or-miss," a wide chintz-covered couch, splint-bottomed blue chairs, a great cherry bureau dating with the century, a spider-legged table with brass claws for feet. The women and their belongings were ancient, grave, work-a-day; nothing was there fresh and young but the stranger baby, and a bunch of blue larkspur which Aunt Espey had gathered that morning.

The child slept; there fell a silence and a pause in D'rexy's well-ordered home; then came

the hour of retrospection ; she took out the letter—a letter from Mrs. Dobson, where Selina had boarded and died. It told how Mrs. Leslie had passed away, calmly, after a short illness from pneumonia, and enclosed a note written by Selina's faltering, dying hand. D'rexy read these lines aloud, with broken pauses and deep catchings of her breath. "Nothing to leave you, dear, good sister, but my love and my little child. You were so tender and faithful to me, I could not leave him in better hands. You were more a mother than a sister to me. Urias is a good man, he was always kind to me, and I know he will be kind to my orphan son."

Such words D'rexy read to Aunt Espey, and they talked over the old times when Selina was a bright young girl, ambitious to teach, and finding an opening in a school where she might be a pupil-teacher, had gone West ten years before. After a time she married, then came widowhood, and again she had taught to maintain herself and child. She had not come back since that summer day when, full of hope, yet grieving somewhat to part, she had left D'rexy's home.

"God has seen that she was tried enough," said Aunt Espey, "and now, D'rexy, you know that she is safe and happy, and possessing all things in the Father's house. You could not

see her while she lived, but you felt careful for her. Now you cannot see her, but you have no more cares."

At noon-day Urias Sinnet came home. He washed his face at the pump, hung up the tin basin and big crash towel on the porch, and came into the kitchen. His face was scorched bright red by the sun, and shone from the water, looking like a red glazed mask. His wet hair stood up in stiff points as if he wore a fantastic headdress of tenpenny nails. He dropped into his big chair with a grunt of content. Then he saw the child building a cob house on the floor. D'rexy was vigorously beating mashed potatoes.

"Who's that?" asked Urias, pointing.

"That's my sister Selina's little boy."

"Sakes, D'rexy! has Selina come to visit us at last?"

"Selina has been dead two weeks. She sent me the child to bring up, as I did her, 'Rias."

Urias contemplated the fact of Selina's death in silence for a few minutes. He had rather liked Selina, but had not been pleased at her "setting out for herself," as he called it, when she might have been useful to him; then too, he "had never held with folks craving after a lot of book-learning." Children Urias was unac-

customed to, and felt them distinctly useless. Presently he said,

“Why did n't some one else take the child?”

“There was no one else, Urias,” said D'rexy.

“He ought to have gone to his father's kin.”

“Jonas Leslie had no kin. Jonas was a lone orphan himself.”

“Well, why did n't folks out where they lived keep the child?”

“Is it likely strangers would do what kin-folks begrudge?” said D'rexy, smoothing up her dish of mashed potatoes and putting two bits of butter on top.

Urias was aggravating himself and growing bolder, as folks do.

“Then they ought to have sent him to their county-house; plenty of children go there, and I never agreed to take him.”

Certain red banners of indignation waved up into D'rexy's cheeks; she was marching to her Waterloo.

“Urias!” she exclaimed, “do you suppose I'd send my own blood, a little child, my only kin, to a county poor farm as long as I'm able to do for him?”

“I can't have him here. I don't like children, D'rexy.”

“That's because you never tried 'em, Urias.”

You don't care to be paying his board to any one, do you?"

"They don't ask board at the county farm," he said sulkily.

"Urias Sinnet! Would our town officers take charge of the nephew of people as well-to-do as we are?"

"Well, this is my house, D'rexy, and I have not invited him."

D'rexy kept on with her cooking, there was a sharp hissing and a pleasant odor as she poured milk into the frying-pan to make cream gravy.

"Urias, suppose you turn him out! Do you suppose I'd let him go alone? He's a helpless baby, you're an able man. He's in the right of it, and you're in the wrong. What would all the people of our township, what would our church folk think of it? They'd side with the woman and the child, Urias, they always do."

Urias was silent. D'rexy has spoken undeniable truth. This gospel-civilized age sides always with the woman and the child in her arms. The woman and the child sit near the heart of things, they are shrined at the springs of life. Presently he said weakly,

"I don't know what you mean, D'rexy Sinnet, flying in the face of Providence the way you do! If the Lord had meant us to have chil-

dren he'd have sent 'em to us. Seeing he did not, it's going clean against him to take on the way you're doing."

Now Aunt Espey had come along softly, and laid her hand on her nephew's arm. "'Rias, who sent this child, if not God? Who called away his mother? Who spared the child to come here, and offered no other home? Our Father is meaning blessing and training for you in this, and it is you that rebel against Providence. Our Lord 'took a little child and set him in the midst of them,' just as now he has stooped from heaven to set this child here. Jesus said, 'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' He said, 'Whoso receiveth one such little child receiveth me.' Pharaoh's daughter was not the last one who said, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' Urias, you're a church-member and a deacon, and you are trying to escape your privilege of being a co-worker with God. We're like rebellious children, we baulk and cry against what is good for us, for our soul's health and learning, as children flout at their medicine or their lessons or against going to bed. Did n't Paul hear it said to him, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks'? Urias, it is better for you to run with joy the way your Lord points out."

The piety of Aunt Espey was such that her words had weight. Urias saw before him the duty of self-conquest. The child, with childhood's prescience, had perceived itself the subject of controversy and on the verge of unpopularity. He scrambled up, ran, laid his arms on the knees of Urias, and looking up in his face, innocently demanded, "Does oo yike me?" Urias could not say "no;" he would not say "yes." He took a middle course. "I like good boys," he said grimly. "Nen oo yikes me. I'm dood," said the child, ran and gathered up the cobs and tumbled them back into the basket behind the stove, and seeing D'rexy setting the table began to run to and fro, carrying knife, fork, spoon, cup, what not, and laying each on the table in promiscuous disorder. D'rexy followed him up putting things straight; he turned his happy little pink face to her, calling out cheerily: "How you gettin' on, Darlin'?" This was as the rod of Moses that smote the rock. D'rexy suddenly sat down on the corner of the wood box, hid her face in her apron and rocked back and forth in a tempest of sobs and tears. All her life-long repression, all her private disappointment, her loneliness and yearning for love, poured forth in that agony of weeping. Urias was amazed, alarmed, profoundly moved. Cold and hard in his ways, he still had a heart,

and D'rexy filled it. She was his, all his, and all he had. That she was capable of such profound emotion he had never guessed; that she suffered, was overwhelming. D'rexy crying in this way! He went to her in all the awkwardness of a man untutored in gracious ways, silent, secretive, ignorant how to express the best that was in him. He laid his big hard hand on her head. "D'rexy, woman, what's hurting you? What's wrong, girl? Don't take on so, D'rexy." He patted her shoulder. "You'll hurt yourself, woman. Don't, don't do it. I can't bear it! Yes, you've lost Selina; but I'm here. I care for you, D'rexy. Didn't you know it? I'm powerful slow of speaking, but I care." Aunt Espey had been setting the dinner on the table, putting the child on a chair built up with two cushions; she poured out the cups of tea. "Dinner's ready," she said in her soft slow voice.

"Come D'rexy, come my girl," said Urias, pulling the apron from his wife's face and wiping her eyes, "Come, a cup of tea will settle your nerves." He put his hand under her arm and raised her up, leading her to her place at the table, as he had not done since the first weeks of their married life. Perhaps if he had kept up those little courtesies and attentions his heart would have been softer and his wife's happier. He felt better when he saw her in her

own chair. The most terrible part of her breakdown had been to him that forlorn sitting on the edge of the wood box! He gave a relieved sigh and asked the blessing in a more fervent tone than usual.

“Did oo bess at?” demanded the infant, pointing to the golden dish of the pie; “nen dim me some.” But D’rexy had her own views of raising children, and was mindful of the debris found in that frock front; she bestowed upon the boy a glass of milk and a piece of bread and gravy. “There, that will make a big boy of you!”

When Urias came back from his work that evening he glanced anxiously at D’rexy. Had she kept on crying? Was her passion of grief a sign of a coming illness and speedy dissolution? D’rexy seemed the same as ever, except that there were dark circles about her eyes and less smile at her lips. It was borne in on Urias that these footprints of woe were not all for Selina dead, but for the bitterness of disappointment in him. He had not showed up well that day, and he knew it. When he came from milking he gave his wife a sprig of honeysuckle. “It smells powerful peart,” he said awkwardly.

That night when all was dark and silent in the house, tired as he was Urias Sinnet could not sleep. He was wakeful because he knew

that D'rexy, though absolutely quiet, was also awake, and not only awake but weeping silently, bitterly. He wondered if in all these years she had spent other nights crying, and he had not known it. Why did she mourn Selina, or want the child when she had himself? He wanted only her. "Women are curious," he said to himself. "But I'll break my head before I cross D'rexy."

CHAPTER II.

THREE GROWN UPS AND A BOY.

“The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.”

“D'REXY, the Lord's been mighty good, sending that child to you,” said Aunt Espey one day. “You're the kind of women that just need a little child to do for. If you had n't felt it wrong to be pining after what the Lord did not send, you'd have fretted after children. Since little Heman came here you're as cheerful again.”

“And that seems strange, when Selina, that was like a child to me, and I brought up since I was fifteen, is dead.”

“Oh, no,” said Aunt Espey. “In ten years you'd been obliged to get used to not seeing Selina; and it appears to me you felt her farther off than you do now that she's in the heavenly land. You know too, she had her troubles and hard work, and now glory is her portion. It's true, D'rexy, and we ought to feel it so. 'Blessed are the dead that are already dead, yea more

than the living that are yet alive.' I believe too, D'rexy, that the Lord sent the little child here on an errand to Urias, to expand him, to make his heart bigger."

"I really think Urias likes him more than he lets on to," said D'rexy. "It is a point of not knuckling down yourself."

"He 'll come round," said Espey; "for one thing, he's glad the boy has the same name his father had. My brother Heman was an uncommonly good man. He was drowned off a schooner when 'Rias was pretty small, and we all saw hard times, for 'Rias' mother was weakly, and I had my mother to support, and she was bed-ridden. In those days, D'rexy, folks that could live as we do now would have seemed to me like kings and governors of the earth. Women had poor chances for work, and mighty small wages. Many's the week I've nursed somebody all the week for a dollar. Up early and late, nursing and running the home too; and when I was going home with the dollar, if any one said, 'Miss Sinnet, here's a sack of corn meal, or a peck of potatoes, or a leg of pork,' besides, I felt well off. When I was n't nursing I made rag-carpets or sewed. I was at something all the time, and often I thought food and drink at our home were like the widow's meal and oil, always down to the last, but never quite out. O D'rexy,

we learned to trust the Lord by the minute then, and go hand in hand with him."

"I don't make a doubt," said Drexy, "that 'Rias' hard times when he was a boy made him industrious and hardy, and saving, and prayerful like too; but I believe they made him anxious after money, and setting too great store by riches. 'Rias craves to be rich, and I'm always fearing he'll take some terrible risky ways to get rich."

Aunt Espey shook her head over her knitting; it was her private opinion that her nephew was a child of God, yet with a large part of his training in the ways and manners of the heavenly household yet to come, he lacked much of the graciousness of a follower of the gracious Galilean. Perhaps D'rexy detected some of these thoughts, for wife-like she spoke up for Urias. "'Rias has very good views, and I want to train up little Heman so that 'Rias will like him, and take comfort in him. Aunt Espey, what do you think are the chief points in training up a little boy? You've seen many boys come up to be men, some good and some bad, more's the pity."

"Well, D'rexy, it appears to me, reverence is a good deal less out of training now days. Folks wait on themselves, and on children too, when children ought to be brought up to be waiting

on their elders. It do n't hurt a boy a mite to fetch a chair, or open a door, or pick up what is dropped by his grown folks. It does him good ; helps him to be quick-eyed, industrious, unselfish. Children are let to be saucy, and it is laughed at when they 're little, and growled at when they 're big. It's just as easy to have 'em polite-spoken when they 're little. It makes 'em popular too ; folks like to have 'em round. First of all they ought to be taught to give God reverence ; to respect his day, his Book, his name. Then, D'rexy, if you fetch the boy up to be truthful, and honest, and industrious, and tidy, I do n't see but you've got all the foundation you want for a proper character. For D'rexy, I'm not supposing the boy can be any of these things unless he's obedient ; he needs to be that first of all."

It seemed that the dear Selina had begun well with her child in all the points of training Aunt Espey demanded. 'Little Heman,' they called him, but the admiring D'rexy thought him well on the way to be 'big Heman,' as she watched him playing under the trees, usually with a big slice of corn cake or brown bread in convenient reach. D'rexy had contrived a little wagon out of a starch box, four big spools, and a piece of twine. Heman enjoyed it as heartily as if it had cost a dollar. D'rexy instinctively

felt it not well to vex the prudent 'Rias by laying out unnecessary money on the child. She made his toys, and solved the question of a bed for him by buying a crib from a neighbor, and paying for it with currants and pears from her well-stocked garden.

The child did not encroach on 'Rias's few rest hours at home. 'Rias was up before five "doing his chores," as he said, and working in his garden. Then, as most of his fifty acres was in pasture, where he raised stock of various kinds, many of his days were spent pursuing his trade of carpenter, and from seven until sunset he was somewhere building barns, fences, corn-cribs, or houses. There were days when his potato-patch and corn-fields claimed his care; stormy days, when his shop beyond the kitchen and woodshed sounded to his hammer and saw. D'rexy said 'Rias worked too hard, and no doubt he did. D'rexy also said that Heman would soon be able to help Uncle 'Rias. It was held out to the child as a prospect of great honor and happiness. Meanwhile the little man carried in chips, cleared up the litter of his own playthings, and helped hunt eggs and feed the chickens.

That small world about the farm-house was a world of glory and beauty to him. He had no playmates, and wanted none but the family dog, the fowls, and the usual motherless cosset lamb

or two, brought up by hand, by D'rexy, in the door-yard. Heman watched, wide-eyed, the performance of feeding the lambs from a bottle. He fed them bits of his own bread, and led them about with a collar made of some of Aunt D'rexy's carpet rags. Safe in bare feet and legs and a stout "hickory" apron, Heman climbed and rolled, sailed boats in pans of water, and paddled in puddles to his heart's content; he was not born in the unhappy time of princes, who weep to play in gutters; he had all the gutters he liked without begging or tears. No palace ever afforded a child the luxuries offered by a barn. D'rexy was not nervous about her charge. He scrambled on the hay, and in and out of the farm vehicles. If D'rexy heard stentorian shouts that meant trouble, she went to look after matters, and now and then Aunt Espey strolled about to see how the child was getting on. Good plain food, plenty of sleep, unlimited out-of-doors, moulded the sticky image brought to Aunt D'rexy by the drummer of the Notion Store, into a brown, burly, jolly creature, who still wore his radiant yellow curls, because Aunt D'rexy loved them, and even 'Rias thought that "they looked well in church."

'Rias said but little to Heman. As D'rexy had suggested, he objected "to knuckling down," as he denominated yielding to others,

even when they were in the right ; and then too he was somewhat jealous, in his silent way, that D'rexy took so much comfort in the little boy. Being married twenty years had not instructed 'Rias that there is always a corner in a woman's heart vacant unless a child fills it. That is why the little sisters, and the children, and the grandchildren find and fill their place with women, in a succession of childhood.

One evening D'rexy was busy in the milk-room ; she kept eight cows and sold the milk to a milk route ; she was getting the cans ready for the morning cart. Aunt Espey had called Heman to come and go to bed. He ran into the kitchen where 'Rias sat tilted back against the wall reading his semi-weekly paper. Heman ran up to him and clasped his hands over the man's knees.

“ Ride me on oor foot ! ” he demanded.

'Rias gazed on him, as an entomologist at a new specimen. Then he slowly brought his chair into perpendicular, took Heman awkwardly on his foot, and slowly swung him up and down, while Heman, pleased with little, shouted with glee. Then 'Rias saw D'rexy looking through the door at him. He dropped the boy as if caught in a sinful deed.

“ There, go to bed ; children are great plagues, ” he remarked in self-justification.

"I make him say "please" and "thank you," said D'rexy.

Tea at the farmhouse was over at six, and then how beautiful were the long, warm summer evenings, flushed with pink and gold! 'Rias carried Aunt Espey's rocking-chair to the side porch, and took his own favorite position, tilting his chair back against the side of the house. It was the hour for home talk. D'rexy generally occupied the time before the dew fell in gathering seeds, thyme, summer-savory, and sage. The boy trotted along after her carrying a pail or basket for the spoils.

"That child will be a great blessing to you, 'Rias," said Aunt Espey.

"Well, I don't know," said 'Rias, mindful of that affair of knuckling down. "His father was one of the fellows that keep store. There's a heap of men looking out for easy ways of making a living; nothing is easy enough for 'em. I tell you what, Aunt Espey, we ai n't so much in need of professors and store-keepers as we are of farmers and mechanics. It's the men of muscle that keep up the country; the men that make something where there was nothing; the men that plan waste land and raise a crop; that take boards and make houses; or clay and make brick; or raw iron and make tools. These are the real producers, Aunt Espey, and I don't

hanker for the other kind in my family. Leslie, Heman's pa, did n't seem to know how to make money."

"Maybe, 'Rias," rebuked Aunt Espey, "if you had died as young as he did, you would n't have appeared very forehanded either."

Urias overlooked this very reasonable suggestion, and said, "And there was Selina, a nice girl, but she had terrible high-falluting ideas about education. Now I believe in education, some of it, not too much. There's plenty of folks chasing after knowledge of foreign languages, and the stars, and so on, that overlook common work needed nigh at hand, like building roads and keeping up fences. If Heman's like that, I would n't take to him very powerful."

"Yes; but you'd be glad, for example, if he showed the parts of a good doctor, or the making of a minister."

"I don't know as I should. If all men are ministers, who's going to fill the pews and give the money for church work? If all are doctors, who's going to pay the fees? Some of all are good, but for my family, give me a good, stirring farmer or a capable mechanic. They're the bone and sinew of the nation, and what makes the world go round, being the bulk of the population. I hold to every man knowing some trade well. Untaught day-labor is always

getting out of work. The Jews knew what they were about when they taught every man a trade. Paul made tents. Solomon says, 'The king himself is served of the field,' meaning farming; and he isn't far out when he says, 'The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much.' Solomon's generally in the right of it. There was Jim Kittle whom I used to go to school with. Ought to have been a blacksmith, but thought school-keeping was more gentlemanly. He's always been a poor, useless, out-at-elbows lot. And I can tell you another little ditty about that, Aunt Espey. Tom Glass, that thought clerking so much elegant than mason-work, has never had a home of his own, and never will."

Privately Urias considered Heman "a stirring child," but felt it beneath his dignity to say anything so complimentary. When the minister came to call and found him in his shop making beehives, and Heman filling a basket with shavings, 'Rias, knowing that the minister had no hint of the "knuckling down" bugbear, said that "the little chap was surprising good at church and at family prayers."

"He'll make a parson some day," said the guest, patting the child's head.

"I'll be satisfied if he makes a good, honest carpenter or bricklayer," said Urias.

When Christmas came, Aunt Espey knit some red mittens, and made a little plaid cap, and some horse lines; D'rexy made a canton-flannel rabbit, a horse's head on a section of broomstick, and a strong paper soldier hat, with waving plumes. Urias made no remark, but silently approved home-made toys, and on Christmas morning appeared with a neatly-fashioned sled, painted blue.

"If he's to grow up worth anything, he has to learn to play in the snow," he said sheepishly, and he took immense satisfaction in observing that before the glory of that sled the women's gifts were simply nowhere. Urias made certain wide grimaces, that were his style of laughing, when he remarked Heman shouting, shrieking, rolling over, scrambling up, laughing and capering with that sled in two inches of snow that whitened the dooryard.

In March, D'rexy one evening made popcorn sticks and some taffy, and covered a ball, while Aunt Espey prepared a picture-book, pasting in, on cloth pages, pictures which she had collected during six months. To-morrow would be Heman's fourth birthday, they told Urias. Urias made no comment, but he retired to his shop for half an hour, and made what was better than comments, a little windmill of four red vans on a stick. His excuse for this

piece of work was that "he never could abide a child that did n't know which way the wind blew."

There was a night, late in March, when lights burned all night in the farmhouse, and against the curtains might be seen the shadows of people passing to and fro. The child was very sick, burning and moaning with fever. One or two children of the township had lately died with scarlet-fever, and Urias had been full of slow, silent sympathy, as he helped his neighbors bury their dead. While D'rexy was applying remedies and Aunt Espey giving advice, 'Rias disappeared. D'rexy concluded he had gone to the shop for quiet. In an hour and a half hoofs clattered and wheels rattled. Here was 'Rias with the doctor. The man of remedies pronounced the case a bad cold, but no scarlet fever, and in the morning the boy was better.

D'rexy said gratefully, "'Rias, it was mighty good of you to ride to town for the doctor in all that storm, after your day's work. You knew he'd be near here at Mr. Ladd's in the morning, and for your own self you never called him in the night, because night visits cost more."

"Yes," assented slowly the man who never, never knuckled down, "yes, D'rexy, but how could I sleep, thinking scarlet-fever had got into

our home? It was worth the trip to find out we were free of that."

"I reckon," said D'rexy; but she knew what he felt to be worth the trip was, to find "that Heman was not dangerous."

"I never knew 'Rias to be so powerful in prayer as he was this morning," said D'rexy with satisfaction, to Aunt Espey. "It appeared somehow as if he'd taken to soul-growing."

"Yes," said Aunt Espey, "the Lord has got 'Rias in hand, and is teaching him. It's the tender-hearted that pray powerfully, D'rexy."

Spring opened, and the sturdy Heman, past four and big of his age, elected to follow 'Rias like a shadow. Often the child was seen riding the horse that was ploughing, and 'Rias explained this concession by stating that "the child lagged so far behind and was so little, he was plumb sure to lose him in the furrows unless he set him on the horse."

Heman could find the eggs and feed the dog and chickens by himself now, and hour after hour he spent in the shop with 'Rias, making very singular things which bore the large names of "road wagon," "cisterns," "tanks," and "hen-houses."

"It beats all how straight that child can drive a nail," said 'Rias triumphantly to D'rexy; then remembering that this was altogether

knuckling down, he added as he buried his face in the roller-towel, that "no doubt it was all accident; and come he was ten years old he'd be all for a yard-stick, and not know a hammer from a monkey-wrench."

One evening when Aunt Espey and D'rexy had been to see a sick neighbor, they came home to find 'Rias and Heman sitting on a saw-buck, and 'Rias telling this tale to Heman :

"Oh, I can't tell you stories like the women folks. All the story I know is about the man you're named for, Heman, who played on the horn in the Lord's temple at Jerusalem. He had fourteen sons and three daughters, and the whole of them could sing like larks, and he stood 'em in a row in the temple every day and they sang and played on harps, just like rows of angels."

CHAPTER III.

SEED-TIME.

“ This is the porcelain clay of human kind.”

WHEN a little lad forms a friendship for a man, this emotion is largely a hero-worship. Flattered by the condescension of his demi-god in granting him his society, he lingers about him, exalts all his actions; dreams dreams about his past, making a homely and pathetic Odyssey, and whatever other people may think, the boy has no suspicion that his idol is very largely clay. When the man is happily honest, faithful, clear-minded, and God-fearing, this friendship has the finest results in moulding the boy-nature towards real manhood. This happened between Urias Sinnet and his nephew Heman. Heman early developed a strong preference for the society of Urias. Discouraging remarks did not bluff him, nor did cold silence daunt him; possibly with childhood's prescience Heman discerned that this was “only company manners” and had regard to “knuckling down.” It was very nice in the evening, especially when the days were growing chill, to climb into Aunt D'rexy's lap, tuck his curly head close on her shoulder, let his woolen-stockinged feet hang

down in pleasant nearness to the stove, and listen, cradled into warm softness and rest, to Aunt D'rexy singing sweet old child-hymns, "Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber;" "I think when I read that sweet story of old;" "Gentle Jesus;" "Around the throne of God in heaven," and so on: Aunt D'rexy had a large repertory.

It was very delightful to sit on a stool before Aunt Espey and have her tell him stories. Aunt Espey knew none but Bible stories, but she told them well. David and Jonathan lived before him; he saw John Baptist in the deserts, and Samuel in the tabernacle; Jacob asleep on a stony pillow, and Joseph parading before his brethren in the beautiful new coat, the immediate results of which were so disastrous. On Sundays he was allowed to stand by the table and look at the full-page wood cuts in the big Bible. There was Samson pulling down the pillars, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah tumbling into the sea. They were pictures coarse and ill drawn to a degree that would banish them from a modern nursery or kindergarten, but by the Sinnet family were supposed to be marvels of high art, and were expected to have a happy effect in refining and educating Heman. Perhaps they had.

Sometimes when Aunt Espey was nodding

in her "rocker," and D'rexy was very busy getting supper, Heman would climb on the back of Urias' chair, and whisper loudly in his ear, "You read me a story." Then, if Espey was very sound asleep, and D'rexy fully absorbed, Urias would reach out a long arm, take down a blue Webster's Spelling-Book from a high shelf, and slowly and impressively read the three tales that conclude the contents of that compendium of knowledge: "The Gored Ox," "The Boy on the Apple-tree," "The Maid and the Pail of Milk."

The true joy of life was to follow Urias afield and abide by him during a day's work. One day Urias and a neighbor lad were repairing a stone wall, and building a new fence in "the low pasture." Heman was attracted by a large stone, partly embedded in the earth.

"Who made this? what did he make it for?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing, mebbe; ai n't that like any other stone?" said Urias.

"No; somebody made this, it's for something," insisted Heman.

"Now hark to that, will you?" said Urias to his comrade, "and take a lesson. That child sees there's something special about that stone. He sees that there have been ideas put to its making, As there were ideas, he sees a maker

back of it, and he says, Who did it? what for? But you take notice, there's many people, considerably wiser in their own conceit than they ought to be, that look at all the Lord made—stars that do n't fall out of the sky, trees that bear their own kind of fruit; seed that yields its own crop, and they say nobody made it, for nothing; it just came. Yes, Heman, that stone was made specially to do some work. You dig off the sod from the top, and I'll tell you about it while we eat dinner. It's a mill stone, that was made to grind corn, and there used to be a mill here when I was a boy. You see that little pond up there? It used to be big, and those logs were part of a sluiceway. The tide set way up here, full and strong too; six miles the arm of the sea was, the inlet we called it; now it's choked up with sand-bars and marsh lands, and it's years since the mill fell down."

Heman with a sharp stone and a stick dug away as for his life. Earth, sky, far-off sea, took a new light for him; he lived in a vague romance as he disentombed the old millstone. At eleven he trotted off to the house to bring down what Urias called his "noon snack." Aunt D'rexy had the basket all ready, came through the first big field, and helped him over the first rail fence with his load. Then she left him to tug away for himself; Heman was not

spoiled by being carried over all the hard places of life. He had struggled and perspired all the morning over his mill-stone, and he panted, tugged, and perspired over the lunch basket, setting it down every rod or two, but he got back to his party at last. They took the bared mill-stone for a table.

“You see,” said Urias, “there used a mill to stand here, built of logs and beams, and rough planks; a water mill; it had a run of stones to grind corn and wheat, and it had a saw to rip up logs into boards. It was pretty cold here in the cold winter, and in windy rainy weather, for it wa’n’t built up particularly close. However in one corner there was a room done off, and a stove, and we were n’t used to pampering in those days. You see, Heman, there’s a hole in the middle of this stone, and there was another stone like it a-top, and a spindle went through here, and the wheel turned that, and the water turned the wheel. When the stones ground round and round, the wheat and corn between them got ground into flour. It was n’t very fine flour, nor very white, but it was good wholesome eating, and I tell you, bread made out of it tasted terrible good to me, when I’d been out all day husking corn, or picking up apples or potatoes, and ran home at night with ten cents for my wages.”

‘What did you do with the ten cents?’ asked Heman eagerly.

“Gave it to my mother. I was all she had to do for her, and I worked for her from the time I was of your age. When I did n’t get ten cents, I got corn, apples, meat, or potatoes. When we had grain to grind, I brought it here to the mill. I made a little cart out of a box and some solid wheels sawed out of a log; I hauled my grain and flour in that. Sometimes I worked days for the miller. By and by the miller died, and the water wa’ n’t free here, as before; there were steam mills set up in the village, so this old mill was allowed to fall down. They took away the upper stone, but left this one because it was flawed. They carried off the saw, and some of the timber, and gave me the rest. I hauled it home, and cut, sawed, corded it evenings. It made us a year’s fuel. I tell you, my mother was a good woman; always kind and busy, always patient and pious. My religion’s the only good thing about me that I got from her.”

“Ai n’t it a pity,” said the neighbor lad, “that she did n’t live till now, when you’re so well set up.”

“I do n’t know as I begrudge her being happy in heaven. She would have been old, older than Aunt Espey by ten years, if she was living now. But I am proper glad that she lived to get past

the hard days, and where I could give her an easy living. She lived two years up in the house there with us, and D'rexy did uncommonly well by her. I say, boys, it's a great blessing to have your mother to do for and wait on, a great blessing from the Lord, an honor he puts on you. You'll miss that, you two boys, seeing both your mothers are dead." "Oh, well," said Heman, whose mother in eighteen months had become a dim dream, "I've got you, and Aunt Espey, and Aunt D'rexy, and I'll take care of you all." Whereat Urias patted him on the back, remarking that he "showed pluck," "had good grit," "was willing to take up a large contract," and "to do a land office business." Such unstinted praise Urias only bestowed in the privacy of the fields, far from those two women who might have accounted it an excess of "knuckling down."

On a summer afternoon a passing neighbor called to Urias that "his black heifer had got into trouble in the west lot." Urias with rope, axe, and lever, hastened off, his shadow Heman trotting after him as fast as short fat legs could carry him. The heifer was soon rescued. "What's this hole she got her leg into?" asked Heman.

"A well. Our old well. I timbered it over and sodded it, but it was a job done long ago,

and the timbers have rotted. Well! that might have cost me a good cow; I'll have to mend that, and I'll build a stone wall round it this time, sure."

"Oh, yes," cried the child, "and I'll bring my cart and drag stones for you; we can build the wall, Uncle 'Rias! But if that was your well, Uncle 'Rias, where was your house?" "Here it was," said 'Rias, walking off a little way, and pacing about a square depression, with a grass grown ridge on two sides. "Here's where I lived. It was a log-house, one big room, with the chimney run up outside, and a loft above. I slept in the loft when I was a boy. I made my bedstead, and I had it close up to the chimney for warmth. There were hollows and ledges in the chimney stones, and our hens used to roost there winters to keep warm. We had a lean-to kitchen to do the washing in, likewise the summer cooking. When my mother was sick I used to get up at four o'clock, do the washing, and spread the clothes out on the grass before I went to work. After I learned my trade I built a table and a cupboard for my mother, also a lounge."

After such histories Heman saw visions. He set forth Uncle 'Rias in his honest hard-working filial boyhood, as other boys more widely but possibly not better instructed, set forth Paladins,

and the Round Table knights of yore. If only he could emulate some of these deeds, could rise up before light to do a family washing, bring home wages at night, and built cupboards! Sometimes in imitating the doings of Uncle 'Rias he got into difficulty, and was only called meddlesome for his pains! He upset a churn full of cream in trying to make butter unasked for Aunt D'rexy. He destroyed a pan full of bread dough in a vain effort to accomplish the family baking; he spoiled a bee-hive, a sink box, and a cradle top, untimely putting a hand to Uncle 'Rias work in the shop. He had the great misfortune to be pronounced mischievous, and to hear it said that it "was well he'd be of school age next summer."

Now and then his efforts met with happier recognition. One evening coming along the road with Uncle 'Rias, they saw a deep hole at the edge of a little bridge over a runlet. "That ought to be mended," said Uncle 'Rias, "some horse will break a leg in there."

"Oh, we know where it is and wo n't let our horse get into it." "Yes, boy, but ours is not the only horse in the world. Other folks have teams. We ought to think for our neighbors. Some one might get into that place of a dark night."

The next day as Uncle 'Rias came along the

road to dinner he heard a great shouting and ordering. If he had been given to reading Milton, Uncle 'Rias might have said, "Satan was heard commanding loud." Heman and a taller, older boy of a quieter disposition were busy in the road; a crowbar and two little carts indicated serious work. Heman's round face was dripping as usual; his tongue was loudly active, also as usual. "Joey, pound that stone in! Joey, where's a big stone! Joey, I've got a chunk to go there! Joey, why don't you haul up some dirt." There they were. Heman and his only play-fellow, Joey Clump, were vigorously at work, doing a rude style of road-mending. Like the slough of Despond the hole seemed "hard to fill" on account perhaps of "the bottom being so bad." A happy effort in crowding down a fragment of stump had afforded staying place for stones and sods. "Why! how long have you boys been at work!" cried Urias. "Pretty near all the afternoon," said Joey, who was dry, white, and panting. "Who set you at it?"

"I did," said Heman, "did n't you say it ought to be fixed?"

"So I did. Well, you'll be road-master's some day. Give me that crowbar and I'll finish it up, Joey, you can come on to tea with us, and D'rexy shall give you both a slice of pie." He-

man had never had "company to tea" before. He thought that he had fallen into Arcadia.

Joey Clump was the only child and idol of the Sinnets' nearest neighbors. D'rexy was wont to say, "If Joey had been any one but Joey, he'd have been clear spoiled by the praising and petting he got." "That's what the dear Lord's provided for poor little Joey, so he won't be overborne by his afflictions," said Aunt Espey. For "poor little Joey" had brought into this world as his inheritance a misshapen foot and a crooked shoulder. To make this burden lighter his parents had kept him much in the house amusing him, and had allowed him unlimited pie, cake, and preserves. Joey had therefrom grown slim and pale like a potato plant in a cellar.

Heman, the rollicking, the redfaced, the muscular, became Joey's particular admiration. Pitying Joey, and advised by Aunt Espey that "children ought to play with children," Aunt D'rexy with fear and trembling lest her boy should suffer harm, made Joey welcome to the doorway. Heman became a shade more dictatorial and lordly, but Joey browned, reddened, toughened in out-door sports; while being instructed by Heman that cake and pie were bad for little boys, and made them slim, and he would n't eat them. Joey revised his bill-of-fare to his great

advantage. Joey had been kept out of school, "lest the other boys should put upon him." He was to begin with Heman, as it was evident that though Heman did not object to a thrall himself, he would let no one else tyrannize over Joey.

The summer before their first essay of school-life, Joey and Heman afforded a little conversation to the neighborhood. A young mother with an only child, a girl baby six months old, was near to death. Joey and Heman were left in the front-yard of the sick neighbor's house, when Mrs. Clump and D'rexy were giving friendly cares within. Joey who had heard various conversations at home, said, "When Mrs. Pratt goes to heaven she can't take Dolly, and some one has to take Dolly and keep her, and bring her up for theirs."

"Who?" demanded Heman.

"I don't know; only Dolly is such a good, pretty baby, all the folks will want her. We'd want her, would n't we? I mean to get her."

"Oh, no. Me! Me!" cried Heman. "I want her dreadfully. Let me have her, Joey! I *will* have her."

Joey looked regretfully at his masterful play-mate. What Heman wanted he must have. "You'll let me see her every day?"

"Of course I will."

"If we do n't get her pretty soon, other folks

will take her off," said Joey. "Let's take her *now*," said Heman, always prompt, "We'll carry her to my house. You can help, Joey."

"We can put her in a basket. There's the chip basket by the porch, and we can each carry a handle," said Joey.

Said—done. The hapless Dolly's cradle was in the out-kitchen. The chip basket was emptied; the thoughtful Joey put into it a little cradle-quilt; the baby was laid upon it, and the two kidnappers set off down the road. The fact that Heman was much the shorter of the pair, and that Joey hobbled badly, gave their progress a jerkey motion, that even Dolly, the most complacent of babies, could not endure. Usually she took life calmly so long as she had a pink thumb to suck. Now, jogged and tossed, her little head rolling about in a rough basket, on a wrinkled little quilt, Dolly began to weep, then proceeded to cry unappeasably, and to give wild shrieks. This put a new phase of baby-tending before Heman. "I don't believe Aunt Espey can stop her," he said anxiously. "Uncle 'Rias don't like children *much*. He can't bear crying. Joey, your house is nearest; you can have Dolly."

"Oh, good! Don't you want her, Heman?"

"You can have her," said Heman firmly. "Come on." But a call was heard, and Mrs.

Clump, sunbonnetless, came down the road after the baby. "What are you doing with Dolly, you naughty boys! Heman, I know it was you got up this trick.

"No: I did," said Joey. "I want her. I mean to have her for our baby. She's pretty and she don't cry all the time. I'm going to have her. I got her first," insisted Joey.

"Why, Joey! You don't say so!" said Mrs. Clump, walking up the road, a boy on each side, the baby in her arms.

"Yes, I do say so," said Joey, unused to refusals.

When the matter was referred to Joey's father, Mr. Clump said, "Very well. We'll take her. Joey wants her, and what Joey wants he gets."

Thenceforward the baby Dolly presided over the Clump family, and Heman before long saw the time when he proclaimed her "a real bothersome little thing, always squealing and tagging round." However, he was fond of Dolly, and took great pride in her first steps and her first tooth.

The time came for the first day at school. Aunt Espey made Heman a book-bag of ticking, and D'rexy duly paid for slate and primer out of her egg money.

Said Urias, "When I went to school I had

that blue Webster's spelling book with board sides, and I had a shingle to write and do sums on with a coal or a bit of chalk. Nights I scrubbed it clean to have it ready for the next day. That was all I had to learn from. I did n't get but four months schooling a year, and that only for three years; but I read the Bible and any paper I got to my mother between whiles, to keep up my learning. When I was older I studied nights with the school-master till I learned writing and ciphering." Heman set out to school thoughtful; he had received a lesson upon his privileges.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST-FRUITS.

“Its waters returning
Back to their springs like the rain, shall fill them full of
refreshment,
That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the
fountain.”

IN this world of quiet beauty which surrounded the humble happiness of the Sinnet farm Heman Leslie lived, grew, and was glad. Once, in an hour of confidence, leaning on Aunt Espey's knees, he asked her if she thought the little boys in heaven were any happier than he was, and if she did not think that his father and mother were glad that he had stayed behind when they went to the good land.

“You can make them more glad still,” said Aunt Espey, “if they hear that you are so good and useful that this world is better and happier because you are in it. If people go to heaven and say that you helped them to get there, then they will thank God for you, because the citizens of heaven are glad of the good done on earth.”

“And can I be a citizen of heaven?” asked the boy.

“Yes, surely. Do n't you know that Abraham, while he was in this world, was always seeking a better country, higher up, and trying to live in the fashion of that better land?”

In this way before Heman the earthly and the heavenly were knit together; Without any especial help at home, except his general training in diligence and obedience, Heman did well at school. Sometimes Urias was troubled with a fear that Heman was “getting too much education,” but he reflected that in these days people “appeared to need more than they had when he was a boy;” and then Joey Clump was kept at school and Heman ought to do as well as Joey Clump. Joey was Heman's class-mate, lagging along a little for his younger friend to help him in lessons as in physical activities. Joey, in spite of his infirmities, was becoming tough and healthy, his future began to occupy him, and he planned that whatever Heman did he would do, and they would be partners. Joey's chief trouble in life was that out of school Heman spent so much time with the nimble, driving Urias; and it was quite hopeless for Joey to try to keep up with either of them; he was obliged to fall back on the society of Dolly, his adopted sister—a rosy, trim little maiden, who wore ruffled gingham aprons every week-day but Saturday, and then in the afternoon came

out resplendent in a "white pinafore" and a blue hair-ribbon.

Two important factors entered into Heman's education in these early days. Aunt Espey's eyes were failing: even the large print of her big Bible tired them, and Heman was daily called upon to read the Scriptures to her. It never occurred to him to feel this a burden; it was the least he could do to minister to the good aunt. In the school he might fall into that sing-song, droning style of reading too current in country schools; his reading from the Bible aloud to Aunt Espey rescued him from that, and made him a clear, accurate, sympathetic reader. Whoever practices reading in the Psalms, the Gospel of John, Proverbs, and the Epistles to the Hebrews, cannot fail to read well.

The pastor of the Sinnets had not ceased to take an interest in their adopted son, and fearing lest the fewness of books in the home, and Urias' jealousy of educational privileges, might dwarf the lad, had persuaded D'rexy and Mrs. Clump each to subscribe for a young people's magazine. The two being read and exchanged between the homes, the two boys were supplied with information and fresh mental interests. 'Rias himself liked to hear these magazines "read out."

Of all his companions Heman still found

'Rias the most congenial. In spite of his hard early life, 'Rias carried into his mature age much of boyishness; there was still a suggestion of childhood in the hard-faced, hard-handed man. Urias liked to chat and tell stories; he enjoyed conundrums and jokes. Every year he eagerly secured an almanac or two—usually from the druggist for nothing—and the jokes, puns, and fun in these were an endless source of amusement. On long, cold evenings of early winter Urias would take down a succession of these almanacs running through several years, and he and Heman would go over the jokes together with great satisfaction. Aunts D'rexy and Espey would smile serenely, but not be able to see very much fun in it. Gravely and calmly happy, D'rexy and Espey had never been children: the cares of maturity had fallen upon both almost in infancy: it never occurred to them to spend an autumn day or two gathering nuts, and to crack these nuts in winter evenings; they never thought it entertaining to thread an apple on a wire, and roast it in that way before the coals. "Land sakes!" Aunt D'rexy would say, "if you want apples, I can bake you a whole pan full in the oven without that trouble."

"They're sweeter for this trouble, ain't they, Heman?" said 'Rias with a laughing glint in his eyes, and Heman said "Yes," even when

the apples were a little black in some spots and a little hard in others.

It was to Heman that Urias confided his longing after riches, his dreams of a fortune. These had haunted his life, and by them he had been sometimes betrayed into financial follies. Wandering agents had lured good ten-dollar bills out of pockets for their treasures, or even double that amount for the "privilege of being agent himself," and of these investments Uncle 'Rias wished to hear nothing. In very dark corners of the cellar were certain queer forms that Uncle 'Rias would have been glad to have buried out of sight and memory for ever. There was a patent medicine that had endangered the life of a neighbor or two; a liniment which had left hairless spaces on D'rexy's best cow; a hinge that would not work; a gate that would neither open nor shut. Over these things friendship drew a veil.

"But then, boy," 'Rias would say, as he and Heman worked at the wood-pile or in the barn, "plenty of people have fortunes left 'em, and why should n't I? There's many a poor man who finds coal, oil, gas, copper, iron, or gold on his barren little farm. Why can't diamonds turn up here as well as in Africa, I say? D'rexy might sit in a satin frock and do nothing all day long."

"I do n't guess she'd enjoy that," said Heman. "I would n't; I'd rather stir round. What do we want a fortune for, Uncle 'Rias? We've got enough."

"Oh, well—we could help the church—

"That's the Lord's, and if he wants us to help that more he'll see to it, wont he? I do nt know what I want more than I've got, unless it's a new pair of overalls and a new jack-knife—and well, an' some dumplings for dinner; and I've got most money laid up enough for the overalls," for Heman earned pennies and nickels very often, husking corn, or driving sheep, or picking fruit for neighbors.

"Well, after all, there's nothing like contentment," said Urias. Then he added slowly,

"I can sharpen your knife good as new, and as far as I know D'rexy's planning for dumplings for dinner. So, come to find out, you don't want anything."

Urias was full of wise saws, the essence of ancient wisdom, and of unwise modern acts, the very essence of unwisdom.

Happy were the days when the ten-years-old Heman could go out with Urias for work at carpentry. If the working-place was near enough they walked, each with some tools over his shoulder and a dinner-pail in hand. If the place were distant they rode on the rude vehicle called a

“buck-board,” on which they were easily dandled up and down, while the dinner-pails swung beneath between the wheels. Heman could nail on lath, could hold the boards for his uncle to nail, could run up and down ladders, and skip along rafters, nimble as a squirrel. Many was the good lesson he got on honesty in work and faithfulness in things out of human sight—no crooked rusty nails, no neglected nail holes, no rotten boards, no sills left weak, no beams untrue. “The Lord is particular, and he’s our Master Workman,” Urias would say.

At noon they would sit in sight of their work to eat their dinner. “I think that finial’s just a little too high,” Urias would say, squinting critically. “And how does that cresting suit your views, Heman?”

“Fine,” Heman would say; “but if this house is wanted to be fancy, why do n’t you put some sticks crossways and notched up in those gable ends?”

“Well, it would look kind of quilly,” Urias would reply, “and we might paint them red.”

Riding home, as they passed some house which Urias had built, he would say with due pride, “That house stands just as true as when I made it; has n’t sagged one bit. It looks real frilly round the top of the porch where I put that trimming, do n’t it now?”

Sometimes he would tell incidents out of his past experience. "You see that house over on the hill, boy—Reed's house? I'll tell you a little ditty about that."

The horse ambled homeward at will. Heman's short, thick legs dangled over the side of the buck-board in company with Urias's long lean ones. Urias waved his gaunt arm at "Reed's house" and began his story:

"I was building that house for Reed. He was in a hurry, and I was, for I had a barn to set up for Maybanks, and a corn-bin to shingle beyond that. I'd worked one day till dark, and got the balloon frame up, and I tell you, Heman, I felt so tired that I could n't strike another blow. Well, I went home and had my supper, and dropped on the lounge in the kitchen and went to sleep. I slept so hard and was so tired, D'rexy just covered me up and left me there. By-and-by I woke up and heard a shutter banging and the clock striking ten. The moon had risen and the wind along with it. I went outside and said to myself, 'If this wind keeps on that frame will be blown over by daylight. I can't afford the time nor Reed the timber.' So I tied on my hat and buttoned my coat, and off I set toward that house. It was light enough, a great round moon, like a brass plate. Well, I got there, and I seized the longest board I had, and laid it slant-

ing across the end, for I was bound to stay that frame. I nailed it to a stud nigh the middle. Then I drove a big nail in at the bottom, and run up my ladder, and whacked a nail in at the top. Then I put another brace on that end, and ran round to the other end. The thing was shaking and threatened. 'No, you don't come down,' I said, and three braces went on there. Then I put two on each side the front door, and two each side the back, and one in each gable end. 'Now,' I says, 'to make sure I 'll lay a stay or two along that roof.' So up I goes. The wind was high, and it was powerful hard work wrestling with those big boards alone in the wind. But I said to myself, 'Rias, this is what the Lord gave you your muscle for; and, man, you've got no time to waste, while it is clear as preaching that you have to do honest work by your neighbor.' So, you see, I exhorted myself like a preacher while I was laying on. After a while I was done. That house was firm as a rock—well stayed as a frame need to be. I got home by two o'clock, and D'rexy never knew till morning that I'd been out working of a night."

Could the admiring Heman fail to take a lesson in honest zeal? He longed to begin a man's work in the world, to have opportunities of making himself felt, of doing something worth while.

He counted the gardening, milking, cow-driving, wood-cutting, the hundred and one things he did for Aunt D'rexy and Aunt Espey, nothing. They felt differently about them, and daily wondered how they could have gotten on had not Providence sent to them that boy.

"I've been to school long enough," said Heman; "I'm past thirteen, and I've got through all the classes in our district. If I go next year I'll have to go to the village. I want to work, like a man."

"And what work do you want to do?" asked Urias.

"I do n't know. Sometimes when I stop before the blacksmith's shop and see the forge and the red furnace, the sparks flying, the red iron hissing in the water, I think I'd like that. See how broad my shoulders are, and look what a muscle I have!" Heman contracted and expanded his arm, marking with pride the swelling biceps.

"Yes," said Urias, "you're a biggish lad; you stand on a good big leg and foot. What else do you want to be?"

"Some days I think I'd like to be a farmer; there's nothing like the fields and orchards. Other days, when I work with you, I think I'd rather sit up on the ridge of a roof and pound on shingles, than be President. Then when I

go over to the mill and yard for lumber, then I'm sure I'd rather keep a lumber-yard than do any other thing, the wood smells so nice, and is so clean, and shines so yellow in the sun. Say, Uncle 'Rias, all is so nice I don't know which is best."

"That's so, sonny," said the gratified Urias; "your head's level. You'll have time enough to get your mind made up. You can work with me and get your taste of farming and carpentry, and you'll know at last if you want either of them. I may be able to set you up in a lumber yard myself before long, or a big blacksmith's shop yonder in the village."

"Whoop! Uncle 'Rias, that would take loads of money!"

"Perhaps I'll have lots of money some day," said Urias, mysteriously. He was overflowing with a secret which made his hard features radiant, and brought the simple childish look into his blue eyes. Finally, one Saturday, out in the wood lot felling trees with Heman, the desire for sympathy overcame Urias. They were sitting on a log eating dinner.

"I say, Heman, you're not to tell Joey, but when Luke Parks went off to Africa to pick up gold and diamonds lying round loose like stones in what they call the Transvaal, I took stock in him, and so did some others."

"Why, how? You believed he was going to get rich there?"

"Yes, you bet! Why, boy, if I'd been young, like Luke, I'd have gone too; but I could n't leave D'rexy and Aunt Espey, and you so young. So I and some others put money into Luke's pocket; he's honest, and we gave him three hundred apiece, four of us, and he's five. When he comes back rich we'll share even; if he makes half a million, we'll have a hundred thousand each. See? But it's more likely to be a million."

A little rabbit scurried over the path among the dry leaves; a red-capped woodpecker began to drum on a branch; the breeze rose and whispered low through the woods. All these sounds wove themselves together and fell as words upon the boy's ear: "They that will be rich fall into a snare." He marvelled that the man did not hear it, it was so plain; but no, the man who had striven so hard for bread heard another refrain: "Plenty of money! riches! riches!"

"I took the money I had in bank, boy," said Rias, picking up his axe to go to work again. "I did n't tell *her*. Those riches are going to be a surprise to her."

Then Heman understood that he was not to mention this affair, and his boyish heart sank, for he was sure the outcome would be ill.

More than ever he was restive and wanted to be doing a man's work in the world, to help hold affairs straight "if they began slewing round wrong," he said to himself. They told him he could close his school-going with the close of the spring term in May. There was some comfort in that.

One March day he came home from school and found D'rexy and Aunt Espey talking earnestly, so that they could not even nod at him. He saw that tears were dropping over D'rexy's firm round cheeks. He went and put his arm about her neck, pressing her head on his stout young shoulder. She clasped his hand, but went on talking.

"Yes, Aunt Espey, I believe I've done wrong. I saw that 'Rias was clean carried away by Petty's glib tongue. But then 'Rias is so set on it! and after all, Aunt Espey, it's all 'Rias's money; he earned it by terrible hard work."

"No, D'rexy," said Aunt Espey firmly, "it's as much yours as his. Women ought to feel and know that their work indoors, and their economizing, are just as much earning, and make what is got together just as much theirs as a man's. The law sees that, D'rexy, and that's why the law gives a woman a chance to save herself, by not allowing a mortgage to be laid,

or real estate bought, unless she signs the papers."

"You see," continued D'rexy, "'Rias had some money in the bank, and I'm sure he's gone and invested that some way, or he'd had that to invest with Petty instead of laying a mortgage on his place. Oh, Aunt Espey, it took so many years to get this place clear and comfortable and a bit in the bank for safety. And here we are mortgaged again!"

Heman's shoulder shook a little; he knew that the bank money had gone—to Africa.

D'rexy pulled him closer. "Uncle 'Rias has bought part of Petty's new trading schooner," she said; "he thinks it's going to pay fine. Somehow I'm timorous. I lived down there on the coast when I was young, and so many wrecks and drownings made me feel the sea was pretty uncertain. I'd rather trust the land. But maybe 'Rias knows best, and it will be safe."

"Yes, and don't you cry, Aunt D'rexy. I'll be out of school soon, and I'll work like a house afire, and you'll have all my money; and if Uncle 'Rias loses some, he and I will earn plenty more, don't you see?"

D'rexy looked encouraged. Heman felt cheery enough. Schooldays were slipping by like beads from a string, and he had what Urias

called "so much conniving" with Joey to attend to.

"What wont those boys be up to next!" said Urias one afternoon, as he sat on the porch cutting up seed potatoes. "Do you hear the whistles Heman and Joey have been making?" They call 'em sirens, and they're like a steam engine going off. Then they've set up what they call an observation and signal station, in the big cherry tree, and in the shop they're getting up some kind of a telegraph with wires and strings and tin cans, such as they read about in their magazines. Boys are always at some contraptions."

From far they could be heard coming down the road, Joey limping, Heman striding, each of them blowing on his siren a deafening strain. Happily these country people, reared amid the clarions of cocks, the shrill roulades of guinea-fowls, the shrieks and squeals of pigs, the full chorus of calves, sheep and cows, were regardless of any noises that could be produced; nothing distressed their well-accustomed ears.

"We've got a set of signals made," announced Heman, tearing in at the gate. "Long, hard call—'attention!' Three short ones—'trouble!' Lots of little ones—'hurry up!' Oh, they're fine. Hark to them, will you?"

"Fine!" said 'Rias. "If you'd slice some of

these potatoes, it would be finer than all the signals you could blow. Sit right down here and get to work. To-morrow being Saturday, you can plant 'em."

"Bet I can cut quicker than you can," said Heman, seizing a pan and pulling out his knife; "cut 'em good, too."

"That's you," said Urias, gratified. "You're the right kind of a boy; you take hold and do what you can, and you ain't pernickety. Some boys are always pouting if they can't be riding in the band-wagon and carrying the flag."

CHAPTER V.

HE PUTS HIS SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL.

"Affliction, like the iron-smith, shapes as it smites."

THE potato-field where it was Heman's fortune to plant potatoes on that March Saturday, lay next the road. Spring had set in very early. The field lay sloping a little to the south; a thick line of low-growing tamaracks sheltered it from the north winds, and the Sinnets always boasted of having the finest and earliest potatoes in the township. Heman considered himself an adept at potato planting. At the side of the field the bushel basket stood with the cut slices, each having its eye or growing point and plenty of white good stuff to keep it hearty until its roots developed. Hung by a strap about Heman's neck was a tin pail for the pieces to plant in two rows. Hoe in hand he marched down a furrow, planting at set distances and covering as he planted; then back in the same track, planting the ridge on the other side of the furrow, and so reached the basket for a new supply. We might imagine a scientific boy, a student boy, as cheering himself on in such work by considering the wonders of potato growth, how a potato is not a root, but a thick underground

stem, a food storehouse for the plant, and by diligent cultivation becoming much the more a food store-house for man ; he might have considered how it grew from eyes, which are simply buds, capable of throwing out stalk and roots, or from the seeds of the pretty but despised flower ; he might have thought how the medicinal tomato, the injurious tobacco, and the dangerous nightshade, are all first-cousins of the potato, and so on indefinitely. Heman thought nothing of the kind, yet did not lack for cheer ; he liked to hear the call of the first robins, to mark the crafty manners of the crows, to see the fresh promise of the grass, and notice the rosettes of mullein growing along the fence corners.

He laid some cracked nuts here and there along the fences as he reached them, and was rewarded by seeing cunning little chipmunks and red squirrels skimming along to get them, and then sitting up sedately on their haunches and their ragged tails erected, joy radiant in all their little bodies as they prepared to eat the nut meats. He reflected that he had heard of a big black squirrel, seen occasionally in the woods, and wished he might trap it to sell, as a man in the town would pay him well for that, and fairly well for a pair of grey ones. When Heman looked down the earth kept him in good fellowship ;

there were snail-shells turned out by the recent ploughing; he wondered if he could find an arrow-head to present to the school-master, and he observed the quantities of angle-worms, and meditated when he could go a-fishing. If he looked upward there were broad blue skies to fill his heart with exultation; spring was in the air, and to-day low in the northwest lay a pile of black clouds like gigantic castles, clouds which D'rexy called wind-clouds, and 'Rias "weather breeders."

Some schoolmates passed along the road and stopped to interview him.

"Say, Heman, come, go fishin'! They's lots of bull-pout in the creek now, an' perch! Timmy caught nineteen shiners last night. Come on. It 'll be warm 'nuff to wade, mebbby."

"Can't; do n't you see I've got all these per-taters to plant?"

"Well, I call it awful mean to have to plant taters all day Sat'day, after bein' in school at hard work all the week."

"I do n't work very hard in school, sure," said Heman, slowly covering the two "hills" nearest the fence, and leaning on his hoe. True enough, he looked longingly at the poles and lines of domestic manufacture, and the pails suggesting dinner in the woods.

"Come on; do n't drop taters all day."

"I notice I drop 'em into my mouth fast enough, when they 're grown and cooked," said Heman with a jolly laugh.

"Where's your Uncle 'Rias, why do't he plant 'em?"

"He's out in the wood-lot, fellin' some big trees. Budd Hunt has his little saw-mill set up at inlet head, for a couple of weeks, an' Uncle 'Rias wants some boards sawed out."

"Come on, an' leave them taters for him to plant nex' week."

"That would be a pretty trick," said Heman, with scorn.

"Take you all day, wont it? An' you might be eatin' outdoors."

"Guess I'll do that any way, soon as Aunt D'rexy's gingerbread an' apple pie's done, guess I'll take dinner out to the wood-lot for Uncle 'Rias an' me."

There was some malevolence in this remark; these viands of Aunt D'rexy's making were famous, and Heman shrewdly suspected that a large part of the zeal for his company, fishing, was due to the thought of the good things he would bring to eat.

"Hum—m," said one boy, "'fore I'd work like you do, an' they ain't your people neither."

"They are too, my people," said Heman. "Aunts an' uncles, they come next to fathers

an' mothers, an' gran'mothers; do n't you know anything?" and he covered two more hills vigorously.

"Come on, jes' half a day, an' work at taters this afternoon."

"Can't—Joey goin'?"

"He never goes 'less you do—an' *his* mom's makin' doughnuts."

Heman laughed. "Well, I've got to hurry up. Would n't be s'prised if that pile of black clouds brought suthin'."

Away went the boys disappointed and commenting, and Heman hurried along the rows thinking about shiners and "pumpkin seed," and how nice a dozen of little fish would smell, frying in a pan for supper! Time flew as he went up one row and down another, and the store of cut potatoes in the big basket visibly lessened, for Heman was a diligent worker. He reflected that of late 'Rias had seemed less cheery than usual, and even more zealous than ever in crowding on work. He knew too, that Aunt D'rexy often looked earnestly at 'Rias as if anxious to read his thoughts. These were sober musings, but they fitted the darkening of the day, for before Heman was aware the clear sunshine had changed to a dull brassy light, and now and then a puff of wind came along with a shrill scream. One such whirled off Heman's

hat and led him a chase. When he picked up the hat he saw that the big black clouds had massed and heaped until they looked like the picture of Mount Chimborazo, as seen in his atlas, drawn by an artist who delineated from imagination rather than observation. Heman commented to himself that this view was "about as good as going to South America and seeing the big volcano:" he felt still more impressed with this idea when he saw at the top of the cloud-mountain a whirling banner of sheen and shade, as if the volcano threatened eruption. Then all at once the cloud-mountain towered, growing higher and narrower; the lower portion contracted to a neck, the upper reeled and bowed, and whirled toward him, as if seeking a near path to reach the sea. There was sudden twilight and cold, trees rocked, a groaning filled the air. He heard Aunt D'rexy blowing loud and shrill on the dinner-horn. She wanted him; he turned to run toward the house. A queer world this, a panel or two of rail-fence rose up into the air and waltzed about; the potato basket turned over and went trundling along the field—there was a screaming, much more shrill than the dinner-horn, and Heman reflected that freshly-ploughed land did not taste well, and that he would be a queer looking boy if ever he stood up after being rubbed along for a while face

downward in the moist furrow. He appeared to be sleepy, and forgot himself. Then, there he was, scrambling to his knees, shaking earth from his hair and spitting it from his mouth, wishing he had a towel; next he stood up, and his breath, which had been gone it seemed, came back. The sun had come out, and the shrieking noises were stilled. Seaward, the torn cloud-mountain careened, hanging low, as if to meet the waves. Yonder, between him and the house, was Aunt D'rexy, running as he had never seen her, for D'rexy was squarely built and sedate of movement. Heman ran to meet her, and after she had laboriously climbed one fence reached her, and was clasped, mud and all, to the embrace of her clean calico gown. "Now the dear, kind Lord be praised, who has saved you, my boy!"

"What was it, Aunt D'rexy? I'm all right, but the potatoes are upset, and I'll have a great time getting them together."

"'Pears like it was a piece of a cyclone, from what I've heard. It did n't hit our buildings, but it took down your dove-house, and cut the top off the popple tree down the road. I wish I knew about 'Rias. 'Peared like the wind did n't go long our wood-lot way though. Went toward the school'us."

"Well, as soon as I'm clean enough to see

straight, I'll go look for Uncle 'Rias, an' ask him to come home for early dinner."

Heman made haste to wash and change his clothes: his shoes were full of stony earth. Uncle 'Rias had the two horses at the wood-lot ready to haul out his logs. "He may want me to stay and go with him to the saw-mill," said Heman; "if I do n't come back soon you know it's all right, Aunt D'rexy."

Heman went up the road at a rapid pace, not that he was alarmed about Uncle 'Rias, but he was thinking what fun it would be to tell him of the antics of the fence-rails and the potato basket, and how he himself had tried ploughing up the ground with his nose! Then if Uncle 'Rias should elect to go at once to the Inlet-head, there would be no end of a fine chance to watch the anchored boats, to see what new cat-boats were being built, perhaps to have a row, and finally he and Uncle 'Rias could sit on a log at the saw-mill, and eat a "snack" of cheese and hard tack bought at the "ship's groceries" store. Better far all this than going a-fishing. As he surmounted the low hill that looked down upon the wood-lot he saw in an unfenced stump-filled field on the south of the road one of Uncle 'Rias' big grey horses, tearing around as if insane with fright, a portion of harness flying like ribbons about his back. On the north side of

the road the path opening into the wood-lot was strangely changed. If, as Aunt D'rexy said, the main part of the wind storm had swept straight seaward, some of its scouting parties had done dire damage here; a tree lay partly across the road, there was a wide opening where tree tops had been reaped off like ripe heads of wheat; and spaces where some big pine falling had carried down all beneath it. Heman set out to run in good earnest. A few rods brought him to the scene of desolation. Bandy, the other grey horse, lay dead, his head crushed, and beyond him, on and under a heap of debris, of rotten wood and dry branches, fallen backward, his head very low, was Uncle 'Rias, motionless, ghastly. The quick eyes of the boy took not a minute to discern that the right leg of his uncle was crushed under the fallen body of the partly decayed tree, the wreck of whose top afforded the debris that covered him. To free his head and shoulders from wreckage and to put his head in a better position was Heman's first work: and in doing so he found that his uncle's heart still beat. Around Heman's neck hung, like a boatswain's whistle by its cord, one of those shrill sirens in which he and Joey delighted. He blew as he worked, the loudest blast he could. To his great joy a second blast obtained an answer; Joey then was

somewhere on the road. Heman blew the signals of "trouble" and "hurry," and soon a plunging sound, and Joey's voice encouraging a horse, came near. Then Joey's chestnut "Ranger" reared and refused to come on; he was terrified by Bandy's dead body. Joey turned him about, tied him, and hurried forward.

"A tree's fallen on Uncle 'Rias!" shouted Heman.

"Is he dead?" cried Joey, awe struck.

"No; of course not. Joey Clump, you are the stupidest! See here, we've got to get this trunk off his leg, and then you must go for help. Where's your father?"

"Up here at Reed's. Mom sent me to see if he was all right. I 'spect he must be—" for like other people Joey could not quite see how death or disaster could fall on *his* house.

"Joey, get Ranger round here to the north of that tree. You mount him and keep his head away from Bandy. Go round a little," ordered Heman, who was a boy of very quick prompt thinking. He had taken the big coil of rope which Uncle 'Rias had brought to ease his trees down with. It was provided with a noose and slipknot on one end; this Heman placed about the upper end of the bole that lay upon his uncle's leg. Then he carried the rope to a strong uninjured tree, climbed up and passed it

over a great limb. Joey was now in place on Ranger and the next affair was to get the collar for him from the dead Bandy, and arrange a safe-fastening of the end of the rope, so that the horse's weight and pulling force could be brought to bear on it. "Now, Joey, help me with this block, so I can have it where I can cram it under the log when it lifts a few inches; that's all we'll try for, just to take the weight off him. Now, Joey, give me that sapling for a lever and I'll get it against this stump, and I'll put my strength on lifting. There, as soon as I say 'Now,' Joey, you start Ranger and keep the rope right on him, and if we all go it awful hard, I guess we can lift that log half a foot or so."

Heman was right; the log being unsound was lighter than he feared. Ranger's pull on the rope over the big limb, and Heman's management of the fulcrum and lever succeeded: Heman announced that he could "see daylight between the tree trunk and the leg," and exhorted Joey to "hold taut" while he rolled in the block for a support.

"There, now, Joey, Uncle 'Rias will die of lying on the damp ground. There's his coat yonder; I'll lift his shoulders, and you spread the coat under him. Pull off your coat to cover him, and I'll roll mine up with leaves in it for

a pillow. Say, Joey, he 's fainted ; what can we give him ? When Aunt Espey 's faint she smells camphire."

"Or 'monia," assented Joey, and began to search his pockets as if they might develop a possible drug store. "Haint a thing, but two pep'mints ; but they 's awful strong," he said, offering the red and white rounds.

"Now, Joey, get on Ranger, and ride like mad to your pop and Mr. Reed, and tell 'em to come here quick, to carry Uncle 'Rias home ; then you ride fast to town for both doctors to go to our home, an' you tell 'em what 's wrong. Holler to your mom as you go by, to go tell Aunt D'rexy to get things ready, for Uncle 'Rias' leg is broke ; an' if you say one word 'bout dying, or what 'll scare Aunt D'rexy, I 'll fight you for all you 're worth, soon 's I get time."

Joey made off. Heman took his cap to a little brooklet and brought in it water to bathe his uncle's face ; on a second trip he found a rusty little can, and brought water to pour into his uncle's mouth ; then he administered the two peppermints, and tried to better the unfortunate man's position, looking with a sickening awe at the mangled leg which he dared not touch.

"Standin' still won't help things," he said. "I might as well work clearin' out the path, so

they can carry Uncle 'Rias, when they bring suthing to lay him on."

By the end of half an hour he had dragged away considerable rubbish and cleared a space about his uncle, who had begun to groan. The groans sounded awful in the silence of the woods, and made Heman quake, though he braced himself up with the thought that "it was better 'n being dead."

Finally voices and steps proclaimed help. Several neighbors carrying a stretcher, a blanket and some bottles arrived, and with infinite care Uncle 'Rias was lifted up and his friends set out to bear him home.

"It's a terrible bad job," said Mr. Clump to Heman, and tears were blinding the boy, and rolling over his round, ruddy, freckled face, as he caught the frightened grey "Captain," and rode swiftly home to help prepare Aunt D'rexy for the dreadful sight that she must see.

Three doctors and nearly all the neighbors made the Sinnet house and "front yard" full that day. The neighbors came to help, to sympathize, to listen for the verdict of the doctors. Heman could not stand the long still waiting: he knew he was not needed, was in the way in fact: he bargained with Mr. Clump to call for him if he was wanted, and to let him know "about things," and then went back to his po-

tato field. "If Uncle 'Rias is goin' to be crippled, all I've got to do is to put in harder 'n ever," he said in his matter-of-fact way, a way which made some of the neighbors call him "a very disregardless kind of boy." Aunt Espey knew better; so did Joey.

Joey had no way to show his overflowing sympathy but to help pick up the wind-strewn "sets," and then to plant potatoes. The two boys never said a word as they worked. Joey knew if he spoke he'd cry; so did Heman. Toward the middle of the afternoon various small vigorous figures tumbled over the fence from the "public road," and began to plant potatoes. None of them talked—they all worked, and they took long looks at Heman, who in the morning had declined "to go fishin'" with them.

At last the whole field was finished. The sun lay low along the west, all red and gold; a waving light as Heman saw through tears. The three vehicles of the doctors were gone from the Sinnet gate. There were two neighbors doing 'Rias' work in the barnyard, and two women consoling D'rexy, who sat weeping on the cistern platform. Mr. Clump climbed the fence of the potato field, and the boys slowly clustered round him. "He's livin'; doctors say mebbly he'll get well," said Mr. Clump.

"An'—'bout his—leg," gasped Heman.

“Well—that’s—cut off.”

Heman turned very white and reeled a little. Mr. Clump took him under the arm and led him homeward. The other boys climbed the fence to the road and trooped off.

“We plumb forgot that pertater basket,” said Joey Clump.

CHAPTER VI.

HE VENTURES OUT INTO THE WORLD.

“ He loved the twilight that surrounds
The border-land of old romance ;
Where glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,
Where banners wave and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries of song.”

THERE was no more going to school for Heman. 'Rias lay prostrate, near to death ; Aunt D'rexy, growing white and wrinkled, fought for his life by diligent nursing. Neither of them had a thought to give to the conduct of the place ; but Heman had worked observedly with Uncle 'Rias for eight years, and, boy as he was, he did a man's work, and did it well. If he needed to know anything about the farm affairs he repaired to Mr. Clump.

The neighbors variously remarked that “ The boy was a great blessin' to the Sinnets.” “ Did-n't know how they'd get on without him.” “ S'prisin' how steady he was and how much he knew.” “ Mighty good thing he was such a great, strong fellow, or he could n't do it.”

Heman, now somewhat past fourteen, had

ceased to be a boy and become a man. The other boys recognized that there "was no more playin' and foolin' for Heman," and the best of their boy-nature came out as they gave many hours to helping Heman plant and hoe his corn and work his garden.

What did Heman care for hard work so long as daily the doctors announced that Uncle 'Rias was improving. The dreaded fever was escaped; the labor-hardened, clean-living Urias was reaping some of the benefits of his orderly methods. No heat of intoxicating liquors, no distractions of late hours and violent passions infested his blood. Nature had all the opportunity needed to make repairs, and Urias did not complicate matters by terrors of death, or by rebellions against his lot. He was in the hands of God. What God should do was well done. True, to face years of the enforced idleness of a cripple, the thought of being deprived of all those activities in which he had delighted, did at times cut him to the heart; but Urias stayed himself on God, and felt that his way would be made clear. He had no self-blame over this accident with which to torture himself.

There were hours when self-blame about other matters tormented him. It is always harder to leave our follies and mistakes with God than our sins. One Sunday afternoon when

Aunt D'rexy had gone to take a nap, Heman was sitting alone with his uncle. The deep sighs of Urias stirred the boy's heart.

"It's awful to lose your leg, Uncle 'Rias," he said, "but can't you bear up under it?"

"'T a'n't the leg," said Urias; "the Lord saw fit to send that accident, I do n't know why, but it did n't come along of any keerlessness of mine. But, boy, these doctors will be powerful expensive, and I can never do any more work, and how's the bills to be met? That's what I'm thinkin' of. 'Owe no man anything,' that's Scripture; an' I've lived up to it, and I could yet if I had n't been too graspin'. I had four hundred in bank, and unbeknownst to D'rexy I put into Parks' going to Africa. 'T want sense, an' 't wa'nt fair to D'rexy. If I had n't done that there'd been money ready for these expenses an' to buy me a leg; legs come high."

"But, uncle, Parks may come back with a lot of money for you."

"He a'n't bin heard from since he struck Africa, an' it's much more likely he's dead with fever. I'm seein' things clearer lying here."

"Well, uncle, the farm brings in a lot of money: I'll work furious hard, and earn enough for all the bills," said Heman valiantly.

"I know you're willin', boy, an' you're doin' a man's work like a man; but land's poor round

here, and you can't get out of it more than 's in it. The land never more than just kept us, and all the laying up, and buying the farm and so on, came out of my work carpentering; and that's done now." He turned his face to the wall and groaned heavily. Heman wanted to console him.

"Mebbe the Lord knows all about that, and he 'll help you," he said.

'Rias groaned again. "That, I told you, ai n't the wust of it," he explained.

"Well—no—Aunt D'rexy told me 'bout your buying part of Mr. Petty's ship; perhaps that will make a lot of money for you."

Again 'Rias groaned heavily. "An' that ai n't the wust, neither," he said.

When Uncle 'Rias had these doleful hours and their darkness fell also across the kindly face of Aunt D'rexy, all the world seemed to Heman made of sea-fog. However, youth is buoyant; work has its exhilaration for those who do not chronically hate it; and Heman, getting out into the fresh air, smelling the earth and its fruits, always took heart of grace and whistled and sang as he toiled. Boy-like, he built air-castles and had bright dreams. He would do all that Urias had done in building up the family fortunes, and he would beware of speculations and risky ways of making money.

It seemed to Heman that in a family it was not quite fair for one person to endanger the revenue and not afford the others even so much as the poor opportunity of protest. "‘Wages for work,’ that will be my deal," said Heman.

Heman felt himself truly a man when he took charge of the shearing of twenty sheep, and the neighbor boys stood about, looking awed and respectful, as Heman gave his orders to the one negro he had hired to help shear. It seemed to these on-lookers a true honor to be allowed to carry a fleece to the tying-up table, or to anoint with the medicated lard places where skin as well as wool of the sheep had been clipped by the great shears.

All this diligence on Heman's part did not keep away disasters. In June, just when there was talk of getting Urias out of bed, he had what Aunt D'rexy called "a terrible back-set." What caused it she could not tell, until one evening, in confidential communing out in the barnyard, where they were both milking, Heman told her that the cause of the relapse was the rumor of Luke Parks' death, and Luke had taken to Africa Uncle 'Rias' precious bank-money.

"I mistrusted something about that money," said D'rexy. "Poor 'Rias!" She cried a little behind the barn there, and Heman was not ashamed to cry with her; but when she had

strained the milk and got it all ready for the early wagon, she went and leaned over the bed and said gently, "Don't fret any more, 'Rias. I know all about *that*—I reckon we can live through it." 'Rias slept better that night.

Rias was hobbling about the house on two crutches, and talking about getting a cork leg; the howling of October winds was keeping him awake nights, when the next storm came. This family seemed fallen upon the experiences of Job—one trouble raced upon the heels of another, as if to see which should deal the heaviest blow. Uncle 'Rias, unused to idleness, found much consolation in his village paper; he read it, personal items, advertisements, corner poetry, and all. Then he read that the Angelina, "owned by Si Petty and some others," had been wrecked in the last big gale, a total loss; and under all, the ominous line, "The insurance had just run out." For a while Uncle 'Rias forgot even to realize that when those timbers which carried so much of his hard-earned all went down, there went down also stout men, fathers of families.

Aunt Espey and D'rexy, moved to immense pity, seeing the terrible misery of Urias, tried to comfort him with plans for strict economy and more diligence in earning money, so that the direful mortgage could be paid off. "Only you keep up, 'Rias, an' we 'll pull through," said

Aunt D'rexy. "Once you get your strength, you'll find something you can go at. Now I do n't need to wait on you, I can earn right smart at dressmaking for the neighbors."

'Rias was inconsolable; he had good reason to be; he had a great sin against poor D'rexy lying heavy on his heart. Had he been less iron of constitution, had less childish buoyancy of spirit, no doubt his accumulated misfortunes would have killed him; but the last strata of ruin fell, and Urias lived to endure it. Joey Clump's father brought the news this time, appearing in the character of raven on New Year's night. "Terrible pitiful this 'bout Tom Ansel—bad beginnin' for the New Year: he's all broke up, gone into bankruptcy; his mill's closed down. Great shame he ever went into that wood-fibre work. He did n't understand it, and he had n't capital enough to get well a-going. There's money in wood-fibre work, they do say, but it's for them as has the knowledge and the capital. Tom Angel went ahead too fast; he ought to be content with a back seat for a while longer. He can't take up a bit of his paper. Pitiful hard on his security men; sure they'll have to make it good. I'm glad I ai n't on his paper. He asked me, and my! he talked so slick, it seemed as safe as the church steeple; but I spoke to Hanner about it, an' she says, 'Don't you do it

Clump; it ai n't Scriptor to go security; the Bible's plumb against it,' she says, an' she dealt me out the texts. 'That settles it,' says I, an' I'm mighty glad it did."

Urias was silent; he had fallen into a gulf of blackness; he was on Tom Ansel's paper for all the mortgaged farm and stock were worth. When Clump was gone Urias reached out a white shaking hand. "Mebbe God and you can forgive me, D'rexy, but I can't never forgive myself. Clump asked Hanner, an' he ai n't on that Ansel paper; but I did n't ask you, and I am on, D'rexy. We're old, an' homeless, an' poor. God help us! The farm's got to go, an' all the chattels too!"

So the New Year came in with weeping and abundant sorrow. "You see, Aunt Espey," said D'rexy privately to her aunt next day, "the law do n't take as good care for women as you thought it did. 'Rias could n't buy or mortgage without my signing; but he could put his name to a note that carries off all there is."

The neighborhood were greatly sympathetic when the catastrophe became known. Farmer Sloane, living on the edge of Windle, the town and railroad station, held Tom Ansel's notes. Sloane was a breeder of fine stock, a successful man, and the monied man of the township. Close, accurate, scrupulously honest in dealing,

just, but never generous, what was his own he claimed, and gave every man his dues. "It was a great pity," he said, "that 'Rias Sinnet had allowed himself to be bamboozled into signing notes. It was a bad business; no man ought ever to do it; 'Rias had had mor'n enough trouble lately. Yes, he s'posed he'd have to take the Sinnet farm; he'd rather have money, and if 'Rias had been able-bodied and wanted to rent it, why maybe he'd have rented it to him. No one else would keep it up quite so well as D'rexy; but Bob Adams would rent it, and he'd do mighty well by it."

Farmer Sloane even strained a point and presented D'rexy with all her fowls. The neighbors clubbed their money and bought the best cow and pig and gave them to D'rexy; and all the cord-wood which had been cut during the winter was reserved to Urias, and he was to have the use of the gray horse and the wood-cart to haul it. There would be fuel for two years.

On the edge of Windle, in sight of Farmer Sloane's, near the railroad, lay a low flat acre, in which stood a three-roomed house with a lean-to, also one room in the attic; a tumble-down something represented barn and other out-buildings. No one wanted to buy it. It was the sole property of Aunt Espey, and had rented

for forty dollars a year. There the family must go. The church people, headed by the minister, took the matter in hand. The little house was painted outside and in, and the rooms papered; blinds were put on, and a party of young people sodded the front yard and planted some shrubs and flowers. Farmer Sloane donated some second-hand lumber, and under 'Rias' direction Heman made over the shed into a barn, a pig-pen and a hen-yard.

The hour of the hegira came; the hens, the bees, the furniture had gone. "I've ruined you all!" groaned Urias.

D'rexy's kind hand stroked his gray hair and furrowed face. "We've got God and each other, 'Rias. Keep up heart."

Thus Heman spent his fifteenth birthday fleeing from that good sheltering home where he, a baby, had been brought by the drummer.

Urias had reserved for himself all his tools, and D'rexy all her household goods. Urias never expected to use again the tools he had handled to such good purpose, but he said, "The boy might want 'em."

D'rexy having selected enough goods for the small house to which they were going, left the remainder with Mrs. Clump, who provided a room for storage, and gave assurance that neither moths, mice, nor dust should harm them.

“And who knows, D’rexy, the day may come when you’ll have the farm back again, and put the things back just where they have stood always,” said Mrs. Clump, trying to be cheerful.

D’rexy and Urias had known nothing of the work done on their new home by the church people with whom they had lovingly and generously labored for so many years. When they found two stout fellows from Aunt Espey’s Bible-class waiting to put down carpets, hang curtains, and carry in goods; when D’rexy saw the lately forlorn place made clean and fresh, she began to take heart again; while Aunt Espey, not one whit surprised, said, “Now, ’Rias and D’rexy, didn’t I tell you the dear Lord would n’t try us a mite beyond what we’re able to bear, but would bring bits of comfort here and there to help us along.”

When Aunt Drexy’s stout rag carpets were spread on the floors, the shades put up and the cheese-cloth curtains draped over them, the long-used stove, table, cupboard and chairs placed in the kitchen, and D’rexy had prepared supper from the bountiful supplies sent as farewell gifts by her country neighbors, her heart and her steps were lighter than they had been for weeks. The worst had come and passed.

After prayers, ’Rias, who was hobbling about awkwardly on a new leg that was very inferior

to the lost one in point of comfort and usefulness, occupied some little time in studying how the young men had straightened and enlarged the bare front porch, adding to it some pillars made of young trees with their bark on. Vines had been set to clamber on these, and on each end of the porch stood a rocking-chair covered with turkey red cushions of D'rexy's manufacture. At first these things interested him, then he was overwhelmed by the contrast between the farm and this dismal bare acre, flat and uncultivated, without a growing thing upon it except the few trees and shrubs lately set out by their zealous friends. He stumbled into the house, doubled himself up in a chair in a dark corner, and groaned loudly.

"'Rias, have you hurt yourself?" cried D'rexy, running to him.

"I've ruined myself," moaned Urias, "and what's worse, I've ruined you. Look what I've brought you to, D'rexy!"

"Now, Uncle 'Rias," spoke up Heman, "this ain't what I call fair, to give way and break us all down. Oh, I say, let's all promise we wont do a thing of the kind; we'll work better if we're cheerful. You earned the farm once, Uncle 'Rias, and you and I will earn it back, see if we do n't, unless we kill ourselves fretting first. Why, Uncle 'Rias, I've planned to earn money

to get lumber to build us a little shop against the lean-to, and you can do work here, making and mending things, and I'll do work out. I'm going to start making garden here to-morrow, and I'll set a whole row of currant bushes by the fence, so's Aunt D'rexy can sell currant jelly. Look at me. I'm tall and strong. Do n't I look as if I could earn back the farm, with you two to help me?"

"So you do," said Aunt D'rexy, proud of her boy. "I would n't be a particle surprised if you bought back the farm. 'Rias will find a plenty that he can do, and with such a bit of a house as this I'll have oceans of time to take in sewing, and make jelly and preserves for sale. Oh, we'll get on."

To have an object in life is exceedingly good for a lad; perhaps the greater the object the better it is for the boy. Heman now had something to work for, and at first it seemed as if the task of recovering the farm would be delightfully and easily performed in a few years. As long as Heman was intensely busy he was happy. Aided by Uncle 'Rias and D'rexy he made an excellent garden, planting a quarter of an acre in potatoes and more than that in corn, with an eye to food for the cow and pig. When the garden was made, the cord-wood from the wood-lot was to be hauled, and a long shapely

woodpile built behind the kitchen. Then Heman had day's work to do hauling wood, making garden, planting corn and potatoes, picking strawberries and cherries for the former neighbors and the new ones. The day's work brought wages, but small ones. Money looks large to people when they are paying it out, and while Heman in his burly strength did as much work as most men, he was paid as a boy. The amount received looked disastrously small, especially when contrasted with the price of shoes and the rapidity with which they were worn out, and the manner in which he outgrew his clothes.

"It takes for ever," said Heman, "to earn enough money to lay up just three or four dollars. The hardest text in the whole Bible to practice is, 'Be content with your wages.'"

In fact, while Heman's intentions were excellent and his ambitions were right, he was in danger of becoming as restless and grasping after money as 'Rias had been, and so of falling into a snare of some kind. Heman, like Uncle 'Rias, needed his lessons.

As long as the pressure of business and the new cares lasted, and the periods of work in the old neighborhood, Heman had no time to be homesick for the farm. Late July and all August brought him idle days. He had helped at haying and harvesting, and now, until the time

of husking, apple picking, and other late autumn labors, he would find very little work. There was no school in session. Heman's time hung heavy on his hands. He sawed and split a deal of wood for Aunt D'rexy, but that brought no money. As he worked he dreamed of the shop he could build if he could get money for lumber, door, windows and chimney. If they had the shop Uncle 'Rias could make flower-stands, clothes-racks, little tables, baking-boards, and many things to sell, while Heman could learn carpentry.

A boy need not have fed his mind on the "Arabian Nights," "Tales of Chivalry," and "King Arthur's Round-Table," to be a dreamer. Heman dreamed as much as any one, though his dreams were of a practical nature. His heart clung to the boys he had known all his life; he did not care for the new boys in the town; he wanted Joey and the rest, and sonsie Dolly with her rosy face, smooth hair, and clean fresh aprons! So all his longings and hopes turned towards shining piles of dollars, and work that should be the stages of success, all to reach as their objective **THE FARM REGAINED**. This was as dear an air castle as a Governor's mansion, or President's chair, or Professor's desk, or General's straps and stars, or ships and tournaments, and athletic successes are to other boys.

In August, just when Heman could find nothing to do, a travelling show came along through Windle. There were tents and vans, flaming advertisements, cages of monkeys, loudly playing drums, trumpets and violins. Heman had no money to spend on entrance fees, but he had time and curiosity, and he hung about the outside of the show and talked with the show folk. So did Uncle 'Rias; he and Heman were both boyish enough to invest the travelling show with a halo of glory.

CHAPTER VII.

ROOF-TREE AND FIRE-SIDE.

“ We 'll relish therefore with content
What 'er kind Providence hath sent,
Nor aim beyond our power.
For, if our stock be very small
'T is prudent to enjoy it all
Nor lose the present hour.”

A BIG, strong lad with his wits about him can usually find plenty to occupy him of a desultory kind, even when steady work is lacking. Heman helped to mend a broken table and a monkey-cage ; he caught and dominated a rearing, frightened horse, and he and Uncle 'Rias became quite well acquainted with the owner of the van-load of monkeys. The disappearance of this man's factotum and driver occasioned an offer for Heman's services. Cripps, the monkey-owner, asked Heman to go with him as driver and general assistant. The idea was at first resented by Heman and Urias. Persistent talk on Cripps' part, “sixteen dollars a month and found—hire by the month, can come back when you choose, only asks you to take me to the city where I can settle for the winter. Do as you like after that, you 'd have two or three months'

good wages, and a chance to see the world." These suggestions told. Heman and Urias saw in the offer for three months the money to build the longed-for shop.

"I could bring back forty dollars," said Heman, "I could n't use more than eight dollars, even with my ticket back, if all 's found. I 'll be back before the first of November, in time for the best work here—mebbe I 'd better go. I do want to do something, Uncle 'Rias."

In fact Heman was homesick, lonely, restless, and a great craving to see the world had come suddenly upon him. There was *boy* enough in Uncle 'Rias to sympathize with this restless craving, and he began to argue the case in Heman's behalf.

"Dr'exy, there ai n't nuthin' so right down bad for a boy as havin' nuthin' to do ; to be cravin' to earn when he can't earn. And, D'rexy, all boys want to see the world some. I went to Boston, New York, an' Philadelphly ; it stands to reason that Heman, not having been ever twenty miles from home, wants to see suthin' too. He 'll be back by time snow flies. I say, let him go."

D'rexy, however, was set against the whole project. "He 'll get sick and die far away from us. He 'll have cholera, or small pox, or yellow-fever, or plague, or something."

Heman, who could not remember a day of illness, laughed this prognostication to scorn.

Aunt D'rexy insisted. "He's never had scarlet-fever, or diphtery, or measles, or whooping-cough, and once you let him go out permiscuous, he'll get 'em all. Them show people are a bad lot, they cheat, lie, swear, and break Sabbath. Heman will be among those who do n't fear God nor regard man: the first Psalm is dead against all such companying—and so's all the Epistles."

"You're mistaken. D'rexy, this Cripps is n't half bad; I never heard him swear or talk rough; he appears real square, and he says he do n't do a thing but rest Sundays."

Cripps was brought to the house to reinforce these good opinions, but Aunt D'rexy said that she did n't take to him a mite; he looked "part wolf, part fox, and all rat" to her.

Heman then undertook to persuade her. "Aunt D'rexy, if I find that they swear and cheat and break Sunday, I'll come home. I'll act just as I was brought up to act: I will, true! You do n't know how much we need money for that shop! You can't guess how mean I feel not earning a thing when I've cost you such a terrible lot of money, and eat so much!"

"Cost us money!" cried Aunt D'rexy amazed. "Why no, you have n't."

“ Oh, but I have. Just think, you could n't feed and clothe me, shoes and all that, and school books, for less than a hundred a year—and you've been at it twelve years, ever since I was three, and that's twelve hundred. Think of all I've cost you breaking, forgetting, and spoiling things, and all the sewing and washing's been worth; why, oceans of money, indeed, Aunt D'rexy, and I feel like a pauper doing nothing day in and out.”

Heman waxed eloquent, he wanted to go; he thought to sit on high, driving a van with two big horses, through the sunny summer landscape, would be joy. He loved horses and had driven for years; for five months he had missed a horse so much! Oh, to go, to do, to see, to be, something!

As usually happens, the woman, whether she was in the right of it or not, was talked down. The bargain was made, strictly by the week, and in the presence of the “Scientific Show Man” whose knowledge of microscopes and large words greatly impressed Urias.

On a Tuesday in August, Heman, with his clothes in a big faded carpet-sack, set out to see the world. His size, strength and knowledge of horses and tools, had made him welcome in the eyes of Dan Cripps, who did not believe there was a boy in creation whom he could not dom-

inate and corrupt. However, he had to reckon now with steadfast Christian training.

It was the third day out before Cripps began to show the cloven foot. "Hullo there, boy; did you take in this quarter? Do n't you know anything? That's counterfeit. Here, you get it off first change you make to-night at the door. Mind you do n't make trouble by offering of it to a man; pass it to a woman or a kid."

"Why, if it's bogus I can't pass it at all."

"You can—do it quick; you say 'here's your change,' an shoves 'em along. If they comes back on you, you stares an sez, 'I never gave you that, never see it before.' Then *I* comes to the rescue, an I sing out, 'Pass on—do n't block the way, do 'nt hinder the show; do n't try to palm off your counterfeits on us!' see!"

"No!" answered Heman, "I do n't see that I'm going to work off bad money."

"You took it in, you've *got* to work it off," cried Cripps.

"I did take it in," said Heman ruefully, "and I s'pose I owe you for it. There, there's a good quarter. Give me that other," and before Cripps knew what he meant to do, he sent it whirling far off into a field.

"Well, you *are* a nincompoop," said Cripps.

Aunt Espey had given Heman fifty cents, so he should not go forth in the world penniless,

half of it was now gone. Heman began to see a queer side of show life, and Cripps began to have his doubts.

The first Sunday out Cripps woke up his establishment at four o'clock in the morning. "Turn out there. It's a hot day, and we'll have to go slow, we'll make D—— by five o'clock. Turn out; feed the monkeys, harness up, while I get breakfast."

Of course Heman expected to feed the animals on Sunday but not to drive all day; so he protested. "I say, I'm not to work Sunday. You said you did n't. I'm not going to drive, I'm going to church. Did you forget it was Sunday, Mr. Cripps?"

"Forget! Well, Lightning and Red Peppers! *Ain't* we advertised to show at D—— to-morrow? Say, ai n't we?"

"I do n't know. If we are, what did you do it for? I wont go."

"You wont! I'll make you," cried Cripps, seizing a tent-pin and running at Heman. Heman skipped aside, caught up a camp-chair as shield and weapon, and full of fury roared,

"Come on; let's see who beats in this game. I'm more a man than such a skimpy thing as you are!"

As by enchantment the other show people of two or three vans, turned out to "see the fun,"

and "Go it, kiddy!" "You're matched, Cripps!" broke the Sabbath morning quiet. "You do n't break *that* kid's arm." "You wont bruise *him* up much," were words addressed to Cripps, that let in floods of light on Heman's mind.

"I'll leave you and go myself," said Cripps. "What 'll you do?"

"Well, I'll walk on after you to-night; catching what rides I can, or I'll turn round and work toward Windle."

In fact Heman longed to hurry back to Windle. But to go without a cent, to confess defeat so soon when he had seen so little! And then the days were beautiful; the new country was beautiful. Cripps set about getting breakfast, and Heman fed the animals. Suddenly Cripps came pleasantly to Heman, saying, "I ought to have told you why I had to hurry to D—. I do n't travel Sunday as a rule. I do n't want to. I could start at eleven or twelve to-night an' get to D— time to show up to-morrow; but you see, fact is, my old mother at D— is dreadful sick—likely to die—an' I got a telegram from her before I woke you up, sayin' to hurry on or I'd not see her alive. A man does want his mother's good-by blessin' you know. That's what made me mad, you bein' so unchristian as not to help me get to her. Then I see you was all right, cause I had n't showed you the tele-

gram. Here 't is;" and Cripps took out a strip of yellow paper. Says, "Come quick—or she'll be gone." *She's* a good woman; *she'd* stand by you not workin' Sundays. *She* brought me up well."

"Well—of course—sickness and dying—that makes a difference."

"All the difference in the world. It's not show work, but a poor dyin' Christian mother—that's what it is," urged Cripps.

Heman drove all that hot Sunday towards D—, and when they reached the place where show tents were set up, Cripps began to tear about to establish himself. "Leave that to me," said Heman. "Hurry to see your sick mother."

Then did Dan Cripps execute an Indian war dance, and being a little drunk he whooped and laughed and slapped his legs and triumphed greatly.

"I fooled you fine! Mother! Mother! Never had one as I knows of. Dying! Good folks! Oh, ai n't you easy gulled! Fish that bite bare hooks! Did n't I game you!"

Whereupon Heman in great fury marched off, washed and combed at a railroad station, attended evening church, and did not resume the society of the jubilant Cripps until the next day.

The Cripps show consisted of two vans. One held the monkeys and was driven by Heman: the other conveyed the tent, household goods, and other properties, and was in charge of Cripps. Cripps slept in that van, and Heman, who was disgusted with Cripps, the bedding, the whole outfit, slept outside under the van or under the tent if it happened to be up. A blanket and the earth made good enough bed for the sturdy Heman those August nights. The second Sunday out one of the horses was crippled, and Heman was detailed to delay and bring the animal on after a day's rest. Cripps failed to leave him any food or money to get it. The third Sunday they lay over at a place where a Saturday night show had been given, and two days more were to be spent. The fourth Sabbath morning at three o'clock the vans drew up at a watering-place where a month was to be passed.

By this time Heman had found Cripps to be all that Aunt D'rexy's fancy had painted him, cheating, profane, dirty, false, idle, drunken. Never was a boy so heartsick of an affair as Heman of show life. Not a cent had been paid him; he was far from home, without a penny; the six addressed postal-cards Aunt Espey had provided were used up; Heman had to wash his own clothes, had no bed but the ground or the

van top, no food but the coarse daily meals prepared by Cripps. Oh, the horrible venture! Oh, the heart-sickness of Aunt D'rexy's boy, turned showman! All Sunday morning, boards rattled, hammers banged, show people vociferated, and animals made the sounds with which nature had gifted them. The booth next to Cripps was held by the "Scientific Show Man," the second by a new party on whose booth was displayed "Wonders of the World," "Biggest Lady ever Known," "Smallest Man," "The Bearded Marvel." As Cripps worked at his show alone, Heman having wandered off as soon as the animals were fed, the proprietor of the "Biggest Lady" questioned:

"You alone? Where's your helper?"

"He wont work Sundays. Pious kind."

"What?"

"Oh, it's true. Feeds, but wont show nor set up. Can't make him."

"Kind of unhandy," said the Scientific showman."

"It is," said Cripps, with conviction, "but being genuine it has advantages. He don't steal the door money. I can leave him to take it. He don't sell the horses' oats for drinks; he don't worry the monkeys sick to get even with me."

"Cripps is afraid of him," said the Scientific

showman. "He sees he can't lick him. You ought to see him try it one day. The boy laid Cripps flat. Says he, 'If ever you lay a hand on me again, Cripps, I'll knock you down, and leave;' that's what he said."

The show people laughed loudly. The proprietor of "Biggest Lady in the World" remarked, "Such a boy has no business in a show," and the "Biggest Lady's" mother, a neat, worn, mild woman added, "No; it'll be the spoilin' of a good lad; and good lads ain't plenty in *this* world;" speaking as if she had had experience of some world where good lads grew thick as plantain.

The "Biggest Lady's" mother and proprietor shook their heads mournfully, and as they set their affairs in order meditated much on the absent boy, the anomalous "good boy" at a show, the "good boy, who had muscle and showed fight, and took care of himself generally."

Heman was n't in church by any means. He felt too dirty and disreputable to go to church. Day after day he had driven in dust and heat, night after night he had slept out of doors; he had had no opportunity for a thorough good wash, his hair needed cleaning and cutting; he had not a shirt fit to wear to church, for he had been his own laundress for a month.

When dressed for the show he wore a suit, and a tall cap of blue, scarlet, and much tinsel, sash, feathers and red shoes, show properties, that by this time his soul loathed more than the Israelites their "light bread."

Now they were by the sea, Heman, after dark came out of the woods where he had lain all day with nothing to eat but a few crackers, some wintergreen leaves and a handful of late blackberries, and for an hour luxuriated in a sea bath. His hair and skin were clean at last!

When Heman appeared the next day in his due place as factotum of Dan Cripps' show, he was regarded with some curiosity by the owners of the near booths. A "good boy" in show life was more of a wonder than any sight on the placards, and a "boy who could down Dan Cripps" was naturally regarded with favor by all Dan's enemies, that is, by all who knew him.

The mother and proprietor of the "Biggest Lady" were honest, kindly people, and regarded Heman with a commiseration which quickly grew into a resolve to get him out of his unfortunate business. Acquaintance progressed quickly; he was heart-sick and was at an age when the social nature is well developed, and boys respond readily to kindly advances—an age which Christian people should consider and not let slip by unused, if they wish to cap-

ture the boy for goodness. On Tuesday Heman was invited to tea by the "mother;" on Wednesday to dinner. The eating, as compared with D'rexy's cooking, left much to be desired; as compared with Dan Cripps' concoctions it was simply sumptuous.

The booths as now arranged had some kind of a compact by which the shows were open in succession, or two or three at a time for half an hour each, thus giving the public opportunity to pass from one to another. Cripps thus found unoccupied seasons when he could get a sleep, a drink, a smoke; and Heman could meditate upon his situation, show favors to his neighbors, or omit the other booths. One afternoon he strolled into the booth where the "Scientific Manipulator," as he styled himself, was exhibiting to some colored people the marvels of the microscope.

The "Manipulator" was fresh from London, where he had given street exhibitions for years. Gloomy as Heman now was, he could not fail to laugh as he stood listening to the lecture.

"Look through that glass," said the Manipulator, "them wot you see is cheese mites; you'll observe that they are as big as black beetles; *them's* what you eats by 'undreds when you indulges in old cheese. Look through the next glass an' wot you sees is King John, and a werry

bad feller he were—a signin' Magner Charter. Next glass is a flea, a live one; don't be skert, he can't get out. Shake the hobjec' glass, sirs, an' you'll see him kick out his legs distinctly, and the size of a lobster. Look through the next glass, gemmen *and* ladies, though it ain't no bigger nor a pin's 'ead, it is clear an' plain, the death of Lord Nelson with all his crew gathered weepin' about 'im; an' there's a 'im says,

“ 'Ow blest the righteous when he dies!

Remember that.”

On Saturday evening late, Cripps having gone to bed, Heman noticed a gentleman and lady walking slowly among the booths, and stopping to talk with those of the show people who were yet up. “The Biggest Lady” in the world had been seated in the front of her booth, all the curtains being drawn up and her mother engaged in fanning her, for the “biggest lady” was a most uncomfortable creature. The strangers looked at her with commiseration, and Ware, the proprietor, as show time was over and these were “nice people,” such as he did not often see, entered readily into a monologue.

“She ain't got much intellect, or what they calls brains—it all ran to fat. No: I don't belong to the Fat Lady's Family; her mother's a real nice woman, so was her father, 'till he was

killed in the engine-yard, and could n't get no damages. Well, they had to eat, a fat lady like that eats a great deal, and wears a great deal, there ain't a small thing about her. She needs a heap of care, being so fat, and her mother could n't give her the care and earn her way. I kind o' fell into the show life, nursing and doing for a show-man whose back got broke, and he left me the show. Jest then I was out of work, and my sister was left a widdy with four children. Three years ago that was; so I proposed to the Fat Lady's mother to add the fat lady to the show, and we'd do the best we could for all concerned. Soon as them children gets schooled and taught trades, I do n't run no more show. 'T ai n't the life I hanker after."

The "fattest lady," arrayed in a stagy blue satin, reclined panting in an enormous crimson chair; her mother fanned her with a huge "turkey-tail" fan. The fat lady made a miserable little moaning sound, and the proprietor, diving under a little counter, produced, after some rattling, a teacup of ice cream and a tin spoon. These presented to the fat lady appeared microscopic in her enormous hand, and appeased her woes for a little, as she ate it with lady-like mincing.

"We have to feed it to her constant," said the proprietor sighing.

Suddenly the lady shook an ineffectual fist towards a hand-organ which was dealing largely in repetitions of F sharp. The ice cream was gone, the music held on, and the fattest lady burst into tears, her face convulsed like that of an angry child.

"Oh, how that organ do tease Maggie!" said the mother. "She can't abear it!"

"Stop that there noise, you're hurting of my fat lady," cried the proprietor towards the organ-grinder. "Move on; it's too late for music, and it do wear a fat lady out terrible to be teased and aggervated after sitting all day before an admiring public. Fourteen hours she have sat. It's only reasonable for her to be let alone, or exhibit nerves if she ai n't let alone."

"I'm trying to amuse her," said the organ-grinder.

"She's tired of music, and she's taking on tremengeous," said the proprietor. "You quit it, or I'll be obliged to break your head. I'm doing the fair thing by this Lady: nineteen, she is, and life's a burden. She's like other folks I've seen, life's a burden, but she has to go on living it. Oh, ai n't it wearing to have to carry 'round a fat lady! It's worse on her mother than on me. She has to bathe and dress her twice a day. The work to get her in and out of bed, and on and off a train, is beyond

tongue to tell. She's genuine, no make-up about her, she is the biggest in the whole world. Genuine article, she takes the cake and the whole baking, too. She's making faces at you to go away."

The strangers moved away, so did Heman. The lady turned to him.

"You don't look as if you belonged about these shows. Do n't stay with them. Have you no home to go to? Oh, if you have, go!"

"I have a home and a good one. If I live till Monday I'll go back," said Heman resolutely. "I've had enough of this."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAKINGS OF A HERO.

“Dream not helm and harness
The tests of valor true;
Peace hath higher tests of manhood
Than valor ever knew.”

SCARCELY had Heman settled himself for the night behind Cripp's tent, than a dark figure was seen stealing around there, and the “Proprietor's” voice called,

“You Boy!”

“Hello!” said Heman, crawling out of the empty van.

“Boy, you ai n't in the right place. Me and the Lady's mother have been talking you over. You're a decent lad, not fitten for show life, and it will make a scoundrel of you, like as not. We don't ask how you come into it. Mebby you thought it was high and mighty, all kings and queens and play. Or, mebby you got mad at something, ran away from home, and took the first thing you could find.”

“No, I did n't. Uncle 'Rias and I needed 'bout fifty dollars to build our shop, and I was out of work, so he let me come.”

"Well, you won't get no fifty dollars outen this, I tell you."

"Cripps promised me sixteen dollars a month and found."

"Hoo! He was guying of you. He'll never give it. Could n't do it if he wanted to; he don't take it in."

"I was only going to stop three months, but I've made up my mind to leave now. I've been with him a month Monday; he has to pay me and I'll go. Aunt D'rexy made me promise to come right back if he turned out swearing, drinking, cheating, and all that, and he has turned out all of it. I'm just sick of the dirt, the noise, the lowness of the thing! I was ashamed to-night when that lady looked at me as belonging to it! I'd have gone before, only I had n't a cent, and I could n't beg my way home."

"You'd better beg it, or crawl it on your hands and knees, than stay in such a show. I wonder at your uncle! What's he like?"

"First-rate," said Heman, "only he always lived in the country, and did n't know; and he's lost his leg lately and can't walk. We lost the farm, too—all the troubles came at once."

"Mighty bad that, but losing decency and turning out a rascal will be a power worse. You light out Monday. Cripps won't pay you.

he 'll try and keep your things, rather. I know him."

"He won't try that game on me very long," said Heman sturdily.

Early on Monday morning Heman informed Cripps that he wanted his sixteen dollars, and was going home. As had been predicted, Cripps flew in a rage, danced, swore, threatened, held the big bag and its contents, and refused to pay a cent. He stood in the booth door laughing and triumphing as Heman walked off. Heman, however, had read the newspapers at home, and had heard the talk of sensible people. He walked up into the centre of the town and asked for the office of a magistrate.

Entering, he found the very gentleman who had been walking among the booths Saturday night. The gentleman was at leisure, for it was early, and Heman told his story in a frank, boyish way, the home troubles, his foolish desire to see the world, the glamor of the show, the bargain, the miserable disappointment, Cripps' refusal to pay wages, the holding of his small belongings.

Said the magistrate: "We 'll see about that. As for going home you're right. You've made a grand mistake; let it suffice you. Face about. Get home, and never again think that you can do better in a wandering life than in a decent

home, no matter how poor it is. I'll make out a writ and summon Cripps at once. You sit here, it wont take long to bring him. I know him of old."

Cripps was still hilarious at "getting the better of that boy," when a constable appeared with a potent strip of paper requiring the presence of Cripps at the magistrate's office to answer the charge of nefariously withholding wages and property from one Heman Leslie. Cripps' jaw fell. Go he must. He went. The other Booth Folk now did the laughing. The case was soon heard. Heman had as witness to the bargain the Scientific Manipulator, who testified unwillingly, in fear of Cripps; he also stated that the pay promised was too large, and beyond Cripps' ability to pay.

Finally the magistrate condemned Cripps, under penalty of having his license revoked, to pay Heman ten dollars, and to give him his bag of clothing. To assure this, the constable was directed to walk back to the booth with the pair, and see to the payment and the delivery of the property.

Having thus triumphed openly, Heman was very curt and lofty, and *looked* his advantage at the raging Cripps. The "proprietor" followed him a little way from the booth and thus addressed him:

"I'm glad you're going, boy, and don't you ever get into such a place as this again if you have any respect for yourself, which I think you have. There's no train going out your way betwixt now and eight this evening. My advisement to you is to get out of town as quick as you can. You've got what you wanted, now go. Cripps is the kind of man would as lief waylay you, or sandbag you as not. He'd like to get that money back. Better get out."

"So I think," said the constable. "It's no good provoking quarrels. You were in the right, and you've got your rights. Don't hang 'round here all day. You're stout, keep the line of the railroad and walk ahead. More you walk less ticket you'll need to buy. Now I think of it, the hand-car of the section repair men is on the track, and will be running five or six miles up the road soon. My brother's boss of the gang. Come along, and I'll ask him to let you ride with him that far."

Heman thanked both his advisers, and went with the constable in search of the hand-car. He had in his pocket three dimes which he had earned helping show-people during the week, these he laid out in a loaf of bread, some cheese, and a slice of ham, for luncheon. The section-boss gave him a six-mile ride up the track, and about noon, Heman, with his back to show life

and his face toward home, walked gaily along the track. How foolish his leaving home seemed; how wicked his unrest; why had he not trusted God better; why not wait with patience when one cannot find work for every day? There is always something one can do, even if one cannot always get paid. Surely he had sinned in leaving a Christian home to go with a godless man like Cripps. Aunt D'rexy was right as usual.

Whistling and singing he went his way: now and then he rested: he ate some of his bread and cheese and found himself considering if he *could* get home with ten dollars intact. No: for to walk would take most of the autumn, and home, not the highways, was the place for him.

As the afternoon wore on his bag grew heavy. About four o'clock he overtook a chicken-merchant in trouble; a box had fallen from his cart, broken open, and the chickens had escaped. He-man, knowing the ways of both chickens and boxes, helped to catch the one and mend the other. The man then invited him to ride as far as his house, and take supper.

At six he was on his way again after a three-mile ride and a good meal. As it grew dusk and he wondered where to go, he saw an enormous iron pipe some three feet in diameter, lately laid in what was evidently in heavy rains the bed of a stream. The short pipe served to safely carry

the water under the embankment of the railroad, but was newly laid, and the season being very dry, no water had entered it. A sudden vision of the pipe as a cosy sleeping-place rushed upon Heman. Not a house was in sight; he was tired; darkness drew on. Full of delight in his plan he hastily cut a quantity of tall weeds to pile at one end of the pipe for a wind screen: then he trimmed off branches from cedars and junipers growing near the road, enough for a fragrant bed inside the cylinder; his carpet sack served for a pillow; he gathered fuel for a fire at the mouth of his bedroom, and heated several large stones against which, as he lay down, he put his stockinged feet. He slept without a stir or a dream. In the morning he went to a pool up the runlet and took a good wash; then he brushed his hair and clothes, polished his shoes with mullein leaves, lit a fire and made a breakfast of toasted bread and ham. This one delightful day he would give to walking, the next he would board a train and hurry home.

At noon he asked a woman living near the road to allow him to cut wood for her for the sake of a dinner. This secured him a good meal. At three o'clock, hearing a train coming up behind him, he seated himself on a boulder to watch it pass. It was a long stock train. It was just past Heman, when he saw the great side-

door of one of the central cars sway out, as if opened from within; it gave way, and a white avalanche of sheep came tumbling out, some rolling, some leaping, some going head first, some lying as they fell, some dashing wildly about. The train did not slacken speed, but Heman saw some of the men come from the caboose, run along the car-tops, climb down to the open car, and apparently secure it. Presently the train was out of sight, and Heman was alone on the track, no house or person in view, and a group of thirty protesting, complaining sheep, making loud cries. Heman was very fond of sheep, and had handled them all his life. He ran to these unfortunates, calling them with familiar sounds. He found one large one dead, one with a broken leg, two or three seeming to have sprained shoulders, and several with gashes cut by falling on stones. The sheep had tumbled over the embankment into the cut, which was steep on the railroad side, but sloped up, green and inviting on the other side to a high fence. A large pile of worn-out ties was near, ready for burning. Heman with these ties built a fence from the embankment to the rail fence; this enclosed a grassy place and a little stream in the bottom of the cut. Then he carried the sheep with the broken leg to a soft, grassy fence corner, whittled out some splints, and tearing a big

gingham handkerchief into bandages set and bound the leg. The cut sheep were then seen to ; he trimmed away the wool, washed the cuts and dressed them with some famous salve of Aunt Espey's, a box of which she had put into his bag. The sprained shoulders were rubbed, and the sheep generally petted and called together. Then Heman built a fourth side for his fold, and arranged for a fire just outside of it. He concluded that he must stay and see to these sheep, which would no doubt be sent for next day. In his zeal he cut and pulled armfuls of green things growing along the cut, and provided his proteges with a supper. He made his own supper of the last food he had with him. Night having come he built a little booth as a shelter for himself, and was thinking what a fine sleep he would have when he heard from afar the howling of a dog. That meant a deal to Heman. If he fell asleep a dog would very likely come and worry the sheep—some would be killed. It would be easy enough with a good club, or torch, to keep the dogs off to begin with—not so easy to drive them off once they had tasted blood. Evidently if Heman meant to do the fair thing by those sheep he must keep awake all night on guard! That was hard lines for a sleepy boy, but with only a few tiny naps taken leaning against the fence, He-

man kept his watch. Morning found him cold, hungry, and tired. The chill was remedied by a fire; then, oh joy! a boy of twelve or thirteen came along. Heman told his tale without mentioning how he himself came to be there, and offered the boy the dead sheep, which was perfectly fit for food as it had broken its neck. "I'll help you carry it as far as I can toward your home if you'll go and get me a breakfast," said Heman. "I'm nearly starved. The sheep's skin will be worth considerable."

"If you'll help me take it to that lane, and watch it while I fetch a wheel-barrow for it I'll bring you a breakfast. My mother'll take to your doings, sitting up all night to keep sheep! Well, you did right, for there's dreadful sheep-killers round here of dogs."

About ten o'clock another cattle-train came up. Freight and passenger cars, express and accommodation had come and gone, this train evidently had an errand, it slowed and stopped, and soon the conductor, engineer, and hands were out interviewing Heman—and the sheep.

"We were ordered to pick 'em up, all that was alive. Why, they're all alive, and penned in and taken care of! Who did it?"

Heman explained his presence, stated the case of the dead sheep, and exhibited his surgery on the others. "I'm glad you've come. I

ought to be going on," he said, and told of his journey.

"Hullo there!" cried the conductor, "come aboard. We 'll land you eight miles from Winkle to-morrow morning, and you can eat with us. You 've saved the company quite a lot of money. I 'll give you your board, and trip and five dollars, if that will suit you."

Heman indicated that that would suit him excellently well. He slept until next morning, except when he was roused to eat.

The conductor, a fatherly man, gave him some good advice about eschewing show life, and working at an honest trade near home. "That Shumanite in the Bible," he said, "showed a power of sense when she said, 'I dwell among my own people.' Kings and courts were not her style of living; her home and her home ways suited her, and if you 're level-headed, my boy, your home ways will suit you."

Heman found himself, about noon, near the farm of old friends. He was warmly welcomed, ate dinner, changed his shirt, blacked his shoes, and put on his best tie. He did not wish to go home in the guise of the prodigal son!

He felt as if he could fly over those two miles after leaving the farm. All three of his family seemed to see him at once. D'rexy, with a cry of glad relief, hugged him close; Aunt Espey

seized his hand and called down blessings on him. Uncle Urias shouted, slapped his shoulders, and pounded with his crutch. There had not been such a jubilation in the Sinnet household for years.

“Oh, bless the dear Lord that sent you back,” said D'rexy, “this is what I've been praying for!”

“They were a vile, bad lot,” said Heman, “and I came away.”

“It was all my fault, I should n't have let you go,” said Urias.

“We can't build the shop, I've only got fifteen dollars,” said Heman.

“Yes, we can build the shop right off; a man that had owed me twenty-five dollars till it was outlawed, came and paid it,” said Urias, “we'll build the shop next week.”

“The minister was scandalized that we let you go,” said Aunt Espey, “and he meant to write you to come home at once. We needed you.”

“You must have some dinner,” cried Urias. “It's all my fault.”

“I've had dinner; all I want is to talk, to look at you all, to hear you all, to tell you all. Oh, Aunt D'rexy, after the farm this place looked so mean and little, but when I was in that show it looked like heaven or a palace! I

have n't had a decent bed, or a decent wash, or clean clothes, or a real nice meal since I left."

Uncle 'Rias beat his head and his breast with his fists, as if he were saying, "for my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault." Then Heman sat between his two aunts, while he told the story of his month in a peripatetic show. He was the hero of the hour.

"Oh, right the minister was," cried Urias, "to say we were risking your life and your morals for a little money. Oh, right he was, saying that I was setting money above morals and fair-mindedness toward D'rexy. Well, I've got my lesson. We have n't one of us smiled since you went, Boy. Such a ditty as you told us I never heard before, nor did I know that there were such an unchristian lot of raps callions on this earth. Back you are, in a Christian home, if 'tis humble, and there's no place like it, as the song says."

Beautiful evening that, an evening out of a fairy tale; Heman and Urias built the shop in words several times, and then Heman and Aunt D'rexy planned never to part again.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT THE HAND FINDETH TO DO—DO.

“Onward, upward may we press
Through the path of duty;
Virtue is true happiness
Excellence true beauty.
Minds are of supernal birth;
Let us make a heaven of earth.”

WHEN “the minister” heard that Heman had forestalled his threatened summons and had come home, he quickly called him to come and take tea with him. A big dish of fruit stood on the study table, and with some cheery remarks Heman was set at ease and directed to help himself. Then somehow he began to talk freely, and to tell of his show life experiences. Afterwards Heman wondered that he had spoken so openly, and told his adventures so unrestrainedly: he feared the minister would think him presuming. He had no idea that quietly and thoroughly the minister, with the trained judgment of a mature mind, was investigating the opinions and experiences of the boy. He wished to know if the innocence, frankness and reverence of the country boy had suffered harm in his wanderings. Gently, imperceptibly the man won from the lad the frank

expression of his thoughts, and he smiled his inward gratification to find that the child of his church had not morally deteriorated. In fact the surly meanness of Dan Cripps had been a safeguard to Heman; it was pleasanter to dwell alone, or to consort with the horses and monkeys than to endure Dan. Heman had been driven in on his own company, his memory, his observations. The minister was well content.

“Your going, my boy,” he said, “was a wrong move; you ran a tremendous risk of moral ruin; when we have made a mistake in life we should gather what good we can from it, and I think decency, simplicity, purity, integrity, home-life will always shine fairer to you, as you contrast it with the show. Sometimes we don’t know when we are well off until we are ill off. Your uncle Sinnet is a good man: he has much of that child-heartedness which inherits the kingdom of heaven. He has a great fault, nurtured by the straits of his early life. He sets far too high a value on money, on the possession of property. Not content with what comes from the daily pursuit of his proper occupation he has always been grasping after profits far beyond the value of an investment; always dreaming of much from little or nothing. Association with him and the losses you have lately met; have roused in you a similar greed for

gain. It led you astray, as it has led Mr. Sinnet into continuous losses. Every indication of Providence seems to point that Urias is not called to wealth, but to a modest enough. He has the promise that he shall never beg, that bread shall be given and water shall be sure. God says to many, as to his ancient servant, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not, saith the Lord.' The plain directions of Divine Providence seemed to appoint Urias his humble, happy home, safe, sufficient. Covetousness has been his ruin. Now, Heman, you have had a lesson early; follow safe, honest open ways of making a living; earn honorably, spend wisely. If God leads you into wider paths, follow them; only be sure it is his leading. If he keeps you in the simple round, the common task, fulfil it with singleness of heart as unto God. 'Better the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire.' Now, that's advice, and a little private sermon. Tell me what you propose to do since you are at home again."

"Uncle 'Rias and I mean to start on building a shop right away. We've money enough for lumber, doors, windows, and nails. We'll have it on the southwest, with one door going into the kitchen so we can get some heat that way. I'm going to get every bit of day's work

I can, and work at the shop when I've nothing else to do. I'll have work in the orchards, wood-lots, and corn fields pretty soon."

"Lawyer Brace will want a boy to light his office fire and keep the office clean this winter after the first of November; I can get you that place. Our church will also want some one to build fires in the stoves Sunday, and on Wednesday evenings, and to sweep, dust, cut kindling and clean the steps on Saturday. I think you could do that well, Heman; you are thorough in what you undertake. Those two places would bring you three dollars a week. After November first I want you to take those two places, and what Saturday work you have time for beside, and go to school during the week. We shall have a very excellent teacher here, from November until June, Mr. George Renfrew; you need a winter more of study, Heman, you need to study history, grammar and book-keeping."

Heman did not like study. He had taken considerable pride and pleasure in the thought that "he was done going to school." Uncle 'Rias was largely to blame for this. However, Heman's little journey into the world had taught him that ignorance is the mother of vice and poverty: in proportion to one's ignorance it is hard to make a living; the man who knows

something well is the man wanted. There are degrees of excellence in all labor, from ditch digging to pleading a case in the Supreme Court, and in every line of labor we find the skilled and the unskilled workman; the excellence of knowing something had grown upon Heman. "Book-keeping" had a pleasant business-like sound. Yes, he would like to know how to keep books; history he had always liked well, and as for grammar he "could stand it," although he did not yearn after further knowledge of its mysteries. It was needful to assent to the minister's proposals; Heman felt that he and Uncle 'Rias had been making themselves rather foolish lately, and it behooved them to re-habilitate themselves. Aunt D'rexy and Espey were highly delighted with the minister's plan; they discussed it at the supper table. Uncle 'Rias shook his head over "school" and "grammar," but said nothing; Urias had made many mistakes lately, and was beginning to distrust himself as adviser and manager. Aunt Espey said, "What the world wants, Heman, is honest men that will do some kind of honest work, in a thorough, honest way. It doesn't so much matter what the work is. Good faithful hand-work is what is needed, and the better it is done the more valuable the man is. The more he knows the more good

he can do. I s'pose nobody can know all the learning there is in the world," added simple Aunt Espey, "so I think a man had better pick into the kind he can use best, and get all he can of it."

"Yes," said Heman slowly; "but—you see—I do know a good deal about horses, and if I had n't I should not have gone off with Cripps. Maybe that knowing did me more harm than good."

"Never mind, Heman," said Aunt D'rexy, "I thank God with all my heart you're back; but maybe that experience will do you good. God leads his own in strange paths sometimes; but he leads them home. It's all home track to his people."

Heman's knowledge of horses came into good use very suddenly in November. He had begun his duties in Mr. Brace's office, and as sexton, and was getting on well; he had begun school and liked the master, George Renfrew, heartily. Working hard one way or another all day long, when Heman went to bed in his clean little attic bedroom, he slept profoundly. But even the most tired boy, whose sleepy ear will fail to hear all the cry to get up of a morning, will rouse alert as a weasel to the tocsin of fire. So one night, a cold November midnight, the clanging of a bell and a shrill scream of "fire"

brought Heman to his feet with a bounce, and he was falling into his shoes and trousers the while he saw through his little uncurtained gable window that the fire was two fields off at the house of the nearest neighbor, farmer Sloane, present owner of the Sinnet farm, and breeder of fine stock. The bell ringing was the bell in the Sloane stock-yard, the shouts were from those one or two late passers-by who seem to be always at night on even the loneliest roads. Heman reflected that farmer Sloane was away from home, and that the head stable man had a broken leg. Heman was speeding over the fields toward the red light almost before he knew he was awake. He buttoned his thick jacket and pulled his knit cap over his ears as he ran. The night was cold. It was the smoke-house that was burning. Curing hams and bacon had begun at the Sloane farm. The night was clear, there was a high wind, and it blew directly from the smoke-house to the stable, where were the best horses. Already the fence had caught and the fire was sweeping along, and people were tearing down fence and calling for wet quilts to cover a big straw stack. Water was plenty, but there was no force pump that would throw it high up: the little antiquated engine of Windle was always at the point farthest from the fire! Only a few had yet gathered,

the second stable man was in a stupid dazed condition, suggestive of hard cider, and the stable boy had given himself leave to go to a husking party. The stable was locked. No one knew where the keys were, and as Heman reached the scene a big flame burst up on the barn roof. In a few minutes the hay in the loft would be ablaze, the place filled with smoke and dropping wisps of fire. The horses were snorting and plunging, there were several of considerable value in that stable. A couple of axes broke the doors open, but the rearing horses refused to leave the stalls; they screamed and held back in terror, for the open doors looked straight to the fire, and now a rain of small red flakes began in the stalls. Not a second was to be lost. Heman dashed into the loose box of the big bay, Guy, farmer Sloane's pride. As he rushed in he snatched a saddle from its peg, flung it across Guy's back, slipped a halter over his head, and mounted him in a flash. In such circumstances a saddle always composes a horse wonderfully, so does the knowledge that he has a rider. Guy ceased plunging, but trembled, as with starting eyes he looked at the fire momentarily increasing. Off went Heman's jacket and over the horse's head he wrapped it. A loud shout of joy went up, as, peaceable in the darkness, Guy yielded to Heman's hand and plunged

out of the stable into the crowd. Some one caught him as he came, Heman rolled to the ground, saddle in one hand, jacket in the other, and darted back into the stable while Guy was led off. Two neighbors were wrestling with a beautiful black mare with a colt at her side. She had knocked over one of her would-be rescuers, and her strength was set against the other as he tried to lead her out.

"Hold her a second!" screamed Heman, as he cast on the saddle, threw himself on, covered her eyes and shouted "Clear the way!"

The way had need to be cleared, for like an engine when the throttle valve is open, the fiery animal whinying for her foal, frenzied with smoke, heat, and the breath of flame in her nostrils, flung herself forward, scattering the crowd, knocking over one man, rousing wild shrieks from the women. The foal, not wise enough in life's dangers to be as terrified as his mother, and considering safety to be always at her side, raced along after her, with a little guiding of a man at each shoulder.

Once more Heman with saddle and jacket turned toward the barn, but now the loft was all a sea of fire, and a rain of fiery flakes half filled the place.

"Don't go in again, boy!" "Keep out!"
"You've done enough!"

But Heman darted on. A splendid white three-year-old, sleek as satin, moulded like a statue, the pride of the country, was in there, giving loud, pitiful trumpeting of fear. Heman could not let that beautiful creature be burned to death. Once more he was within the stable.

"Oh, God, hold up that roof three minutes more!" cried a woman wildly.

Heman could not put on the saddle, he sprang upon the feed-box, unhooked the halter and flung himself upon the back of the white horse. Thrown into clear relief by the flames that threatened his head, and great burning wisps of hay that loosened and fell through the rafters, Heman saw the crowd of people in the yard, and the spreading of the fire. He dragged his jacket over Snowflake's up-tossed head, turned him toward the door, struck him, gasped and tried to cry out. A dim cloud of smoke lit by lurid fire wrapped about them, tears poured from his eyes, he could see no more for pain, his chest felt as if bound with iron; it seemed hours, as blind and overcome he lay along the horse's neck. No more his long supple legs grasped the animal's body, his feeble hands could not guide him, the jacket fell to the floor, the awful scene smote the great round starting eyes of the horse, that affrighted swerved away; he reared with a scream, and Heman fell from his back

upon the floor, where fire seemed starting up in every direction.

But firemen and other helpers had now arrived, three stalwart men sprang in, one cast a coat over the horse's head, one called his name with gentle soothing, the third caught Heman by his arm and the neck of his shirt and dragged him out; the boy's hair and shirt were burning, and some one flung a bucket of water over him as he was pulled along.

The horses had been taken to a distant barn; some women carried Heman to the pump and began to sprinkle him and fan him as he lay unconscious.

"Poor D'rexy! If the boy dies it will be more 'n she can bear," said one.

"The Lord spare him, he is a noble boy," said another.

The doctor and schoolmaster George Renfrew came in haste.

"It is the smoke and heat he has inhaled has overcome him," said the doctor. "We must get him home. Poor boy, his shoulder is pretty well blistered. Tell some of the men to bring along a shutter and carry him. Renfrew, you run ahead and tell Mrs. Sinnet, and mind you say there's no danger, and he'll come out all right."

"Bring him into my house," cried Mrs.

Sloane. "We'll take care of him. Oh, the good boy, how he saved those horses. Won't Sloane be relieved to know they're safe!"

"He'd better be taken home, that's what D'rexy'd want, and she is a first-class nurse," said the doctor. "That's it, boys, don't hurt that shoulder. Give me your apron and a bowl of flour, Mrs. Sloane, to cover it up till I get him home."

When Heman was carried in to his own home all was quiet and prepared. Aunt Epsey and Aunt D'rexy were crying quietly, but none the less they had their wits about them. Aunt D'rexy's nice room was all ready for him, a roll of old linen, a clean night shirt, warm water, oil, whatever might be wanted, was at hand.

"I knew I could depend on your level head, Mrs. Sinnet," said the doctor. "Don't break your heart—he'll come round, he needs plenty of air, quiet, darkness. Here, wash the cinders out of his head and cut his hair, Aunt Epsey, while we get him undressed and that burn attended to. He's a hero, 'Rias, a hero, I tell you! Never saw a boy have better courage, or his wits about him better. Good, sound, common-sense, that's what he showed. He's a credit to the town. Finest boy I ever saw!"

Thus the doctor talked as he and the school-master worked at making Heman comfortable.

All night the family sat by the fire in the next room, while Master Renfrew fanned Heman and wet his lips, and the doctor continued to give them encouragement. About eight in the morning Heman woke up conscious. The doctor told Espey to feed him a little new milk as he needed it, to keep him in cool, fresh air, and let nobody speak to him.

“The horses are all right, and we’re all proud of you, boy,” said the doctor, “but you must n’t stir or speak for a while, we want to give you time to heal up your throat and lungs. Smoke has hurt you, as it has many other people; hope you’ve had enough of it to last you your lifetime.”

Having made his little joke the doctor went away. Heman was kept in bed for a week; the schoolmaster came to visit him every afternoon and read to him a book of Paul du Chaillu about the gorilla country, and his adventures there among black wild men and huge apes. Heman thought that pretty good reading.

The congratulations and praises that Heman received when he was about again overwhelmed him. Every one had a hand-shake and a good word. Not at all a shy boy, he was very modest, and to be the object of public comment and admiration made him wish that he could run away, and hide his head in the sand like an os-

trich. Some people said, "Mr. Sloane ought to do something for Heman," but neither Heman nor his family wanted reward for his gallant act of humanity. Neither did Mr. Sloane wish to give any reward: he was a close man, and liked to put off any remuneration to some distant period. He shook Heman's hand heartily, thanked him warmly, and said, "Now, my boy, remember, if there's ever a time I can do anything for you that you want done, come right to me and I wont refuse you. Here are these fellows for witnesses. What you ask me for—I'll do—if I can—if I can."

"I'll remember that," said Heman quietly.

CHAPTER X.

SITTING ON A RAIL-FENCE.

“ But at his desk he had the look
And air of one who wisely schemed,
And hostage of the future took,
In trained thought and lore of book ;
Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
Shall freedom's young apostles be.”

IF there had been other people living on that low acre near the railroad where the Sinnets had come to dwell, they would have heard very early in the winter mornings, before daylight, a boy singing and whistling. That was Heman, as by the gleam of a lantern he fed and milked the cows, fed the pig and chickens, and set the poor little barn in as neat order as if it had been the fine big barn where as a child he had played. After that there was wood to carry in to fill Aunt D'rexy's wood-boxes for the day, water-pails to be filled and set in a row ; and so off to lawyer Brace's office to kindle fires, sweep, and dust. When Heman came back from that work he must wash, change his working clothes for his school suit, and then have breakfast. After breakfast, putting on a canvas apron and pair of sleeves, Heman worked in the shop with Uncle 'Rias until the bell rang for school.

Thus far the shop had not been a very profitable venture, but as Aunt D'rexy and Heman said to each other, "it did 'Rias a power of good to have it, and made him feel as if he was doing something." 'Rias and Heman made stands, sleds, ironing-boards, clothes-racks, pie-boards, and other small wares, and ticketing them "*For Sale*," set them in front of the shop. One by one they were sold, and so trade was creeping up.

After school in the afternoon Heman was still busy: more milking and feeding; milk to carry to two or three families who bought their daily quart of Aunt D'rexy; wood to saw and split to keep the two or three fires going, for Aunt Espey's room must be heated, and sometimes the shop as well as the kitchen.

Heman was not condemned to "all work and no play." Many a merry evening he was off skating or coasting "with the other fellows." They had fires by the river bank, and baked potatoes and apples, or roasted chestnuts to be ready to warm them up when they were tired and cold.

Aunt D'rexy and Uncle 'Rias liked to talk; they carried the old neighborly country ways to town with them, and the boys were largely welcomed in the evening, the elders entering into the fun and gossip as heartily as any one. Some-

times they made molasses candy, or pop-corn balls, or nut-taffy.

Heman made a checker-board and a fox-and-geese board, and taught Uncle 'Rias these games. The boys who came in the evening played them also, and the schoolmaster showed them how to make a geography game, a history game, and a game of birds, which became very popular. At Christmas Heman earned a dollar by making fox-and-geese and checker boards. He felt almost the cares and interests of a millionaire as he laid out three shining quarters on Christmas presents for his "home folks," and divided the last one between the collections for the Sunday-school Christmas-tree and a present for the schoolmaster.

There was not in the village a boy more alert and jolly than Heman; it was poor work trying to condole with him. Fred Knapp tried it. He was leaning over the fence watching Heman at his evening work, which seemed to Fred interminable. "How *can* you whistle and sing over it, especially in the cold mornings when you have to turn out so early?" he asked.

"As long as I have to turn out, it would n't make it any easier to glump and gloom over it, would it? You would n't advise a fellow of my size to go crying and whining round, sucking his fingers to keep them warm, would you?"

"Oh, not *that*," admitted Fred; "but 'pears like I'd hate it so. I could n't be jolly over it the way you are."

"But I do n't hate it at all. I've been used to getting up early, and so long as I have sleep enough what would be the use staying in bed? I always worked, and I do n't see but I like it. When folks have to work it makes it easier to like it, and get out of it all the fun there is in it."

"I do n't see any fun in it," said Fred. "I think it is a real pity for you to have so much to do morning and night."

"Who would do it if I did n't?" demanded Heman wrathfully. "Would I leave it to Uncle 'Rias crippling round on a wooden leg? What kind of a fellow do you take me for, to see women folks carrying in wood and water, and milking, out in the cold? You talk about 'too bad.' I think when a man has a good home, good meals, some decent clothes, some friends, and knows where he belongs, he is pretty well off. I've seen people dragging about the country with none of these comforts, I can tell you."

When Heman took this tone, and alluded more or less darkly to his experience, his boy friends were full of awe and veneration. They had concocted many myths about the world as Heman had seen it. They had tales about the

tawny-haired Heman having lived for a month with an ex-penitentiary convict; that this ill-chosen comrade had tried highway robbery, and Heman had gallantly delivered his victim. They hinted to one another that Heman had carried on "a great lawsuit, and won it, sir, won it as you'd win a game of checkers, do n't you know?" It was said that Heman knew all about "circus men" and prestidigitateurs and their tricks, and could tell too, only he was deeply pledged never to unfold these dark arcana. When Heman was deferentially approached about these tremendous adventures, he laughed openly, showing all his strong white teeth, and said, "Sho! I never told such things as that; guess some of you fellows must have made it." All the same the boys believed it steadfastly, and felt sure that these denials were only a part of Heman's pledged secrecy. By reason of these legends and his big bulk Heman was rather a king among the boys.

One spring afternoon Heman, busy at his desk, suddenly asked leave to go away from school.

"Is it necessary?" asked George Renfrew reluctantly.

"Yes, sir," responded Heman promptly.

A little later the boys who sat where they could overlook Miss Polly Drew's place saw Heman over there, darting about, busily getting

in certain flocks of young chickens and callow broods of turkeys. Various significant winks, head-shakes, and pointed fingers conveyed information that Heman, instead of shining in the history class, was making Miss Polly's little place and poultry ready for a thunder-storm that was rapidly rolling up. As he ended his task he saw Bob Henden dashing along on his pony.

"Hello, Bob! As you go by Lincoln's, stop and tell Miss Polly Drew not to worry about her chickens and little turkies, because I've put 'em all up for her!" cried Heman.

"All right!" said Bob.

"I say, Heman," asked Fred, "what'd you do it for? You're real good in history, and you lost your marks going out of class to-day."

"Why I *had* to," said Heman; "I could n't let Miss Polly Drew lose all her poultry, could I? I saw the storm coming up, and I knew she was out at Lincoln's sewing. You see, Miss Polly makes a lot of her living out of her fowls—could n't let her lose 'em, of course. My, I know she was glad when Bob Henden told her they were all shut up right; Miss Polly makes her living by hard knocks. Aunt Espey says she's terrible thankful she is n't alone in the world, like Miss Polly."

"Yes, Miss Polly does have it hard; but say, Heman, why do n't you try for one of the prizes?"

The history one, say. You might as well get it as anybody, you're just as smart." Heman modestly admitted that he was n't deterred by any fears based on a lack of smartness, but explained :

"You see, Fred, I just came to school to learn a lot of things I needed to know. I could n't stir myself up trying to get prizes, for I knew to begin with that if any one was sick at our house, or anything bad happened there, I'd have to stay at home and see to it. Then if I had a good price offered for a day's work, I'd need to stay out of school and do it; I need the money. The lessons I could make up at night, and come in all right for examinations, but I can't go in for prizes. Don't know as I want to. School prizes are n't in my line; you see it's work I'm bent on."

Plodding along in this fashion, doing what he individually must, and not measuring himself by the doings of other boys, Heman reached May and the last week of school. He had been out in the country for a day's plowing. Aunt D'rexy had undertaken to clean the church for him that he might go and earn his dollar. He had earned it and was coming home. Master Renfrew met him.

"You're early, Heman, it is not six yet."

"We finished the field, and Mr. Weeks did

not care to begin another. He always knocks off work a little early Saturday night."

"If you're in no hurry, come and sit here on the fence with me, and let's have a talk," said the school-master.

The two perched on the top rail, each with his knees drawn up, because his heels were stuck in the third rail, and each took a stick to whittle. Said the schoolmaster,

"What a delightful place is a rail fence! Here the raspberries and blackberries make a mat with their red and purple stems that shine of fiercer color in the sun; pretty soon along these brilliant stems there will be thousands of white flowers, and then the berries. The ground in the fence corners is covered with cinquefoil, blue violets, and vervain. In the autumn golden-rod and milfoil will be here in force. In June alder bushes will spread out white bloom, like rich laces, and in the autumn the pokeberry will blaze in red stems and purple fruit. The squirrels love to run along the rails; the blue-birds, the jays, the robins and the thrush chase each other here, and sing in the leafy coverts. I've heard folks talk of 'ugly rail fences;' they simply don't understand where to look for beauty! Heman! school is nearly over, and I suppose you are not expecting to come back to books next year. What are you going to make

of yourself, my boy? You should have a plan and pursue it. Have you a plan?" Thus the school-master, quickly changing the tenor of his remarks.

"Well, sir, I've got to stir around pretty lively and do something," said Heman, sedately. "You see, I've a family on my hands. My folks are growing old; time 'll come when they can't help themselves much, and when I won't want them to feel forced to do anything. Aunt Espey's quite old; Uncle 'Rias has been dreadfully broken up by losing his leg. They took care of me when I was little, and they meant to give me all they had. That's all lost, so they have n't anything for themselves or me either; but they meant it all the same. Why, school-master, when I came to them I was a baby about three years old, without parents or a penny, nothing but a little carpet-sack full of clothes!"

"Poor little fellow!" said the school-master, impulsively.

"But they never let me know that I *was* a poor little fellow! They loved me and I loved them, and they gave me all the good times that were agoing. They saw to it that I had all I needed, that I was healthy, and made much of. I do n't know as my fix was different much from any other child's. When children come to their own folks, you know, they're littler than I was,

they can't get about on their legs, and they haven't any sack of clothes. Yes, sir, my people have loved me for all I was worth and have done their level best for me, and now I must do for them."

"What?" asked the school-master.

"I don't know," said Heman.

"You don't want to be a day laborer, on odd jobs man all your life. You can be more and better than that, and if you are only that, you'll get but a poor living for your family. You need to have a trade or some business or profession, some regular thing to begin at and keep at and be proficient in. One gets to a journey's end quickest by going straight on, not by zig-zagging all over the country. Is your mind made up as to your life work?"

Heman shook his head.

"It is time it was," said the master, incisively. "Let me see if I can help you to a conclusion. What do you think of clerking, or book-keeping? You've done nicely in book-keeping."

"I wanted to know how to keep books for myself if I had a business, but there's not the making of a book-keeper or a clerk in me, Mr. Renfrew. I'd use a yard-stick as if it was a club, and put the scissors through a piece of cloth like a rip-saw going through a plank, and

I'd wish it *was* the rip-saw too! No, I never craved to stand in a store all day."

"What about a profession? Have you thought of that?"

"Oh, yes, I've thought; but they take too much time and money, and there are no prompt returns. It can't be done."

"Why have you thought about a professional life, Heman?"

"Well—it seemed—more honorable like—I would like to be worth something in the world."

"Can't you be worth something in a trade?"

"Yes; but somehow, as I thought of it, a profession seemed to be more high-toned."

"A man must love a profession for itself before he is fit to pursue it, Heman. He must desire it so much that he would be willing to pursue his ideal for double the usual term of years, as Jacob served his seven years twice told for Rachel. He must feel that cold, hunger, poverty, weariness, are all as nothing for the love wherewith he loves the profession of his choice; as if, prince or peasant, he would or could be nothing else but master of this profession."

"Oh, but master, it's not in me to care for anything in the study way like that. I don't love study much. I like books, magazines, newspapers. I like to sit at home in the evening and read a little, partly because I want to

know what other folks know and talk of ; partly because I 'm sure I 'm safe and out of mischief ; and partly because the folks like to have me there, and it cheers them up if I read a little to them. I get asleep over it often, and if I were studying a profession I 'd get asleep over it always !

“Come, come, we 're getting on ! You do n't want clerking or indoor mercantile work, and evidently the Lord has not called you to the ministry, medicine, or the law. You do n't like books particularly ; you will not be a “mute, inglorious Milton,” or a Shakespeare spoiled. I doubt if ever there are any such. If genius for letters is in a man, it will come out ; but family pride, a craving for the ‘high-toned,’ as you just said, has dragged many a boy from a useful, honorable, manly handicraftsman to be a miserable, inefficient dabbler at some profession. Now, Heman, you 've made it clear that you want a trade—what trade ?”

“Do you know, Mr. Renfrew, almost any trade that I can give good hard knocks at, do something at, looks fine to me ! I do n't really think I care for brick-laying, or stone-cutting, but there was a time when I was pretty sure I would like to be a blacksmith. I liked to hear the hammers ring, and see the fire glow and the sparks fly ! On the whole, I want carpentry for

my business. I like boards, and nails, and tools. I always did! I want to learn the trade well and go on to house building. Why, I might, you know, get so far as to build not only houses, but churches, court-houses, school-houses, colleges. I could go on and on, by doing well, to fine work, if I was a house carpenter, just the same as I could go up in any other business, if I knew enough."

"That's the right spirit," said the master; "wish to excel, to rise, by deserving to rise, in whatever work you choose for your life occupation. Whether you are a tailor, a shoemaker, a baker, a merchant, artist, or teacher, whatever you are, be thorough and make your mark in it. You have no time to lose, Heman, if you are to learn house carpentry thoroughly, you cannot spend further time in cleaning offices or in ploughing. You must say, like Paul, 'This one thing I do.'"

"I know it," said Heman; "it has worried me lately as I thought about it. If Uncle 'Rias had not hurt himself I could have learned with him; he's first-rate. I do know something, I have lathed, and shingled, and boarded, and put on clap-boards; I could earn my way now with a builder."

"Then this very evening talk it over with your uncle and aunt, and see what plans you

can make for beginning at once on your life-business. Some day you and I will plan how you can study mechanical drawing. You need more mathematics too, for making estimates."

The two dropped the sticks they had whittled and got down from the rail-fence: slowly they turned toward the village, and soon in the purple evening light Heman saw the flat acre, the little house, the little barn and the beds newly arrayed of Aunt D'rexy's garden.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE WAY OF INVESTMENT.

“What riches give us, let us then inquire—
Meat, fire and clothes. What more, clothes, meat and fire :
Is this too little?”

“It never rains but it pours,” said Uncle 'Rias, with as much dignity as if he had been a pythoness announcing an oracle. From his tone one might fancy he had spent his life-time in harvesting this piece of knowledge.

Aunt Espey, turning the heel of a stocking she was knitting, received the proverb graciously as fresh information.

“That's so,” she said ; “I've noticed it. I've observed, 'Rias, that 'misfortunes never come singly.' Uncle Jabez made that remark when I was a girl, and it came so pat that I laid it up. Your father was drowned, and our cow died, and mother took worse, all in one month. Our meeting-house burned down, and Deacon Gray died, same year our minister resigned—the one you joined church under. Year our chimney blew down, Sam Jenks' little girl spilled carbolic acid all over my one good frock, and some boys shot three of my ducks, thinking they were wild ducks—city boys they were—ought never

to have had a gun in their hands, and did n't know wild duck from tame. Not to speak also, 'Rias, of how you lost your leg, and your bank money, and the farm, all in the same year."

"Well," said Aunt D'rexy, cheerfully, "the longest lane has its turning, and I've always noticed that's so. My mother used to say 'it's always darkest just before day-light,' and my father, who was a partic'lar sensible man, had a saying 'when the tide's full, then it has to turn.' That's true too, and Uncle Andrew, whatever happened, used to say, calm like, 'the wind don't always blow in one direction,' and he allowed that reminded him of a Bible text, 'In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider.'"

"Yes," said 'Rias, "I mind your uncle Andrew; he was remarkably powerful in prayer, My, would n't he make that old school-house hum sometimes! seemed like he'd bring the walls of Jericho right down about sinners' ears. Another of his sayings was, 'When you've got down to the bottom there ai n't no way to go but up.' And once, when a very movin' revival preacher was at our church he read the Psalm beginning, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee,' and he stops short, with the observation, 'Brethren, there ai n't no way out of the depths but up,' an' sez he, 'the heights of Zion over-

hang the deepest depths any of us can get into; so climb.' Oh, that took hold—it took hold tremendous!"

"Yes," said Aunt Drexey, "I remember. I wonder if folks preach quite as powerful now as they used to them days."

"Oh, yes," said Aunt Espey; "the gospel's the same, and the messengers are men all the same, and the preachin' is just as powerful; but you see, we're older, and we've been through a good deal, and we're duller, and slower ourselves; we do n't love less, but the stir of youth in us is gone."

Having thus given her version of "the fault, dear, Cassius, is not in our stars, but in ourselves," Aunt Espey knitted, Aunt D'rexy sewed, and Uncle 'Rias shaped a pudding-stick. The click of the needles, the shirr of thread, and the soft fall of shavings on a newspaper providently spread on 'Rias' knees, could be heard in the profound silence of the May afternoon.

The primary occasion of these proverbial discussions was a visit made the previous evening to Uncle 'Rias by a man named Simon Fletcher.

Uncle 'Rias had been sitting on the porch whittling pudding-sticks for sale. His stiff patent leg was stretched out awkwardly before him. Heman and Aunt D'rexy were busy in the garden, where some lettuce and radishes were

ready to be sold to the grocery, and the peas needed "brushing." Aunt Espey and Uncle 'Rias had been talking of Heman, how he wanted to begin at once regular work at carpentry and had no more time to waste, but must find a skilled master, and wages, and constant work. "And what I ask is where 's he going to find them?" said 'Rias dolefully.

"The Lord will provide, 'Rias," said Aunt Espey, and at that minute the gate-latch clicked, and a big, tanned, keen-eyed man came in and helped himself to a seat beside Urias. "I lay you can't place me," he said cheerily.

Aunt Espey looked keenly through her glasses. "You're Simon Fletcher. I know you by a twinkle in your eye," she said.

"Simon Fletcher! Well, Sime; I am glad to see you," cried Uncle 'Rias, slapping his hand down on his guest's knee. "I have n't seen you for ten years! But I ai n't forgotten you, boy."

The "boy," a burly, bearded man laughed loudly, "No more I ai n't you. 'Rias, things ai n't partic'lar chirk with you, are they? I'm terrible sorry," and Simon Fletcher looked about at the little house, the little shackly barn, the poor acre, and pitifully laid his hand on the "patent leg."

"They've gone bad," said Urias, sedately;

"but they might have gone worse. How 've they gone with you?"

"Nothing to complain of," said Simon Fletcher. "I've been blessed in basket and in store, coming out and going in. I've made money, and I have n't lost it."

"Well, I'm right glad of it," said Uncle Urias.

"I've always said," went on Simon Fletcher, "that if I did turn out any good, it was Uncle 'Rias Sinnet was the making of me. I had the beginning of a bad boy in me."

"Oh, well, you lost your folks early, Sime."

"Well, yes; so I did. Then Satan is always looking out for boys that are lying about loose, and he went for me. I have n't forgot, Uncle 'Rias, how you talked things over with me, and offered me work, and spurred me up, and kept me with you two whole years, and Aunt D'rexy was like a mother to me. You gave me a good start in my trade, and a good start in religion. We worked together, Uncle 'Rias, for five years, did n't we? and you gave me a set toward fair, honest, thorough-going work, and it told; yes, Uncle 'Rias, it told. I've done well."

"Won't D'rexy be proud to see you." said Uncle Urias. "Oh! D'rexy, come here: here's Simon Fletcher come to see us!"

Aunt D'rexy hurried in to wash her hands

and put on her clean apron; then she came to sit on the porch and renew acquaintance with Simon Fletcher.

"Going to stop here long, Simon? We'd like very much to have you stay with us; if you could make out with Heman's room, he could sleep in the shop."

"Oh, thanky. I'll take more 'n one meal with you, I guess; but I've put up at the hotel; I've a lot of people to see. I'm here after a home. I'm going to move here; I've taken contracts will keep one two years or better. I reckon you've heard what a jump the town's taken?"

"Well, yes: they do say old Windle's looking up. I haven't heard the rights of the matter. You tell us how you look at it, Sime, an' if you 're comin' here to live!"

"Yes, the town's making a big jump. Hepburn, old Jim Hepburn, you know, that got rich up among the copper mines, he's left money for a library, and a Young Men's Christian Association building, and they are going right up; and Mr. Lind is going to build two houses, one to rent to the librarian and one to the secretary, and I've got the contract for those two houses."

"You do n't say so!" cried Urias.

"Yes, and an architect I've been with in work for five years, he's got the contract for the

Library and the Association Building, and of course I'm solid with him, and I'll have plenty of the work on them. Then the Kane firm, that were burned out last month, are going to put up their rope-walk here, and I've contracted for that. I'm going at it right away, and three small houses for workmen. Then Windle's more than sure to get the new Normal School building; the site offered here is far and away the best offer the State has, and to end off—for the present—the Dibbs Canning and Jelly factory has bought land on the west edge of town, and their buildings are to go up at once. Things will hum here, 'Rias, hum, I tell you!"

Urias sat confounded. Oh, if he had not lost his leg, if he were the man he was formerly, he too might have shared in this splendid boom that had struck Windle! Sime Fletcher slapped him on the shoulder,

"'Rias, if I know myself I'm bread cast upon the waters, and found after many days. I'm floating 'round your way. You picked me up and made a man of me when I was down, and there is no law, as I see, for to keep me from yoking along of you now, and giving you a pull forward! You can't be as spry as you could once, 'Rias, but there's plenty you can do, I'll be bound, and the folks tell me you've got a boy—a boy to brag on."

"I have," said Uncle 'Rias with conviction, "and here I sit, worriting and breaking my heart because the boy's bound to be a carpenter, and I did n't see how nor where was a chance to make a good workman of him. It's in him, if he has half an opportunity, Sime; he's honest and obliging, quick eyes, big, strong, industrious, and thorough. He begun with me, and I started him well, just as I did you, Sime."

"And I've found the benefit of it, and so will he. You set me up, and I'll set him up. Turn about's fair play, hey? If he wants to learn carpentry and building, in and out, from end to end and back again, I'm his man, and there's this same hand on it, Uncle 'Rias."

Whereupon the two men shook hands, and aunts Espey and D'rexy wiped away some tears. Then Uncle 'Rias called,

"Ho, Heman! Come here, boy!"

Heman, seeing that there was "company" on the little porch, betook himself to the back kitchen to wash off the mould of the garden, brush his hair and clothes, slip on a jacket and a pair of carpet slippers. Folks said "Aunt D'rexy had brought up Heman terrible finniky for a farm-boy." Aunt D'rexy, however, held that "'a farm-boy' had every bit as good a right to be nice as a lawyer's boy or a minister's."

Uncle 'Rias was in high spirits when Heman appeared.

"Here, boy, here, Heman," he cried, "here's Simon Fletcher, that used to work with me before ever you was born. I could tell you plenty of ditties about him. He's an A No. 1 first-class carpenter, if I do say it, and he's got more contracts in this blessed town of Windle than you can keep tally of on all your fingers! The boom's struck Windle, and Sime Fletcher's got his share of boom. That's it, Heman, I'm glad to see you shaking hands with him, you're shaking hands with an honest man and a prime carpenter. What's more, he's come here to share work with old friends. There'll be work for me, and work for you, and here's the man is going to put you through your paces, and turn you out as skillful as they make 'em. Ain't that so, Sime? Hey!"

"It's so," said Simon Fletcher, and he threw back his head and laughed. He was hearty and happy; he wanted to make other people happy, and evidently he had succeeded; Uncle 'Rias was nearly crazy with joy, and Heman bloomed and glowed like a big peony.

Uncle 'Rias stood up. "Come along here, will you, Sime? We've got a bit of a shop, me and the boy. I saved my workbench and my tools, not much else. You can see what work

the boy can do. I've taught him thorough as far as he's gone. He won't have much to unlearn; it will be plain sailing with him. He mended up that old ramshackle barn, and he put up all that fence, and that's a pretty good job, when you consider the poor stuff he had to deal with. Now that frame's a job of his, and I count it neat work. Oh, I'm sharp with Heman, just as I was with you, Sime!"

Thus Uncle 'Rias rattled on in the joy of his heart.

"Well, I must be going; got my hands full," said Simon Fletcher. "I count on beginning work next Monday—mean to start framing then. The foundations were finished a month ago. Yes, you and Heman be on hand, Uncle 'Rias. Do n't seem quite natural for me to be master and you to be man, but I lay out not to let you feel it."

Then Simon Fletcher went away leaving very glad hearts behind him, and thus the next day Uncle 'Rias was quoting proverbs and commenting on old times, while for Heman all the world was bright as a June day or a peacock's tail.

While Uncle 'Rias whittled pudding-sticks and held discourse, Heman weeded the onion-bed, for these were every-day, common-place people, and all that they did was plain, matter.

of-fact work. While Heman weeded he talked to his friend Fred, who was fourteen, and generally unoccupied in vacation. To Fred Heman had triumphantly told his golden expectations in the carpentry line. To Fred the prospect looked less magnificent.

"You'll have to work all day, from seven to six, with an hour's nooning, won't you—right hard work too?"

"Oh, yes, of course, I'll have to jump about pretty lively; but every man who works at a trade has long hours and hard work, that's the way he makes his money."

"Yes," said Fred, "it makes some difference, of course, if you're working where you're paid for it, not like worrying for home folks and getting nothing for it."

"I don't see it that way," said Heman, "when we were at the farm we all worked, and we all got what we needed, clothes and living and a good time, you know, out of what we earned. Seemed to me I had as much as any of 'em. Now here it keeps us all rustling round just to get a living, and I would be a pretty kid to growl at my share, with Uncle 'Rias working round on a patent leg, and poor old Aunt Espey knitting and washing laces for folks to earn a few dimes."

"Yes, I 'spose you have to," added Fred.

“ Pop says you ’re a born worker, and he holds you up for an example. Lawyer Brace says his Jim ’s so lazy he ’s going to ruin ’less he learns to be more industrious; and now you ’re gone, he ’s making Jim do the work you did, clean office, and cord, cut, and carry in the wood to home.”

“ Pooh! that ai n’t hard. and it ai n’t much,” said Heman.

“ But Jim’s folks, you see, do n’t eat breakfast till eight, and Jim wants to lie abed till just a minute or so before breakfast. Mom would n’t let me eat if I did n’t get up early enough to make myself real neat; and then Jim’s so ashamed of working!” urged Fred.

“ Ashamed!” cried Fred more than amazed. “ What of?”

“ Why, working, that ’s what he ’s ashamed of, Jim is. Say, he sneaked up into the office and locked the door and put down the window-shades, you know, for fear some one would see him in there working. Made it so dark he could not half see to get it clean. Then he ’s ashamed of cutting wood. When he had wood to cut did n’t he go carry every blessed stick in the barn, and saw and split it there, for fear some of the boys would see him doing it! Lawyer Brace said it was plumb wicked to be ashamed of honest work, and not ashamed of being idle

and lazy and not earning your salt. He says unless Jim gets more sense pretty soon he has to go apprentice some place, for folks that's ashamed to work is likely to land in the Penitentiary."

Then Heman thought of the "Pilgrim's Progress," where it is written, "I met with Shame; but of all men I have met in pilgrimage, it seems to me that he bears the wrong name. Indeed, this Shame was a villain; I could hardly shake him out of my company; yea, he would be haunting me, and continually whispering in my ear." So he laughed.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Fred. "I guess Jim'll laugh out of the wrong side of his mouth if he gets sent out on a farm or made 'prentice. Why, Jim's old enough to have sense; he's nigh fifteen."

"Does a boy have to wait to be fifteen to have sense?" asked Heman.

"Sho! Some of 'em never has it," said Fred. "It's like the mumps and the measles, that some boys never catches. What are you going to do with your money, Heman, when you get it?"

Heman shook his head; *that* plan he would not tell.

"I know a fellow," said Fred, "that talks large of investments. He says if you invest one dollar you get ten, and your money grows while

you sleep—mortgages and things, and so you get rich without hard work—without any work.”

“Except earning the money in the first place.”

“Oh, yes, I expect you have to earn it 'fore you invest it.”

“I'm going to invest my time and my muscle in learning house-building, and when I make some money I'm going to be very careful what I invest it in, for Mr. Renfrew says there's plenty of glib talkers who live on coaxing people to put money in bogus investments, and then they never see a cent of it again. 'Putting it into a bag with holes,' the Bible calls that. I'm going to be real shy of investments till I know all about them.”

CHAPTER XII.

PARABLES BY NATURE BREATHED.

“ This parable by nature breathed
Blew o'er me as the south wind free
On frozen banks that flow unsheathed
From icy thralldom to the sea.”

THE day when, after their long conflict with misfortunes, Heman and his uncle returned to regular work, seemed to the boy the most glorious of his life. Doubtless Uncle 'Rias remembered the days when he had had two good legs and been master-workman; with him it was as with the building of the second temple; while the young men shouted for joy of it, they who had seen the first house wept. Still Uncle 'Rias was happy: his was not a complaining disposition; he bore the brunts of fate hardily; he whistled and hummed little old-time tunes as he went about with square, line, rule, blue chalk, carefully measuring spaces and marking notches, for Uncle 'Rias had always been esteemed a skillful framer. Heman and a young carpenter just out of his apprenticeship followed up with adze, mallet, and saw, and soon chips were flying like autumn leaves and little flurries of sawdust fell like yellow snow.

Old Deacon Goodspeed came by: the deacon had always quaint observations to make. He paused now, looked at the work proceeding on the pieces of the "balloon frame," and said, "Cheer up, Urias, cheer up. God puts honor upon you when he permits you to help him house the children of men." Then for a time he contemplated the foundations, good solid hewn-stone work, well laid up in cement. "We might as well, my boys," he said, "tie to our doing high thoughts. They make it nobler than if we yoked it to low thinking. Here's a foundation: 'Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, even Christ.' And here's a corner-stone: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whoso falleth on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.'" Then the old deacon crept down the street, leaning on his big cane, the sunlight illuminating his loose hair, until the silvered locks of age took the golden glory of childhood, and Heman had dim, struggling memories about some words of Scripture, that one must enter the kingdom of heaven as a little child.

Whizz went the saws, pound, pound stormed the mallets, Uncle 'Rias' chalk ran shrilly across the rough fibre of the timber, and here came the minister with his hands full of letters, hur-

rying to the post-office. He took time to stop by Heman and say, "Here you are at your proper work. Pluck and patience, my lad; these bring the prizes. A good trade, my boy, is better than gold. Good mechanics are the props of society. Thomas Carlyle says of his stone-mason father, that he never gave the world any ill-done work, and a bridge that he built in Ayreshire will be a monument of his faithfulness to many generations."

By-and-by the schoolmaster, George Renfrew, came along. "That's it, Heman," he said. "I see you are putting your heart into it. My uncle was a mechanic, and he told me his rule had been to copy after the best workmen in the shop, and learn the whole of his trade."

Toward noon Simon Fletcher, who was going from one piece of his work to another, ordering, helping, inspecting, came up with a rush. "You're at your old tricks, 'Rias, making things hum! I'll venture these boys wont see any idle moments under you! I never did see a man jump at his work as you always did. I had you for a model, but never could make myself go quite so quick; I'm too fat a build. You do more work with a patent leg than most men can with their natural ones. You always reminded me of the energy of a wasp a-building, the way you fly at things!"

When the town clock pealed twelve the workmen went home to dinner, and Heman thought he never had sat down before anything quite so good as Aunt D'rexy's "boiled victuals," as Uncle 'Rias called them, and apple pie.

"Ai n't it a spread and a picter!" said 'Rias, as he took his place. Joy gave him appetite.

Quite as beautiful "a spread" of another kind appeared on that same table at the end of the month, when Urias and Heman brought home their joint wages, and supper being cleaned away, they laid the money out before D'rexy and Espey, making as great a show of it as possible. "Do n't it look promising!" sighed Urias with deep content.

"We do n't owe a penny of it," said D'rexy, eagerly. "Aunt Espey and I lotted on having you have it free; so we managed all we spent out of what we earned, sewing and knitting, selling eggs and milk, and things from the garden."

"My! ai n't you a master-hand at managing, D'rexy!" said Urias, and as he gloated over the money his eyes shone. "Say, D'rexy, Abel Ward was talking to me about a new invention a man's selling about here. It's a kind of grip to run the street cars by, and you take shares in it, and all the cars is bound to have to use it. It beats creation, it does. No, they do n't have to

use horses to the cars any more, and these shares you can buy now for about twenty dollars a month, and they 'll bring you—well, about forty per cent. interest, and the shares will go up so they 'll fetch sixty or seventy dollars for what you give twenty for, if so be you want to sell 'em. They're better than gold or Gov'ment Bonds. Abel told me all about it."

Aunt D'rexy's countenance fell, Aunt Espey heaved a deep sigh, and Heman, leaning back in his chair, thrust his brown fists into his trousers pockets and made a remark: "In old times Cain was the bad one, and Abel was the good one; and Cain killed Abel. I do n't know where Cain is, but I know now it's Abel that's the bad one, and trying to ruin folks; and Abel Ward is his full name. Uncle 'Rias, schoolmaster was talking to us one day about electricity, and he said pretty soon all the street-cars would run by electricity; it would run everything else out. He told us about horse-cars in the cities, and about cable-cars, and he said electricity would knock spots out of them all, and take the cake and all the baking too."

After which very free version of his schoolmaster's remarks, Heman looked at Uncle 'Rias, and the two aunts looked at Heman admiringly. If Uncle 'Rias was going back to his old foolishness, it was well that Heman, who was doing a

man's work, should hold a man's opinions and stand up for them. Uncle 'Rias spoke :

"Well, boy, Abel's a good feller, and 'pears to know, and he's mighty civil spoken."

"'Most too smart spoken, I guess," said Heman. "Do n't the Bible say somewhere, 'His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.' Uncle 'Rias, you know when you lost the bank money and the farm, how bad you felt, and how you said you wished you'd left it all to Aunt D'rexy, because she never did lose anything? Now we've got another chance, *don't* let's fool it away. Let us earn money, and give it to Aunt D'rexy to take care of. It's her turn now; she feels it as hard as anybody when losses come. We'll use what she deals out to us, and let her have fair innings for a while, any way." Then Heman leaned forward and put his elbows on the table and his sun-burnt, cheery face between the palms of his hands. "Say, I've got a plan, a jolly plan, and you all chip in with me in it. I mean to buy back the farm! Aunt Espey's got to end her days where she began 'em, I say; and Aunt D'rexy's planted all those fruit-trees, and the grapevines, and the climbing roses; she has to have 'em back. Did n't Mr. Sloane tell me whenever I wanted anything of him to ask it? All I'm going to ask is that he keeps that farm in

his hands until I can buy it back. Three thousand will do it, buy it back, and fix it up ship-shape; and I'll make it!"

"Three thousand! Hear him talk! Well, Heman, you are full of spirit! I'm with you, boy; we'll do it; but, can't we hasten it, you see, by a little good investing, like Abel—"

"No, we can't!" cried Heman. "We'd lose, and get discouraged. We can make it by steady earning and saving; and Aunt D'rexy, when she gets enough ahead, can find at the bank some loan or something that will give her six per cent. Did n't schoolmaster tell us all about such things last winter in his banking and bookkeeping class? What did I go to school for, if 'twas n't to learn such things?"

Then Uncle 'Rias, relinquishing his golden dreams of a thousand per cent. or so, pushed all the piles of money over to Aunt D'rexy, saying, "Take it, my woman; it *is* your turn now. Let's see what you and the boy can make of financiering."

After that, Heman earned, and D'rexy saved, with better heart; that "bag with holes" did not seem ready to engulf all their gettings.

While Abel Ward, who made his living by talking honest people out of hard earnings, laid thus in wait for Uncle 'Rias, whose failings were well known, younger tempters of a diverse kind

lay in wait for Heman, whose weaknesses were yet to be particularly discovered. Uncle 'Rias had been a far safer moral guide than a financier, and his and D'rexy's care had kept Heman out of temptation. Now that Heman was known to be "regularly working" and earning wages, lads of an evil sort, who had passed him by when he was merely digging Aunt D'rexy's garden and milking her cows, came around to beguile him.

"Have a cigarette, Heman?" said one of these fellows, coming up to him as he sat eating his lunch on a pile of boards at the Librarian's house, Uncle 'Rias working that day on the "Christian Association Building."

"No;" said Heman. "I'm not such a gump. Anybody who reads the papers knows that cigarettes make boys crazy, stop their growth, and weaken them all out, like rags."

"That's so," said another boy. There were usually a crowd of idle lads, hands in pockets, lounging about to watch the work on the various buildings. "I do n't go for cigarettes. They ai n't safe. Now, try a cigar, they're safe. Here's one, Heman."

"No, thanks, I do n't smoke. It would make me sick."

"Well, it might—the first one; but after one or two you'd get over that, and like 'em."

“What would become of my afternoon’s work, while I was sick over a cigar? And why should I want to like them? They’d cost me some of my good money, and I’ve better use for it.”

“Pooh! you work hard. You might have a little good of wages.”

“So I mean to, more’n a little—real big good,” said Heman, his eyes shining with that hope of buying back the Sinnet Farm; a hope which was a strong safeguard.

“But cigars are the best thing for indigestion.”

Heman roared with laughter. “Indigestion! Never had it. But I would if I began to smoke. Anyway, there’s no use taking a cure before you’ve got a disease, is there? If you fellows worked as hard as I have to, you would have no indigestion, I can tell you.”

Resolution to save all the money he could, now that he felt his savings were safe, combined with a natural distaste for tobacco to keep Heman from learning to smoke; Aunt D’rexy’s careful and early temperance instructions also held him firm against invitations to enter saloons, or drink beer.

“Come on, and have a cool beer, Heman; you’ll work twice as well after it this hot day,” said one acquaintance.

“No, thanks. I don’t need it.”

“But, man, I’m going to treat you. It wont cost you a cent.”

“To-day it would n’t, but what would you think of me to-morrow if I did n’t ask you in to have a glass of ‘cool beer,’ when it was just as hot a day?” said Heman the shrewd.

“Oh, well—if you’re too stingy to be sociable; but you’ll not get on in the world very well that way, let me tell you.”

“So I would n’t, and I do n’t mean to be too stingy to be sociable: only, if I spend my nickels I want to spend them on things that are worth while. I do n’t see first-class people hanging about beer-shops, and I’ve about made up my mind to be first-class myself, if I can make it. If you’ll come round to the house to-night I’ll give you as nice a glass of lemonade as ever you tasted; that’ll be healthy, and drank in a decent place, and it will not cost less than beer, while you’ll have a slice of Aunt Espey’s gingerbread with it. To-morrow, for lunch, I’ll have here a little basket of as nice orchard-cherries as ever grew. Joey Clump brought them to me, and I’ll share the basket with you, if you’d rather that than lemonade. One thing I’m set on, I wont have any transactions in beer-shops—no guzzling for me. I’ve seen men in gutters.”

On another day some lads came up saying, “Heman, come to our Club to-night to visit;

maybe we 'll elect you a member, if you like it. Meets in Ward's back shop."

"What do you do?" asked Heman.

"Oh," said the lad largely, "we have it kind of free-and-easy, and we talk politics, and read things out of papers, we make speeches and we sing songs—kind of a literary club—trains us for politicians; shows us which side our bread's buttered, and what we ought to go for."

This was not very lucid, but on the whole did not sound ill. Heman had a boy's longing for youthful society, to be sometimes where he could rather lead than be led. After a day's work, an evening at a club, singing and making speeches with other fellows, might be refreshing. He went. About twenty boys were gathered. The air was already dim with smoke when Heman entered, and at the three or four dirty tables were lads with mugs of beer or glasses of weak lemonade, ginger-pop, or buttermilk. Heman had no objection to any of these drinks except the beer, but he thought the glasses looked very greasy and unpleasant. There was some singing, loud street songs, and choruses. Some reading from doubtful papers, which railed against churches and corporations, and educational limits to the franchise. Other lads read stormily from magazines which advocated war on all foreigners, and especially attacked negroes

and Chinese. There was some effort at recitations of a rather vulgar fashion, to Heman's view, and the speaking was the ranting of lads whose eager minds had had no sound training—the demagogues and stumpspeakers of the future. Heman found nothing agreeable in any of it, but he sat, curious to see what it was all about, until he heard a bell ring for half-past nine. He reflected that he rose at five to get “home chores” done before he went to his work, and at the best he never felt that he had too much sleep.

When he reached home Aunt D'rexy was waiting for him : she sat on the door-step, the lamp was out, and the others of the family were in bed. Heman sat down by her.

“Why, Heman ! You've never been smoking ?” she said.

“No : but I've been where other fellows were smoking, and I guess my clothes are full of it. Kind of a Club, they call it.”

“I hope you think home is a nicer place. Let us get to bed.”

Heman felt that Aunt D'rexy's voice had anxiety in it.

The next evening as they all sat on the porch a lad halted by the gate calling, “Come along, Heman ; going to the Club ?”

“Well, no ; I guess not,” said Heman.

Aunt D'rexy and Uncle 'Rias looked relieved.

"That's you," said Uncle 'Rias, "no boy ever hurt himself by keeping to a good home. Your Aunt D'rexy says, Heman, you told her that your knowing none of your savings would get lost in speculators' pockets kinder toughened you up to refuse to spend money on beer, or cigars, or any such matters. Now I see how your feelin' sure that your earnings ain't to be thrown away will make you save cheerfuller; and so I promise you, boy, I wont do any speculatin' again, not till we all talk it over an' agree as to it."

"I could keep out of any kind of wasting and foolishness with a good heart for the sake of getting back the farm," said Heman.

"I've observed," said Uncle 'Rias, "that what people set their hearts on, vigorous that way, they most generally get. I could tell you several little ditties about that. There I was—I set my heart on buying that farm grandpop Sinnet had cleared, and at last I got it. Lost it, more fool I, just as grandpop did, by being too graspin'! Then there was Dan Hays: his father was kind o' soft in the head, and his mother a good hard-working soul. Dan was n't so very bright, but he set his heart on buying a little four-room house, clear, for his mother, and a cat-boat for himself to make a livin' in, fishin'. Ten

years that feller worked. The Lord 'peared to open ways for him : some rich folks came to the beach an' hired Dan two or three summers at big wages, and my, did n't they give him things! Well, he got his cat-boat and his house, and made his old mother's life easy. Then there's a ditty about the Macky boys. Left orphans at twelve—twins they were. They said they meant to make a way in the world, an' set up a big tombstun for their folks. An' they did too. They were grown up when I was a boy; but, sir, Bill Macky was captain of a steamer, an' Tom Macky had three tony restaurants, an' made a fortune. Oh, yes, Heman, folks get what they go for mostly. I could tell you plenty of ditties about that."

CHAPTER XIII.

DAILY FRIENDS.

“ Books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good ;
Round these with tendrils strong as flesh and blood
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.”

HEMAN was by no means too dull to see that Uncle 'Rias' remarks about people getting what they went for suggested that it was well to go for something good and worth while, for if they went for the idle and evil, that they would get. As he listened to Uncle 'Rias' "ditties" about the early struggles of people that Heman had known, he thought that this was much more entertaining than the boys' Club.

Possibly Uncle 'Rias' had some wish to emphasize such thinking. He said, "Come, boy, tell us about what that Club did last evenin'."

Heman hesitated a bit, but then it would never do to be too ashamed of the company you keep to describe it! He had just begun: "Well, they have a place to meet in, the back room of Luke Allen's shop"—when in at the gate came master George Renfrew and took his seat on the porch. Heman was still more hesitant to speak before the master, he would think he'd been

wasting his time. Aunt D'rexy helped him out; she usually had her reasons for what she did.

"Mr. Renfrew, Heman was just beginning to tell us about a Boys' Club he visited last night."

"It seems," explained Uncle 'Rias, "he was n't enough taken up with it to want to go to-night when one of 'em called him."

"Let us hear about it, Heman," said George Renfrew; "it may help me out in some plans I am making for boys."

Heman therefore began his description of what had been said and done.

Not wishing to be too hard on boys, Uncle 'Rias urged, "Tell the hull of it, Heman; mebby there's some good in it."

"Oh, yes," said George Renfrew, who had seen more of the world and was not so much frightened, "there's good in almost everything."

Heman continued his narration: "And then I heard the half-past nine bell ringing, and I came away," he concluded, "for I knew I'd be sleepy in the morning, and I was n't interested."

"Well! well!" cried Uncle 'Rias, slapping his knee, "if it don't beat all nature, them boys settin' up to overturn books and ways that has existed before their granddads were born!"

Master Renfrew laughed. "Why, this *is* nature, Mr. Sinnet. All reformers since the world began have risen to question and overthrow what existed before their grandparents were born."

"But you don't hold with those boys' doings?" said Aunt D'rexy.

"Oh, not with their opinions, of course; they're crude, and ill-guided, and ill-informed; but I sympathize with their wish to know, and be, and do; and I'd like to help them to know, be, and do rightly."

"Wherever did they get such cranky notions! Set up to say the Bible's wrong, and holdin' property is wrong, and gov'ment's wrong, and it ain't right to levy taxes! Why, whatever's this world comin' to with such boys as that?"

Uncle 'Rias looked so excited that Master Renfrew laughed, and that made Heman give a joyous shout.

"There's plenty of just such foolishness in print, Mr. Sinnet, and news-dealers and beer-saloon men have it to give out free secretly to boys. Satan takes more pains to train them up wrong than the church often does to train them up right. However, now we'll take a hand in it, and see what can be done. Some of those lads are naturally smart; nearly all have the

making of useful men in them. Who seem to be the leaders, Heman?"

Heman named two or three lads.

"I thought so," said Mr. Renfrew. "Now we'll let the matter drop while I spend three or four days making some plans, and then I'll ask these fellows to help me get up a Lads' Club and Debating Society, and I'll outbid the attractions of Luke Ward's place. Mr. Hepburn left a few thousand dollars to be used for philanthropic work in Windle, according as a committee of some of our leading people should decide. I have prepared a petition for a part of that fund to be applied to founding the 'Hepburn Club' for young men and boys. There will be, if my plan is carried out, a supply of magazines and papers; prizes for oratory, debating, and essays; a room for gymnastics, table games, and a lunch counter, all properly directed. We'll try and give the lads clear and clean ideas, and help them 'to find themselves.' Say nothing about it, though, until you hear of it from some of the other boys, Heman."

"I'm powerful relieved at your taking a hand in it, master," said Urias. "I know boys of Heman's age get hankerin' after company of other boys, and amusement, and I tell you it comes hard to see all the work you've done in rearin' boys nigh onto the verge of being thrown

away by their getting with a gang that talk such nonsense as that Heman has been detailing."

A few days later the schoolmaster overtook Heman going home from his work. He said to him, "I was in the city a few days ago, and I went to a second-hand bookstore and bought you a few books. I had a little fund given to me to use for working boys, and I thought you should have a share. These are books on building and architecture; they have plates; some are old, some more modern; all will educate your taste and fill your mind with high ideals of building. The smallest and most practical building may have its symmetry, and its harmony with its surroundings and its intention. If you spend some of your evenings with these books, you will find in the day your mind dwelling on the suggestions and instructions they contain; and when you begin to learn mechanical drawing, you will have your thoughts already educated into a mingling of beauty with utility. Have patience; don't slight anything: carry all your work up to the best it is possible for it to be."

"I'm ever so much obliged for the books," said Heman, "and I'll read them over and over. I see, if I take the right way of it, I can be somebody—be as much a man in my work as if I had chosen a profession. I wish you'd tell me, when you think of it, what I ought to learn, and what

I ought to give up saying and doing. Every day now I think I did n't pay enough attention in school when I had a chance."

"A man marks himself by his conversation. If you would observe the conversation of educated persons and the language of books, you would improve in your forms of expression and your pronunciation. You need not use all the vernacular your good uncle does. I heard you speaking of popple wood the other day: there is no popple wood; it is poplar. Why not call it poplar? I have heard you speak of jell, and many people use that word jell; there's no such word properly. Why not add the y which belongs to it and say 'jelly?' These little things mark men's speech. You have as much right, and should find as much pleasure in correct language being a carpenter, as if you were a merchant or a lawyer, it seems to me."

"So it seems to me, when I think of it," said Heman.

"Some time I will make you out a list of books which you should get by degrees, and I will help you to get them as cheaply as possible. Remember, that while it is well to save, one can be too saving. It is not good economy to starve either our minds or our bodies. Your aunt told me the great secret you have, all of you working to get your farm back. That is fine; but

it will not be well to deny your mind nourishment in your effort to save. You must have some books to make a man of you. Books are friends; books are food; books are material for our work—always the right kind of books, understand."

After little talks like these with the schoolmaster Heman felt more alert and courageous; the future looked brighter and the present brighter, though, as Heman was of a cheery disposition, the present was usually gay of color.

Uncle 'Rias was generally at work where Heman and some other young fellows were busy; he instructed them and overlooked their work, and his kindly simplicity made his superintendence acceptable.

"Hollo there!" he shouted one day, "don't use that timber, Jem Dake; it's no good. It ought never to have been sent here. Take that one there."

Jem Dake obeyed, but as he measured and prepared to hew he argued, "I don't see what you've got agin that timber, Uncle 'Rias."

"See there," said Uncle 'Rias, poking the blade of his knife into a small hole in the timber. The knife did not go in far, and Jem was unimpressed.

"I see, it's a little hole, and the timber's good. I could plug that hole up tight with a

little peg, so there could n't a drop of water get in, if it's that you 're fearin'."

"Tai n't what might get in, but what is in I'm afraid of," said 'Urias. "Now it'll be worth spendin' a little time to give you boys a lesson, so's you'll know good timber when you see it, and bad timber when you see that. Here, saw that off there, and there, and lay it open with the axe along there."

The saws tore back and forth and grew hot, the chips flew; then the surprised lads saw that the timber whose outside semblance was so fine and fair, was singularly honey-combed with a succession of very neatly bored cells.

"There, lads, the timber's holler-hearted, not by decay, but because a pesky little insect has been workin' in it. I'll tell you a ditty some day about that. My grandpop Sinnet was a mighty good man, an' very good at exhortin' in meetin'. One day some one was a splittin' up a log like that, an' he makes a text of it, and expounds how sins lie gnawing in the heart like that, till the character ai n't in no wise to be depended on; and he pointed out that the mark on the outside was but small; and so sometimes the badness was well hid for a long time, but just when character was needed to be strong and reliable for some strain of temptation on it, why down it went—all sawdust and honey-combs."

"Well, Uncle 'Rias," insisted Jem Dake, "it seems wasteful to throw away a whole timber; it might do well enough; it ai n't the only one to hold up the buildin'."

"That's so," said Uncle 'Rias, "but it's awful risky; suppose it should give out, what then? 'Spose, Jem, a partic'lar strain come right on that part, and that timber crooked and gave out, what then? It might be a terrible let down of the whole affair. So's you may say one of these worm-eaten characters might n't be put to any test, and go on an' not know themselves; they might be made bank presidents, or county treasurers, or orphans' guardians, and they might break down and carry a heap of trouble with 'em. Oh, you boys, look out for such like."

"One is safe to learn a heap from you, Uncle 'Rias," said the young men with a civility which flattered Uncle 'Rias.

"Well, yes," he admitted, "I do try to convey information if so be I have any. This about the timber makes me think of a ditty used to be in my reader in school, the only ditty I ever cared for in a book—'cept the Bible, of course, I don't reckon that in with books in general. The ditty was like this: 'For loss of a nail the shoe was lost; for loss of the shoe the horse was lost; for loss of the horse the man was lost; for loss of the man the battle was lost; for loss of

the battle the kingdom was lost.' Did you fellers ever hear that?"

The lads unguardedly admitted that they had.

"Well, get ahead with your work," said Uncle 'Rias, heaving a sigh of disappointment, for he greatly loved to tell what he called 'a ditty.'

When needful, Uncle 'Rias could come down sharply upon the lads. One day his keen eyes detected Jake in a piece of carelessness.

"You, Jake! there you are agin sawing off a board by what you call your eye, 'stead of markin' it by the square, now there's a piece of lumber good as wasted; an' yesterday you tried the same trick, an' wasted another."

"It is sawed straight," protested Jake.

"It's half an inch out of line, or I'm goin' blind," said Uncle 'Rias, approaching with the square in his hand. "There, what'd'I tell you? Half an inch an' more!"

"Don't see what you use a square for, if your eye's so keen," said the abashed Jake.

"I use it, 'cause I was taught to use it, an' 'cause I ought to use it, and it's usin' it keeps my eyes straight by eddicatin' 'em. Now, mark my words, Jake; you can't work here with me 'less you'll mind what I say, an' work keerful. I can't have you spoilin' folks' lumber, 'tain't honest. You mind me of what minister said

las' night in prayer-meeting. He said, 'If a man stumbles into sin once, that's a pity an' bad enough; but to tumble into the same sin again wilfully after the first fault, is gre'vous; and not to be tolerated, I add.'

"Well, Uncle 'Rias," said Jake, marking a line on the end of another board, "in a world so full of temptation as this is, I dunno what you're goin' to do about it, not to keep stumbling and tumbling all the time."

Uncle 'Rias was out of hearing, and was framing a door-way. The minister passing, had tarried, and he made reply, "Some sink under temptation and are overborne by it, my young friend, others, looking to God, rise above it and become heroes."

One July morning while the Sinnet family were at breakfast in the clean back-kitchen, the fresh morning air wandering in through all the doors open to it, to give one a breath of coolness before the fierce heat of the day, an irregular step sounded in the shop, and the joyful face of Joey Clump appeared, gazing toward the four at the little table.

"Why! why! it's never Joey!" cried Aunt D'rexy. "And yet it is Joey! Come right in, an' set by; here's breakfast for you, Folks all well, Joey?"

It was clear from Joey's delighted counte-

nance that all his family were thriving; he took the chair Heman drew up for him, and applied himself for a few minutes to the well-filled plate provided by Aunt D'rexy. But the news he brought could not be suppressed; he laid down knife and fork.

"Uncle 'Rias! Pop's agreed! He says, 'go it if you want to, Joey, now hayin's over!' I'm goin' to be a carpenter, like Heman. Of course I am, you know, 'cause me and Heman always laid out to be partners, did n't we, Heman? So I'm to begin learning my trade with you, to-day. I'll come an' go horseback, and my horse can graze in cousin 'Lisha's yard days, an' when the weather gets too bad, an' I'm workin' here in the shop with you, why mom says I can board here, if Aunt D'rexy 'll take me."

"Be sure I will," said Aunt D'rexy beaming.

"We lay out to ceil up my room, or lath it, or something, and make some closets and shelves for it by-an'-by, an' you can help," said Heman, looking ecstatically at Joey.

"Say, won't we have good times!" said Joey. "We 'll have a shop of our own some day, a big one, an' nine or ten men working for us, won't we, Heman?"

"Hear them boys talk," said Uncle Heman between sympathy, pity, and admiration. "Boys

allus think they 're goin' to get the earth—don't they, D'rexy?"

The coming of Joey seemed to add to life all it needed to make it blissful, for Joey was a life-long friend, and not only thoroughly sympathetic with Heman by reason of a similar home life, but he had just that amount of docility and admiration which the masterful Heman liked to have his boy intimates possess for him. When Joey arrived he was made partaker of Heman's plan and hope about the purchase of the farm. Joey was at once enthusiastic. "Say, can't you borrow the money and get the farm back right off, Heman? Maybe pop—"

"No," said Heman incisively, "no borrowing for me. I can wait, but I can't go crouching along under a debt to anybody."

Then there was another matter to confide to Joey: the schoolmaster had made out a list of books which every boy should have and read. The book or two on building and architecture had stimulated in Heman a taste for reading. "And then," he said to Joey, "the master knows what's what, and if he says I ought to have 'em I ought to, that's all about it. Besides, Joey, since I've been round some, a house without any books at all in it looks to me terrible low down and ignorant and common. Now I want to be somebody, I tell you. Don't you, Joey?"

“Just make your mind up, I do,” said Joey heartily.

“Books help it along, Joey, and the master says they improve your conversation, and speech stamps a man. I’m trying hard, Joey, to improve my speech ; but I don’t seem to make out much at it yet. Now I don’t expect to get all these books at once, but I’d like to have some, and I don’t see how to begin on any. It would clean break Uncle ‘Rias’ heart if I spent money on books.”

“Let’s see the list,” said Joey ; and read “Robinson Crusoe,” “Pilgrim’s Progress,” “Swiss Family Robinson,” “Bible Dictionary,” “History of the United States,” “History of England,” “History of the World,” “Life of Washington,” “Life of Lincoln,” “Life of Livingstone,” “Æsop’s Fables,” “Tales of the Covenanters,” “Ten Nights in a Bar-Room,” “Snow Bound,” “Tenants of an Old Farm.” “Whew! ain’t there a lot of them. Here’s six books of travels, North and South and all around the world ; and here’s ‘Black Beauty,’ and ‘Josephus,’ and ‘Plutarch’s Lives,’ and more—and I reckon all you’ve got of ‘em is the ‘School Dictionary.’ Well, I’m just as out of books as you are ; our folks never bought any.”

“I have n’t said anything about it,” said Heman, putting the list in his private box. “When-

ever I do get one I will mark it off, and perhaps I'll get round to 'em some day. That list would just scare Uncle 'Rias. Aunt D'rexy's different."

One evening shortly after, as Heman went home from an errand to Simon Fletcher's, Mr. Loring called him. "I'm going to move to New York, Heman, and I'm weeding out my books. There are some suited for younger folks than I am, and Mr. Renfrew has helped me divide them up for the boys here. These two are for you." The two were "Robinson Crusoe," and "Æsop's Fables." Heman went home triumphant, and that evening offered to "read out some." The family agreed, and as Æsop seemed to have the shortest chapters he began on that. Uncle 'Rias at first vowed that it was the "greatest lot of foolishness he ever heard." But the morals commended themselves to his understanding and in spite of talking dogs, lions, foxes, and storks, when the first reading was ended he remarked that "that was the sensiblest silliness ever was dealt out. There were plenty folks acted plum like them animals did: he meant to read over one or two of them ditties for himself to fix them in his mind like: guessed they'd come pat on the nonsense of some of those rattle-headed fellers he had to teach carpentry to. Powerful queer any one could think out such things."

CHAPTER XIV.

DAILY FOOD.

“ When our old pleasures die
Some new one still is nigh—
Oh, fair variety !”

MR. RENFREW had established his club, and before its attractions the back-room of Luke Ward's shop emptied. There was at the new club a lunch-counter where lemonade, apple-tarts, gingerbread, sandwiches and doughnuts could be had at very reasonable rates. They were good too, for the young man, a cripple, who had the counter in charge, hired Aunt D'rexy to prepare what he sold. On one evening in each week there were Club Exercises, debates, recitations, essays, original orations, and once in six months a prize was awarded for the best in each of these exercises. One evening in each week some gentleman of Windle gave a lecture, free, to the lads and their friends. The doctor discoursed of health and sanitation; lawyer Brace gave them points about common law; one of the ministers gave lectures on great men, and another gave a great many wonderful facts and points about the Bible, which made it seem like a new book to the boys, and roused the curiosity

of some to read it. Mr. Renfrew kept the Club rooms open every evening until ten o'clock, but advised lads who had good homes not to attend the Club more than the two evenings weekly of public exercises. "It is well not to have a habit of being out evenings, even in nice places," he said; "home is the best place, and can be made the happiest, and domestic habits are the best habits."

Joey joined the club with Heman, and stayed in the village with Heman on club nights. The rule of the Clump family was as ever, what Joey wants he must have. It was fortunate that Joey was of a tractable, generous, upright nature, and only set his heart on reasonable doings. He was one of the boys that it was not easy to spoil. "He'll never set the world afire," said Uncle 'Riar, "but it's also likely he won't set himself afire, which is the main thing." Joey's Sedan had been when he persuaded his father into allowing him to learn carpentry with Heman. Mr. Clump had had secret longings and visions, that placed on Joey's shoulders the ermine of the Chief Justice, or established him as Secretary of State. To relinquish these had been hard indeed; but—"Joey must have what he wants."

"'Rias,' said D'rexy, "I'm 'fraid you're one of them that drives a free horse to death 'thout

knowing it. Heman's a mighty willin' worker, but I'm thinkin' he works too hard. He's kind of fallin' off in his eatin'. We'd feel terrible if the boy ran down into a sickness. I think for two or three Saturdays you'd ought to make him stop work an' go out to Joey's to stay from Friday night till Monday mornin'."

"Why, D'rexy," cried Urias, amazed, "the boy likes work."

"I've seen folks like pie till they hurt 'em-selves eatin' too much of it. 'Tain't always what we likes is good for us."

D'rexy had prudently broached the subject when Simon Fletcher was sitting on their little porch "talking business" on a night when the two boys were at the Club. Simon was less greedy of gain than Urias, and he promptly saw the right of the case.

"Yes, 'Rias, every boy ought to have a Saturday or so to go fishin' or into the woods camping, sure. Why, bless me, man, fun will never be half so good ag'in as 't is when we're young. One holiday now will give the boy more real joy than fifty when he's our age. I say, you let Heman go for three Sat'days. If you don't, I don't hire him for those three, nor pay him a cent for them. Why, man, you did n't use to be so graspin', though you always was a driver, an' harder on yourself than on anybody else, I'll

allow that. But boys is boys, an' lots more on play than men."

"It's the cravin' to get back our farm," said D'rexy with quick excuse for her husband; "he wants to see me and Aunt Espey where he thinks we pine to be."

"That's all right," said Simon; "but you don't 'make anything by rushing too reckless. Let the boys have a holiday."

"Well," said 'Rias, "if you all say so, why it's so. I don't want any one to think I'm a skinflint. There was Jim Banks—you mind him, Sime? Mean as pusley—meanest man that ever lived. Tell you a little ditty about him. He worked an' made his boys work right along, Sundays and holidays. One Thanksgivin' mornin' he went to thrashin' out wheat, an' some way he lifted his arms up high, an' he could n't get 'em down, nor the folks, nor the doctors—well, not till nigh night; an' then, come to find out, he had some kind of a crick in his back, an' could n't handle his arms, nor his legs any to speak of, an' on his back he lay eight mortal years; and I tell you his boys kep' their holidays, an' a good many other days after that. D'rexy's uncle, the deacon, he went to see him, an' Jim says he could n't see why he had to be laid up like that. Then the deacon he dealt it out to him, that when the Jews would n't keep

Sabbath, the Lord shipped them all to furrin' countries, an' give the land seventy years to rest up in. And the Lord said, 'You would n't keep Sabbath, but now the land's got a Sabbath, a long one.'"

Heman and Joey went off that next Friday night in great splendor. It was a first-class outing from the start. It was Club night, and they remained at the Club until nearly ten. Then they set out on Joey's horse for the Clump homestead. Although it was Joey's horse, Heman rode in front, and Joey sat behind and clasped his waist; that seemed to both boys perfectly natural, and simply showed the relations between them, Heman always being what as a child he had called "head-leader." The moon was in its chiefest glory, shedding a light almost like day. As the boys rode along they whistled, sang, spouted pieces; the sounds of their mirth woke the dogs, who ran frantically out to emulate them; great black forms of cows and horses lifted themselves from the ground and stood watching as they went by. Hay and straw stacks appeared in the fields like hills of silver in the light, and where the horse stepped slowly across little brooklets, these ran as silver streams in that transforming splendor of the moon. It was considered the joke of the season to arouse the Clump family from their sound

slumbers at nearly eleven o'clock and ask them if they could give two poor stragglers food and lodging. Dolly's pretty head appeared out of her up-stairs window, a dark head relieved strongly by a little ruff of white nightgown about her neck as she thrust it cautiously between the folds of the curtain. Joey furtively flung at her a bundle containing Heman's working clothes, which bundle hit not Dolly but the side of the house, and rebounded upon the head of papa Clump, to the great joy of all concerned. Mother Clump assumed that all was right, and that they had "a holiday till Monday;" she insisted upon beginning the rejoicings by a supper of whatever good things her pantry contained, and certain wild sounds at the hen-house indicated that father Clump intended to have fried chicken for breakfast.

Next morning a hasty picnic and fishing party was arranged, and while Dolly and Mrs. Clump filled baskets, Joey and Heman went to ask the boys and girls of the near neighborhood. Robert Corrie could not be found; his father, a slow, calm, elderly man, remarked that "likely Robert had lost himself somewhere. He suspected that he had got hold of a new book, and if he had they were not likely to see much of him till he'd read it through five or six times." Robert's stepmother said that she had

“ seen Robert girning at someting at breakfast, and she reckoned he had his own ideas.”

“ Any way,” said Mr. Corrie, desiring to do justice to all, “ he never takes himself off when there ’s haying, or harvest, or any special work waiting on him.”

“ So,” said Heman, as he and Joey returned home for the baskets, “ Bob Corrie ’s just as dead set on books as ever. Would n’t Master Renfrew doat on him !”

“ Yes,” said Joey, “ he ’s one of the kind that it ’s books or nothing with. Father wishes I was made that way. If I took to books like Rob Corrie does, my folks would be ready to mortgage the farm to put me through college. But I ai n’t that way, not a bit. I just can’t see how folks will spend years in schoolrooms, digging into books just for the sake of learning something. Mr. Corrie don’t take to Bob’s book-learning ; he wants him to be a farmer and run the farm after him ; but father says the Corrie farm is n’t worth much, not by half what Bob’s brains are.”

“ Well, of course,” said Heman, “ the people that study and find out things, and invent and know, make other folks’ work possible.”

At six o’clock in the afternoon the boys and Dolly were resting on the kitchen porch talking over their delightful day, when Robert Corrie

came in at the gate. He was younger than Heman, big for his age, and so evidently absorbed in his thoughts that he scarcely realized where he was until Joey shouted, "Hello, Bob! We could n't find you for our picnic. Where were you keeping yourself?"

"I was up in the top of the barn," said Robert calmly. "Mr. Clump, father want's to know if you'll lend him"—and there Robert made a dead pause. It was a habit of his, when sent on an errand, regularly to forget what he was sent for, and Joey's eyes sparkled with expectation. Robert looked about uneasily—he had been sent for something, and must fetch something. "A ladder," he concluded at random.

"Certainly," said Mr. Clump, "it is lying backside of the wood-shed. You can have it, Robert."

Robert found the ladder, which was long and heavy, about twice too big for him to carry. In fact, he could not carry it at all, but placing one end over his neck, valiantly proceeded to drag it.

"Let's help him," said Heman, "he can't carry that ladder." So he and Joey hastened to thrust their heads through the ladder at the middle and the dragging end, and thus the long ladder was triumphantly borne away, as a new style of yoke for three boys.

“What can Elder Corrie want of that ladder?” said Mr. Clump to his wife. “Corrie’s got two ladders of his own.”

“Like as not he never sent for it,” said Mrs. Clump. “Last time Robert was sent here to borrow, he came and asked me for a bushel basket, and instead of that his mother’d sent him to borrow my washboard, ’cause her’s had broke in two.”

Mr. Clump concluded to follow the boys and see it out. The Corries lived near, and presently Mr. Corrie could be seen standing at his gate, looking with great interest at the singular procession coming up the road. Presently he recognized his offspring with his head thrust between two rungs of the ladder, heading the march.

“Why, Robert,” said Mr. Corrie in his slow, calm fashion. “What are you doing with that ladder?”

Whereupon the line of march halted summarily, as Robert stayed his steps. He began to realize a blunder—somewhere. Mr. Clump moved to the head of the line.

“Why, Elder, did n’t you send for my ladder? That’s what the boy asked for?”

“Ladder!” said Elder Corrie desparingly, “I’ve got two ladders; but I just broke the handle clean off my sickle, as I was trimming

out round the yard bushes for Mrs. Corrie, and I sent to borrow yours to finish the job. Robert, *can't* you remember an errand ever? You *will* go mooning about."

Robert was overwhelmed with mortification, he was so humiliated he wished he could fall through the ground.

Mr. Clump lifted the end of the ladder from the boy's neck. "As long's I'm goin' back," he said, "I might as well carry your part of it, Bob. Elder, my sickle's lost, I hav n't seen it for two weeks. My wife's been warnin' me to get a new one the first time I go to town."

"Well, I'm going there Monday. I'll bring two," said Elder Corrie. "I might have known Robert would n't get his errand straight. He's been up in the barn all day readin' a book he borrowed from the lady that boards for the summer over at the Sinnet farm. Why, that boy never remembered to come down for dinner! Guess he'd forgot his supper, only he'd finished the book. I'll have to let him go to school and college, I reckon, though it is terrible trying to me. He ai n't sense enough for farming."

"Trying!" said Mr. Clump, while the ladder shook with the laughter of its boy supporters, delighted with Mr. Corrie's tale, and Robert, greatly discomfited had mounted the nearest

gate post, a monument of dejection. "Trying! Why, Elder, I'd jumped for joy if I could have made a scollard out of that Joey of mine! That's the way with scollards, them that wants them don't have them, folks that don't want 'em gets 'em. Why, you ought to be proud to think of a judge, or a preacher, or a doctor, or may be even a college professor out of your boy! You Joey! You need 'nt laugh till you shake this cripplly old ladder to pieces. I've been powerful disappointed in you, that I have."

As the three ladder bearers disappeared, Elder Corrie turned reproachful eyes on his son. "Robert, why can't you ever remember things? Your mother says you forgot to dig the potatoes, and to shell corn for the chickens. Mornins you always forget to put on your jacket when you come out of your room to make the kitchen fire; you 'll get your death of cold doing that some day! I've warned you time and time again! Your mother says you always forget to put on your overalls when you milk Sunday nights. Robert, if ever you get married I pity your wife; you are so forgetful, she 'll be made the most miserable of women."

"Yes," spoke up Robert, who had now got on ground which seemed to him reasonable and capable of being logically occupied, "so she would, if I married one of the idiot kind of

women, that just take it out whining and let themselves be miserable ; but if I marry a woman that's got sense, and won't stand capers, she'll soon settle me, and be real contented ; so 'll I."

At the beginning of this oration concerning matrimony, Robert had intended to go at once and attend to the potatoes and the corn, but he forgot it by the time he had closed his period, and he continued on the gate post, while his father slowly went in to discourse with his wife about his son.

Robert forgot even to be wretched about the episode of the ladder, and the thought that Heman and the Clumps, father and son, were laughing at him all the way home. Elder Corrie had spoken more wisely than he knew when he accused his descendant of "mooning;" the moon was to blame for it all. As Robert set out towards the Clumps he beheld a great, round, glaring disk wheeling up behind a low barren hill—the full moon. All that day, lying on the hay high up in the barn, he had been reading a marvellous book about the heavens. That book had told him of suns and systems, of millions of worlds wheeling in space, of laws that govern all, of close mathematical calculations that can grasp the distances, the orbits, the returns of the heavenly orbs along their pathways.

He had read of flawless order, of harmony, of symmetry, of uncalculable ages and distances and numbers; of knowledge that had read the mysteries of the new worlds. What wonder he had forgotten a sickle or a ladder, when he saw the great, new-risen moon?

CHAPTER XV.

LIVING—AS A PROFESSION.

“Life is not idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears
And dipped in baths of hissing tears
And battered with the shocks of doom,
To shape and use.”

“SCHOOLMASTER,” said Heman, “you’re going to have a new scholar next term, Robert Corrie, from up where we used to live. He’s got through all they teach out there, and his father’s been trying to make a farmer out of him and he can’t. Bob don’t know anything at all.”

“Oh,” said the schoolmaster, but there was something in that little syllable that seemed to put Heman upon the defensive.

“I mean he’s just the kind you’ll like; he don’t know anything but books, has n’t any common sense, you see.”

“Oh,” said the schoolmaster again, and Heman felt still more at a loss, and floundered into further explanations.

“Rob don’t know any useful things, nothing that’s worth knowing. Don’t you see?”

“No, I don’t see,” said the schoolmaster severely, “but I was early taught that there is no balder proof of our own ignorance than to decry the knowledge which we do not possess.”

Heman looked so mortified at this unusually sharp rebuke that he hung his head and his face reddened.

Mr. Renfrew pitied him and said, “Heman, I wanted to give you a lesson once for all; you’ll injure yourself by undervaluing any kind of useful learning, it will stand in the way of your own mental growth, and will mark you among intelligent people as narrow-minded and untaught. I am sincerely anxious for you to be the best that you can be, and I don’t like to have you put stumbling-stones in your own path. You are much given to decrying the knowledge that is to be found in books. Let us consider it a little. Ship-building is a trade you appreciate; but how much ship-building would there be if little vessels, rowed, or driven by clumsy sails, crept along the shores, and none dared venture out on the ocean far from land? The men who have studied astronomy, or discovered the mariner’s compass, or applied themselves to mathematics, have made the traverse of the sea by great ships possible. Men in laboratories, studying chemistry, have taught the possibilities of dyeing and fabric printing; men

devoted to the study of electricity have opened all the wide field of electrical pursuits and labors; chemists again have discovered new substances, and the new uses of old ones. I could show you how the labors of the brain-worker and the hand-worker meet and mingle, and how both need all the ranks of traders to get their goods into the market. Think of these things."

"Well, yes, I see there's a good deal in that, Mr. Renfrew; but I spoke of Bob, thinking of how funny he does act at home;" and Heman, all his buoyant good humor recovered, told the story of the ladder, and various other incidents.

The schoolmaster laughed. "Mr. Corrie stopped to see me to-day about Robert; he seems to be really disappointed that the boy wants to go through college and study a profession. I told him he had no more right to quarrel with Providence about the turn of the lad's mind, then he had to quarrel about the color of his eyes or hair, or that he was a boy and not a girl. The Lord knows what kind of people he wants in the world, and what he wants them to do in it."

"The Corries have n't much property," said Uncle 'Rias, "an' maybe they feel it'll be a heavy strain to send a boy through college. It costs a mint of money, I hear tell."

"That depends largely upon the boy, and

whether he has wasteful habits. A lad can help himself by teaching, or by work in vacation, or taking years off for work. It makes him slower in getting through a course, but it is no real injury, for he values what he learns in proportion to the effort to attain it; and what we study in severer branches, when we are past the first years of early youth, may perhaps be better assimilated. I earned much of the money that was spent on my education. I believe the earning was good discipline for me."

"Elder Corrie's father was tol'ble rich," said Urias. "When I was a little shaver terrible poor, I thought old Si Corrie was about as rich as folks need to be. He lost most of his money, one way or another, before he died, an' his nine chill'en divided up the rest an' scattered off like leaves flyin' in autumn from a popple tree. Elder Corrie took after his mother, quiet, patient, nice spoken, an' unenterprisin', an' he stuck by part of the old farm that was left. I can tell you a little ditty 'bout old Si Corrie. Folks used to talk 'bout him bein' so terrible penurious. Did all the buyin' at the stores himself, 'cause he could 'nt bear to trust any one with his dimes. When he bought things at the grocery, he'd buy such a little teenty bit, that seems like it would scarcely last him till he got home an' turned round twice. Folks commented on it,

an' I heard 'em, for chillen hears most everything, an' it is a pity there's so much foolishness in the world for 'em to hear! Well, one day I was in the grocery down at the cross roads, an' in come Si Corrie an' asks for coffee. He smelt it, an' he priced it, an' he chewed it, and finally says he, 'You may put me up a half a pound.' Well, there I stood, a little spud of ten or thereabouts, an' knee-high to a grasshopper. So I has to put my oar in the conversation. Says I, 'You better make it a quarter stid of a half, Mr. Corrie.' The men was all tryin' to keep from larfin' out, an' he, bein' a big, tall, bean-polish man, looks down on me and says, 'Well, I have heard of folks that got rich by mindin' their own business.' So I had 'nt made much out of Si Corrie. Me an' my folks was pretty poor, an' I ain't rich yet, nor never was; but likewise Si Corrie did 'nt die rich. His riches took wings an' flew away, but I dunno which way they went, I don't. D'rexy's uncle, the deacon, allowed that Si Corrie had 'nt gone partners with the Lord, had never given to the Lord's work, had n't any salt of givin' on his gettings; and it stood to reason they would n't keep."

"I've made a long call," said the schoolmaster, "I only stopped to tell you, Heman, that I have another book for you; it is on your

list: 'Tales of the Covenanters.' Remember, every word of it is true, and it is a record of the sufferings and courage of men who were trying to act according to conscience. Read some of it aloud to your family. They'll enjoy it, I am sure."

Having that list, and marking from it each book he secured, made Heman more eager for the books and more interested in them. Æsop's Fables had been read through, and now the family were much more delighted with these tales of wild heath and craggy glen, of the mountain and the flood, and the hardy sons of the soil, who toiled and bled and died for their faith. Uncle 'Rias became much enraptured with stories of conventicles wrapped in thick mist as in a mantle, while the Claverhouse dragoons swept by; of caves where good men lay, secretly fed by the hands of little children; of hours when God's people prayed, and the hunted wanderers were, by blown branches, or soft falling snow, or marvellous murkiness of some night, hidden as if in God's pavillion, or under the blessed shadow of his outstretching wings.

"Don't it make one wish that he had lived in those days," cried Heman to Mr. Renfrew, when he was sitting with them as he often did, for Master Renfrew looked after his boys closely, and not by halves. "It would have been worth

while to have lived then, one could have really been a hero!"

"Why not be a hero in any age one is born in?"

"'Cause you can't," said Heman promptly. "There's nothing to be a hero about. What's going on now, schoolmaster, to make heroes?"

"Just the same that has always gone on, Heman; the constant strife between good and evil, the battle with temptation. You think the only hero is he who bravely affronts death. But the greatest heroes may be those who dare bravely to affront life. Perhaps you think also that only the young and strong are heroes, only men; some of the noblest heroes have been the aged, or children, or women. The living sacrifice is often more precious to God than the sacrifice lying dead on the altar; the heroism of daily holy living is a nobler sacrifice and perhaps a costlier martyrdom than the sacrifice by fire. We can lay ourselves as a sacrifice on the altar of self-surrender, and then we have fellowship with our Lord, indeed, for this is what he did."

Heman was too young and inexperienced to fully grasp this discourse, but Uncle 'Rias and Aunts D'rexy and Espey had learned its weight in many life lessons. Uncle 'Rias said, "Schoolmaster, it's always surprised me that you are

not a preacher. You'd be very powerful in the pulpit. 'Pears to me you ought to take that callin'. Why don't you?"

"I think I have certain real gifts for teaching, and for helping the young," said George Renfrew; "and besides that, my throat is not fit for the sustained labor of the pulpit. My voice becomes rough and loses itself, and I lose control over it, if I say more than a few sentences at a time in a tone above conversational."

"That's a pity," said Aunt D'rexy, "terrible pity; nat'rally weak?"

"Oh, no; my voice was remarkably strong, but I overstrained it singing. I was quite a famous little choir singer, and my voice broke down entirely." He spoke cheerfully, and did not add that the destruction of a remarkable voice, the renunciation of a longing desire to be a preacher, was a sacrifice laid on the altar of self-surrender. If he had, Heman might have seen before him a hero. George Renfrew did not consider himself in that light. He had knowingly sacrificed his voice, because so doing he procured the comforts of life for a sick mother, and made it possible for her to die in her own home, and not among strangers. He was now sacrificing farther opportunities of study for himself, in order to complete the school education of two young sisters, and enable them to

support themselves. He did not consider this at all heroic : he loved these sisters, they were his mother's legacy to him ; this was doing with his might the work that his hand found to do, as his Master had commanded.

The remarks of the master did not bring Heman to think that the heroism that is apart from swords and pistols or vigorously used fists, is the finest heroism. To him a battle of any kind had a charm, though as he remarked, "He wanted to be on the right side."

One noon, the schoolmaster, returning from his dinner, found Heman planing with all his might. He sat down on a bundle of shingles and asked, "Is it well for you to work your noon hour, Heman?"

"Not as a general thing ; and I don't do it except when I have time to make up. I was ten minutes late beginning this morning. Uncle 'Rias always has us count our time, and if we lose five or ten minutes beginning, we have to make it up somewhere. Jem Dake proposed to make lost time up by hurrying after we began, but Uncle 'Rias said, 'No ; for we were bound to work as fast as we could work well, anytime.' I stopped to polish off Peter Forbes, as I came along to-day, and so I got here late. But I thrashed him, though."

"Oh !" said the schoolmaster. That "Oh !"

always disturbed Heman, it had a singular potency in bringing up both sides of a question. Invariably Heman was by it collared, dragged to the bar of his own judgment, and made to plead his case.

“You see, I and Peter Forbes have had tiffs all along: we never could get along together well; and when he began on me again this morning, I thought I might as well have it out with him then and there.”

“Oh!” said the schoolmaster.

“He’s one of the kind I never could abide, and it seemed it would be time well spent to give him a lesson about what I’d stand. He’s done me more’n one mean turn, with his tongue and other ways. He’s played right mean tricks on me.”

“Francis Quarles says,” quoth the schoolmaster, “that he is below himself who is not above an injury.”

Heman meditated on this sentence until he ended the fifteen minutes’ work he had assigned himself.

“Why fifteen?” asked the master as Heman looked toward the town clock.

“Uncle ’Rias says we ought to give good measure when we work over time—because we are not so fresh, and don’t do as hearty work as when we begin the day.”

"I see. You are a boy that can take advice when you see sense in it. How about Peter Forbes? He's a bright fellow. I account that he'll be one of our future politicians and public speakers."

"He can't get me to vote for him if he is," said Heman with marked animosity.

"I see that you are not as entirely right in the difficulty as you wish to think yourself, and that you did not thrash him as completely as you would like to have done."

"How do you know that?" asked Heman, with a sidelong grin.

"If you had been entirely free from blame, you would find it easier to forgive, and would not carry your rancor through life. If you had really thrashed Peter, you would also have felt ready to forgive; generosity is easy to victors."

"Well," said Heman, "I was getting the best of him; could have thrashed him handsomely I know; but town marshal Perry came along, and says, 'You boys, stop that; if I see any more of that, I'll have you both before the mayor.'"

"As for thrashing him handsomely, if he don't look any handsomer than you do after the encounter," said the master, "I don't see where the handsome comes in; that blue mark on your cheek, that torn sleeve, I don't consider really

handsome. Is it lawful to tell me what opened the battle this morning?"

"Why, schoolmaster, just as you said, Peter can speak; he's got the gift of gab, and I have n't, and don't pretend to have. As far as I can see it is n't his praise nor my blame; but Peter is so proud of his speaking that he's always running the rest of us that can't speak, and make blunders in club and break down. This morning he was guying me for not being able to do anything worth while at club last night. I did n't need to have him tell me I made a fizzle, and I don't lay out to stay at home from club because I can't speak fluently and can't take prizes."

"It is true," said the master, "as Lavater said, 'that not every one who has the gift of speech understands the value of silence.' You are quite right about the club work, although speaking is not your forte; to learn is the main thing, not to take prizes or get admiration."

"Fred told me Peter made fun of me to the boys."

"Fred should never have told that: the Bible says, 'a whisperer separateth chief friends,' and also, 'thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.' 'The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.' I don't say you should never fight; you may really need to; fights and

wars are sometimes a needed remedy ; but the less of them the better. After all, is Peter's offence so great? Turn it around : you are as proud of your strength as he of his speech. You laugh at boys who cannot do feats of strength, as he laughs at those who can't speak well. You beat him in the gymnasium, he beats you on the platform. If you're going to be bad friends with a boy, size it up, and see what there is after all to quarrel over."

Heman began to smile a little, then with that winning ingenuousness which was his shining natural trait, and endeared him to people, he said, "Mr. Renfrew, last Sunday afternoon we were talking at our house, and Aunt D'rexy said she did n't see how people got on who began the day without having prayers. She said prayers to begin with helped folks over hard places, and started them on the day right. So I spoke up, I did n't see as prayers 'd do much good if a fellow's mind was wandering away from them till he never knew what was read about, or prayed for. Aunt Espey allowed our minds were our own, and we were bound to keep them in proper order, and not let our thoughts go wandering like fools' eyes to the ends of the earth. Well, this very morning, all the time Uncle 'Rias was reading and praying, my mind was off contriving about making me a

nice little book-case next fall, like one I saw in Mr. Paull's shop window. Well, sir, just as soon as ever I was off from the house, I got my eyes on Peter Forbes; my dander rose right up, and it did n't take us two minutes to square off at each other, dropping our things wherever they'd lie, and then we sailed into each other—like a pair of idiots, I suppose."

"Yes, I reckon you looked like a pair of half-grown shanghai chicks, trying a battle. Your aunt is right about the value of prayers, we are much more likely to pursue our profession honorably if we have for our manners and morals a solid foundation of religion."

"Oh, but that don't mean me; I've no profession."

"There is one profession that belongs to every human being born into a civilized community; whatever is his chosen daily calling—before, behind, above all, is the profession of right-living, in which we should educate and conduct ourselves the most perfectly possible. You may make your bread, Heman, one way or another, but if you follow right living as a carefully pursued profession, you will round out yourself into a nobility and usefulness, a ripeness and beauty of character, as a complete man, that will make the living itself admirable and beautiful. You may be here, sawing, planing,

driving nails; another man may be making brick, or pleading a case, or measuring cloth or coffee; behind and over-reaching all these common-place actions, is your thinking, your feeling, your inner springs of action, yourself, that should from cradle to grave, helped by others sometimes, remitted to yourself mostly, follow right living as the highest possible profession, because of the elements of eternity in it."

The schoolmaster rose and walked away, leaving Heman to his reflection. It seemed he was a professional man without intending it, and many other people were in the same state. Simon Fletcher came back with the men.

"Can I have five or six of those board ends, to make a dog kennel?" asked Heman.

"Certainly; you can have any from that pile of pieces. Did n't know you kept a dog."

"I don't," said Heman; but later in the afternoon he might have been heard hailing from the roof of an L—— that he was shingling:

"Oh, ho! Peter Forbes, hold on; I've got some boards for you to make a kennel for your dog. Carry 'em down to my shop and I'll show you how after tea, if you will come round."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COMMON THINGS OF LIFE.

“ Oh, be very sure
That no man will learn anything at all,
Unless he first will learn humility.”

HEMAN was one of the boys who are very fond of their friends, very loyal and faithful to them, yet having foes as well as friends, and with hostilities as deeply rooted as his friendships. Boys that liked Heman liked him very devotedly; boys that did not like him, regularly quarreled with him on principle, and he met them in the quarrel half way. Aunt D'rexy had often said with regret that “ Heman does n't know how to get on real well with boys!” “ S'pose you don't love 'em all, you need n't fight 'em,” she would say to the lad, in mild reproof. This call to Peter Forbes about the boards was the first real effort Heman had ever made to settle a misunderstanding with a comrade. When he called from the roof, Peter had it on the tip of his tongue to shout back, “ No, I don't want your old boards, nor your carpentry either!” Heman looked and sounded so thoroughly honest and cheery, and Peter did really want the boards greatly; his dog was his treasure and he

had longed to have a nice little house for him, with his name painted on the front. Moved by these considerations he shouted, "All right," and went off with his arms filled with new boards. When Heman went home to supper he took some waste scraps of moulding, to give the dog house a finished appearance.

Two evenings of hammering, sawing, discussing, made Heman and Peter very good friends. The doghouse was finished. "It only needs paint to make it perfect!" cried Peter. "I'm no end obliged to you, Heman; you've been real kind."

"They'll lend you a pot of paint and a brush at the paint shop, and let you paint it yourself for a dime," said Heman. "Or you can whitewash it. Get a lump of lime and pour boiling water on it, and cover it up till it slacks. Then stir in a handful of salt, and if you want it tinted blue, put in some indigo, or if you want it yellow, stir in some ground gamboge. You can get enough lime for a cent, and coloring enough for two cents."

"How'd you come to know so many things like that?"

"Because I've always been working. Aunt D'rexy had me whitewash the fences and smokehouse and so on, at our farm, from the summer I was ten; and I helped her mix the stuff

always. I always worked with her and Uncle 'Rias."

"Well, my work out of school has always been at the store, weighing and measuring; but I'm going to add to that as I go on. I'm going into politics; a store gives you a good place to start that. I talked to Mr. Renfrew about it, and he told me what magazines and papers I ought to get to study up questions in, and see how much is to be said on both sides of most any question. I'm going to learn to take large views of things," added Peter, quoting the master.

"Going to read and study evenings?" asked Heman.

"Yes; uncle gives me my evenings, if I don't waste them on the streets; he's kind of cross, but he's honorable. I'd have to read the things I need at the club, for we don't have them at our home, only one New York paper. What do you do evenings?"

"I'm so sleepy I usually go to bed at nine, but before that I often read to the folks. Master Renfrew has helped me to some nice books," replied Heman, "and I mean to get more."

At this time Heman had begun reading that very marvellous book, "Robinson Crusoe." The "Fables" and the "Tales of the Covenanters" had reconciled even Uncle 'Rias to reading mat-

ter. When Heman began the Confessions of Crusoe, Uncle 'Rias settled back in his chair saying, "Ya'as, 'pears like that feller did n't know when he was well off. Now you mark, Heman, how boys get come up with that set themselves up against the orders of their elders. That Robinson 's going to see trouble, I 'm sure of it."

Sometimes, pondering by day over what had been read at night, Uncle 'Rias would become critical and say, " I don't believe any one person ever had all them adventures! There 's always a let up somewhere ;" but when evening came again, and the story once more resumed its sway, its singular verisimilitude overcame all his doubts. Crusoe became as one whom he had known from childhood ; he would as soon have doubted the existence of his own grandfather, or his friend Clump, or the minister, as Crusoe's ; while as for pinning faith to the narrative, he would as quickly have doubted the word of Master Renfrew or Aunt D'rexy as the veracity of Crusoe ! Uncle 'Rias was childlike enough to be completely carried away by the tale ; the raft, the dismantled ship, the cave, the cabin, the crops and the hedges, captivated his fancy. He conversed of these things at meal times, and meditated on them as he went to and fro for his toil. But once on the ground and at work, Un-

cle 'Rias single-mindedly thought of nothing but his business—that was what made him so accurate.

Even on Sunday it was hard to get their thoughts off Crusoe. Aunt Espey as she took up her Bible remarked, what a great blessing it had been for Crusoe to save a Bible, and that he like many other people got into the valley of Achor before he found a door of hope.

Heman asking what that meant was bidden to read at once the second chapter of the prophecy of Hosea.

Aunt D'rexy as she came home from church observed that of all Crusoe's misfortunes it seemed the most pitiful that he could n't get to church, or hear a sermon, or a prayer-meeting talk.

Uncle 'Rias opined that "it must have rested terrible hard on him that he might die all alone there, and never get Christian burial." Then he added that many poor sailors had such lines dealt out to them, and they had for their consolation that it would n't hinder them from rising at the last day; also it was written that the sea shall give up her dead.

Still they found other Sabbath themes than Crusoe.

"I saw Elder Corrie," said Uncle 'Rias after dinner, "and he said Henry Grant refused to

take charge of the neighborhood prayer-meeting next winter, because Elder Corrie was asked first. Henry Grant says if he'd been wanted he'd been asked first. Now there can't everyone be asked first, and asking Corrie don't show that they wouldn't be pleased to have Henry. I tell you, D'rexy, it's a terrible thing for the Lord's people to be so thin-skinned, and so notional and quick to take offence. Why we ought to regard it a favor to be asked to do anything for God; and instead of that, most people seem to regard that they're doing the church a favor to agree to take hold of religious work. That's all wrong."

"It's lack of humility," said Aunt D'rexy, "it's spiritual pride, and yet that's something people hardly ever know that they're afflicted with. They'd be surprised to hear one say it."

"D'rexy," said Uncle 'Rias, leaning back in his rocker and eyeing his "patent leg," you remind me of a ditty about your uncle, the deacon. He was speaking in meeting, and making one of his most powerful talks, for in a common-sensical way he was as powerful a man as ever I heard. We had several in our meeting at that time who prayed humility and lived pride. Perhaps they're not all dead yet. So some of these men had been praying that the Lord

would clothe them with the garment of humiliation, and so on, when your uncle, the deacon, rose up and says, 'Brethren, we've been praying for the garment of humiliation for a long time; it strikes me we'd better take a hand in it. Let a man get to work and keep on working, and he'll be humiliated fast enough. There's folks praying for humility that is too proud to do the Lord's work if they ain't first asked; there are parties that refuse to pray because they're afraid some one will criticise their style of praying; they won't bear an honest testimony to the goodness of God, because they heard that somebody said some one else could speak better. Such people are not truly seeking to do the service of God, but are desiring the praise of men, and are puffed up in their fleshly minds.' That's what your uncle, the deacon, said, D'rexy, and it was true, every word of it."

Said Aunt Espey, in her slow, soft voice, "When a man truly begins to serve God, 'pears to me he puts himself, his doings, his time, all he is and all he's got, on God's altar; after that it don't make much difference what way he's used, because which ever way it is, that's God's way."

Living where he daily heard such high thinking, and saw it accompanied by good do-

ing, Heman could scarcely fail of building up a noble character himself. He saw in Uncle 'Rias an example of patience in adversity. True, the adversity had fallen out as the result of his own fault, but that consideration only makes hard natures harder. From being the leading carpenter of a neighborhood which could keep him busy, from being a master and employing men, he was now man for a master, and being hindered by his lameness, and having fallen behind in improvements and knowledge of his work, he was offered instead of houses, little odd jobs to do. He took all cheerfully, and put his best work upon them.

Mr. Sloane came one day to ask Uncle 'Rias and Heman to rebuild the smoke-house and fences, and repair various small damages of the fire; the big stables and barn had been rebuilt by other workmen long before.

"Don't know how you and the boy get on in work, Uncle 'Rias," said Mr. Sloane, "probably you're not up to your old mark; but you'll do your best, and likely it'll do for these things."

"I reckon," said Uncle 'Rias. "I've been working on good jobs all summer."

"Yes, yes; I know it; but you had Simon Fletcher over you, and two or three grown men working with you."

Uncle 'Rias felt hurt, but endured it cour-

ageously; the work for Fletcher was at stay for two or three weeks, in all parts that Uncle 'Rias and Heman could do, so he cheerfully took the not very courteous offer of work from Mr. Sloane.

That obtuse individual went on: "It's a mighty good thing, 'Rias, that you're able to work some just now. By the time you get where you can't do anything, maybe the boy'll be where he can maintain the family of you. I do hate to see a man of your standing, who has been as industrious as you have, come to be brought down to live on the town."

Then Heman's wrath rose, as Uncle 'Rias flushed purple. They both knew that Mr. Sloane had intended no insult, but they were terribly hurt. Heman spoke up roundly:

"My people will never come on the town, Mr. Sloane. We don't mean to stay in this house for ever, either; it does for now, but we mean to have back the farm. We are laying up money for it, and when the money is in hand we look for you to sell us back the place. You said once, when I saved your horses, you'd do any favor I asked you. All the favor I expect to ask is that you'll let me have the farm when I can pay for it, and that you'll not sell it meanwhile."

"Whew-w-w! You've taken a big contract with yourself, boy!"

“Not so big but what we ’ll fill it. We are all working together for it,” said Heman sturdily. “We ’ll do our part fairly.”

Mrs. Sloane had come with her husband to visit Aunt D’rexy while the men talked business. Now she entered into the business herself.

“Heman, I like your grit. I am sure you ’ll get back that farm. The Lord helps those that turn in to help themselves the way you do ; it is a true word of Scripture that the righteous are never forsaken. Husband, you promise the lad what he wants, that you won’t sell the Sinnet Farm over his head, but when he’s able to take it, he can have it at a fair bargain. That’s only right. Yes, Heman, he will promise that, and I ’ll see that we both stand to it.”

Now Mistress Sloane’s word was family law.

Mr. Sloane laughed. “All right, Mandy. Yes, of course I ’ll not stand in the way of their getting back their farm. I ’d enjoy seeing them do it, so long as I don’t lose by it. Say, Heman, what for a start have you made at it, so far?”

Heman shook his head. “That’s what we don’t tell, and I don’t know as we could if we wanted to. Aunt D’rexy keeps hold of the money. We earn it, and she earns some too.”

“I should say she did!” cried Mrs. Sloane. “If it is n’t earning to make one dollar do the

work of two, I don't know what is coming, for my part. Yet men, mostly, don't count that any earning at all."

"'Pears like that's so," said Uncle 'Rias, "though I never thought of it before; business and making money did n't 'pear to me to join in with women folks."

"Did n't? I'd have thought a religious man like you would have read his Bible better," said Mrs. Sloane smartly.

"But what's in the Bible 'bout that?" asked Uncle 'Rias.

"What! Oh, how little folks know about the Bible, even after they've read it all their lives. Did n't you ever dwell upon the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs? Don't it say, 'She considereth a field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her own hands she planteth a vineyard. She maketh fine linen and selleth it. She delivereth girdles to the merchant. She is like the merchant ships, she bringeth food from afar?'"

"Well, well, so it does!" cried Uncle 'Rias.

The summer sped by like a dream, all the hard-working days went so fast that the weeks melted together, and the months ran into each other, as on a swiftly-moving train the fence-posts or telegraph-poles blend and fly by in a blurred line. The week before Thanksgiving Mrs. Clump came in to spend the day, and to

bring an offering of dried fruit and apple-butter.

"We want you all to come and spend Thanksgiving with us," she said. "We'll come for you in the spring-wagon Wednesday night, and bring you home Monday morning. You can get one of your neighbors to see to your cow and chickens for the milk. We'll have a real outing, if you'll come. It'll be like getting home. Elder Corrie's nephew, Mr. Reynolds, is going to give us a Thanksgiving sermon at the school-house, and he's going to preach there Sunday, and they do say he is a fine preacher. There's lots of apples and nuts and pop-corn for the boys, and sorghum molasses to make candy. They'll just be in their element."

The idea of such a holiday, four whole days to do nothing but visit, overcame the whole family; a similar occasion had never presented itself to them. Fairyland, the return of the Golden Age, childhood with its playdays, all that was dazzling and beautiful, seemed embraced in that simple invitation. Even Uncle 'Rias, who made it a point of principle to work fourteen or fifteen hours for six days in every week, was lured by the prospect of four days to sit or lounge about, rehearse neighborhood gossip, and tell ditties with Mr. Clump and Elder Corrie.

The gorgeousness of the whole affair began Wednesday evening, when the Corries and their nephew, Mr. Reynolds came over to sit with the Clumps, and Mistress Clump hospitably served out to them pound-cake and coffee until even the three boys could take no more.

Heman and Joey were up early to visit certain traps in the woods. Heman had made ingenious traps, and Joey was to watch them and keep them baited, the boys dividing the spoils. Heman meant to buy his Bible Dictionary and a History of the United States with money gained by the skins of muskrats, squirrels and rabbits.

Dinner was a glorious succession of roast turkey, chicken pie, vegetables, pickles, fruits, pumpkin pies, and all that the heart of a boy could desire in the way of eating.

In the afternoon, about dusk, they all went to Elder Corrie, and while the grown-ups occupied the front room, the boys presently drifted into the tidy kitchen where Dora Ann, the hired help, who had gone to ride with her young man, had obligingly left apples to roast, and a big pan of cracked nuts.

Mr. Reynolds presently followed the boys. He sat down in the row before the roasting apples and privately confiscated a book into which Robert was casting surreptitious glances—a book

on astronomy which Mr. Reynolds himself had brought the book-hungry boy.

"No you don't," laughed Mr. Reynolds; "playtime for play, and when your friends are on hand don't divide them with books."

"I'll go and put it away and bring a dish of Dora Ann's crullers."

"Don't Dora Ann make the best things!" cried Joey, as he took half a cruller at a bite.

"Yes—but—she don't know anything," said Robert.

"No? I thought she knew a great deal," said Mr. Reynolds.

"Oh, no, not a thing. Let me tell you what she said to me yesterday. She was mending my jacket, and in the pocket was a leaf with a picture of Saturn on it. Saturn, in the picture, was as big as a black walnut. Mr. Renfrew gave it to me. Dora Ann says, 'What's that thing?' I said 'One of the stars.' And Dora Ann said, 'Why, are stars as big as that?' I asked her how big she thought stars were, and she said, 'about as big as peanuts or bees; only I know that the moon is bigger. It is as big as my bread bowl; I have seen it that size.' 'If it was only as big as your bread bowl,' I said, 'you could not see it at all, it is so far off.' Dora Ann said, 'The church spire top is not too far off to see, and why could n't I see my bread bowl if it

was as high up as the moon?' Then I asked her, 'How high up is the moon?' and she said, 'Oh, a yard or so above the spire!' I told her I'd lend her a book that would tell her all about that, and she'd know better; but she said she did n't care to know. The stars are nothing to her she says, they don't make any difference, and she is as well off as if she knew all the wisdom in the world. She says she likes best to know things with some sense in them, like making bread and mending jackets."

Heman and Joey laughed at all this, more at Robert's disgusted manner and contempt in telling it, than at the preferred ignorance of Dora Ann.

Then Heman said, "Well, I was making fun of somebody once who only knew books, stars, and so on, and did n't know how to mix white-wash or drive a nail, and Mr. Renfrew told me it was a mark of ignorance to scorn the knowledge we don't possess. That has made me pretty careful since, at least of talking out scorn, whatever I felt. Perhaps we ought not to think what Dora Ann knows is of no account, at least while we eat her crullers."

"But what is the use in knowing about such far off things as stars?" said Joey, frankly.

"King David found some use in it," said Mr. Reynolds. "He said, 'When I consider Thy

heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him.' And again, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.' I tell you, boys, we should respect the handwriting of God wherever we see it, in skies, or plants, or seas—everywhere, anywhere. And speaking of seas, I have a plan to propose. I must leave here next Tuesday. You boys all go on Monday morning. I am wild to have a sail and a fishing party, as I propose that early to-morrow we take Joey's horse and our light wagon, a big quilt each, some towels, some soap, a bushel basket with bread, eggs, coffee, salt pork, apples, a hatchet, and our fishing tackle, and go to the beach to that fisher's house that is always empty at this time of the year. There is a stove and table in it. We'll camp there. I'll hire some one to take us out fishing in his cat-boat to-morrow, and we'll cook our fish, all we want, and bring home the rest. Saturday we'll have a sail to the light-house, go for oysters and clams, catch what fish we can on the way, and get home by eight o'clock ; it is now moonlight."

Scarcely were the words said before three boys were falling over each other in zeal to invade the front room, shouting, "With Mr. Reynolds! The greatest lark! Fishing! Sailing! Early to-morrow—oysters—clams—camping—spring wagon—horse."

No one would have guessed what the jargon meant, had not Mr. Reynolds expounded his design to the elders the previous evening. So now they were met with, "Oh, yes! All right!"

"Ai n't them boys happy," said Aunt D'rexy, "makes me feel young again myself."

"I had an outing once or twice," said Aunt Espey, "when I was young, and I tell you it kept my heart warm for years."

"I could tell you several little ditties about outings I had," said Urias.

"Does seem queer to me they'd like such didoes as that, when they'd a chance for good cooking and clean beds at home," said Robert's puzzled step-mother.

CHAPTER XVII.

FINDING THE HOLY GRAIL.

“Then moved the trees; the copses nod;
Wings flutter, voices hover clear.
Oh, just and faithful knight of God,
Ride on, the prize is near.”

IN the grey dawn the spring wagon, filled with the three lads, Mr. Reynolds, the camp utensils and food, rattled over the frozen ground out of Mr. Corrie's lane. The joyful whoops and songs of the boys woke the echoes along the road. The air was mild for November; the sun soon rose in splendor and thawed the thin ice in the runnels beside the way. Joey's sturdy little horse seemed as zealous as the boys to get on, and by nine o'clock their camp was all in order at the fishing cabin, the horse was tied in a little lean-to, thatched with sea-grass, and the boys were climbing from the end of the wharf into a waiting cat-boat, the skipper whereof had been engaged to take them on their day's fishing. There was a gentle steady wind pulling just in the right direction; the little crimpling waves chased along the surface of the sea. When the fishing-ground was reached and the tiny vessel, its sail lowered, rocked gently on the deep

breathing of the Atlantic, the lines were hurried out, and soon the fish began to bite. Robert Corrie loved the sea better than the other boys, and had spent more days on the beach and in the cat-boat ; but his enjoyment of it was of a dreamy kind ; he hung over the gunwale watching the waters slip by, fixed his eyes for a quarter of an hour at a time on ships or steamers sliding along the offing, and Heman accused him of stealing down into the tiny cabin to take a read.

Robert caught less fish than the other boys, but they all caught enough. When noon came the skipper brought out two little charcoal braziers, fried some fish, and made some coffee ; to these refreshments were added cheese, pie, rolls, and nut-cakes from the stores sent by Mrs. Corrie and Mrs. Clump. How delicious were those fish, cleaned and washed in the sea, and fried an hour after they were caught ! " Land folks don't know what good cooking is," said the skipper, " nor what a proper fish ought to taste like."

As they came home their captain proposed to go to the " scalloping grounds " and get some scallops to add to their evening meal. " There isn't a thing nicer than nice fat white scallop thumbs, fried with a slice of pork," he remarked as he filled a splint-basket with booty. It was

great fun to cut drift-wood, make a fire, set the table, cook fish, scallops, eggs, toast and tea, and have supper. Robert was detailed to cut salt grass enough to bed the horse, to water the horse and feed it, corn having been brought with them.

After tea they closed up the cabin and went to the "Wharf," half a mile away. On the long, black, ancient wharf, strong enough to withstand winter storms, but looking as if it would tumble over of its own weight, was a "ships's store," a queer, rambling building, with merchandize of all kinds suited to fishers and sailors—junk, biscuit, butter, flour, various groceries, fresh meat, eggs, potatoes, overalls, nets, tackle, rope, kitchen utensils, kedge-anchors, cutlery, boots, felt hats, blankets, tools, nails, putty, paint—a strange collection of goods, all smelling strongly of tar and salt water. Lying at the wharf were schooners, "fore-and-afters" the boys called them, some fresh and new, some battered and old, come to load up with fish or unload coal and lumber. The broad wharf shone in the moonlight with great fragrant piles of spruce, hemlock, pine boards, cedar posts, yellow shingles, white polished surfaces of cypress lumber. There were huge heaps of coal, where the moonlight glinted on the wet cubes and made them shine as if still glowing with the

fires that roasted them long ago. There were rows of coal-filled cars there, waiting to be hauled off when the engines came in the morning.

The captains and mates of the vessels were for the most part in the store, sitting tilted back in chairs about the hot stove, or balanced uneasily on nail kegs, the edge of the counter, or soap boxes. The air was blue with smoke, but breathable still, because the sea breeze played through a score of openings in the twisted old building. Under the floor could be heard the constant lapping of the rising tide, and mingled with the plash of waves came the creak of hawsers, the rattle of chains, the whistling of wind in the rigging, and the grinding of the vessels' sides or the buffers against the heavy timbers of the wharf. All this was new and romantic to the boys; only a few times in their lives they had been here for part of an evening with Mr. Clump or Uncle 'Rias on some especial occasion.

The captains talked and told stories, wonderful stories of fishing on the Newfoundland Banks, of great schools of herring or blue fish—tales of vessels burned at sea, of wrecks on foggy nights, of brigs run down by "ocean tramps," of "hulls bored by sword-fish, sir, right through and through, same as you'd drive a knife in a

mellow cheese!" One or two of these captains or mates had been wrecked on the Bahamas or the Philippines. There were those who had sailed around the cold, stormy, snow-mantled cape of Patagonia; those who had seen the Sandwich Islands laughing in the Pacific; men who had traded in China, and who had in South America "seen oranges piled up thicker than ever you saw tons of Irish potatoes waiting to be shipped." There were men who spoke familiarly of parrots and of monkeys as one of these boys would speak of cats or pigeons.

By-and-by the company began to break up. From certain vast pockets in his mackintosh Mr. Reynolds produced various packages of reading matter, little books, papers, and tracts, which he proffered to the captains in an off-hand way as likely "to pass the time when they were at sea." Then with the boys he set off along the dark wharf and up the beach, walking in single file upon the strip of dry sand left near the salt grass that remained at high-tide mark. The sea stories, the fishers' tales had been fascinating, but had lured none of these four who were tramping along to the fisher's cabin.

Mr. Reynolds had taken to another kind of fishing in the world's troubled waters: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Joey Clump might listen breathless, but boys who

limp on a shortened leg do not go to sea. He-man had of late read "Robinson Crusoe," and wrecks, disasters, hunger, cold, nakedness, "a night and a day in the deep" did not appeal to him as did the crest of a new roof, where hammers rung as shingles were nailed on, finials were put in position, and scuttle holes were scientifically cased and shuttered. As for Robert, already the captain's tales were fading from his mind; dearer to him was that golden ship Argo, gleaming and rocking on the blue seas of the sky, the hosts of constellations moving in space, the comets voyaging through ether waves and sweeping back from measureless distances as sky wanderers whose helm was grasped by God's hand alone.

Sweet is sleep in the ozone-filled sea air after such out-of-doors days as these lads had enjoyed. Next morning they breakfasted early, and then they were off five miles from the coast to visit the lighthouse, Mr. Reynolds taking a large box of magazines, books, maps, games, which he had had sent to meet him at the wharf, these being the gifts of distant city people to the lonely keepers of the lonely lights. There was more fishing, and on the return a visit to certain oyster beds and "a clamming ground." The sun was verging to the horizon as they touched the wharf. As they looked back over the shin-

ing track by which they had returned, Mr. Reynolds, pointing to the column rising finger-like in the distance, flashing in the sunlight, quoted the words, "A pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day."

At last the wagon, filled with the goods, was driven down to the wharf to get the box of fish and the bushels of clams and oysters, the trophies of the outing, and then they were off on the home road, less noisy than they had been at starting, but brimfull of happiness and of pleasant memories, that, as Aunt Espey said, would keep their hearts warm for many coming years.

Sunday, coming after such a week of excitement, fell like the benediction of the night after the toilful day. The morning of the Sabbath was given to the church service; then, after a leisurely home-coming, came dinner about two o'clock, after which the women folks rested with folded hands in their laps. There would be for them no more work that day, no getting of supper; "if anybody wanted anything more to eat, they could go to the pantry and help themselves," was announced clearly and emphatically. Then silence fell upon the household. Mrs. Clump read her usual Sabbath portion of Spurgeon's sermons, sometimes nodding over the book as she slept. Aunt Espey lay back in the big rocking-chair and slept as openly and

peacefully as a tired child. Aunt D'rexy, with lesson leaf and Bible in hand, worked away on the next week's Sunday-school Lesson, glad of an opportunity to read up in Mr. Clump's "Scott's Commentary." The two boys were at the table, at work on a suggestion made by Mr. Reynolds. They had two large sheets of paper, and on the one they were depicting from the description in the Bible the marching order of the Israelites, setting down the numbers and leaders of each tribe, their places in the line of march, the ark and the divisions of the priests, and the particular portions of the tabernacle or its furniture which they carried. On the second sheet of paper they placed the order of the Israelitish camp, the ark in the centre and the tribe of Levi about it, while outside this sacred circle were placed the other tribes. The boys toiled assiduously, measuring with closest accuracy, and printing with great care names and numbers. It was usually Heman that dictated and Joey that assented. If Heman made an error it was presently corrected, and no remark was made; if Joey made a mistake Heman said, "I told you so, Joey. I knew you were getting that wrong." Joey took this quite as matter of course. Mr. Clump sat with his feet resting on the top of the stove; he was reading his church paper, and there had been long periods where he

seemed to be dozing, but might have been meditating. Uncle 'Rias was laboring over the latest missionary magazine ; only a deep sense of duty held him to the task, for Uncle 'Rias and print were ever at strife.

The warm quiet of the Sabbath afternoon and the physical inaction, coming after six hard working days, wore on these sons of toil: it seemed harder to them than work, though in the sum of their lives these days of rest were springs of strength. Finally, as the afternoon drew to an end, Mr. Clump's feet slipped with a thud from the stove, and his chair came down heavily on its front legs. To cover his confusion, he declared in a resolute voice, that it was time for him "to go look at the critters." Uncle 'Rias pricked up his ears at this, promptly laid his magazine on the table, and prepared to aid his host in the onerous duty of contemplating the stock. The boys had finished their drawing neatly and now they looked for their caps; the domestic animals were evidently to be well looked after. This leisurely survey of their brute dependents, cultivating a better acquaintance with them, and giving them special treats of food, was part of the regular Sabbath routine. While the boys filled their pockets with apples, the men helped themselves to turnips and carrots which they carried swinging by the tops,

and even the big spotted dog shook himself and followed the steps of the procession. First they passed through the barn-yard; the cows gathered about a stack, slowly munching, turned their big kindly eyes on their guests, and held out their wet red tongues for a taste of salt or a turnip; the black moist muzzles, the sleek sides were patted, and Mr Clump gave the description of each cow, telling how much butter and milk she gave, and remarking that he must come out and milk pretty soon, since the hired man always went home on Sundays. Next they came to the stable, where three horses were in the stalls, whinnying for the expected apples. Mr. Clump consulted Uncle 'Rias about a weak eye that troubled the oldest horse, and advised with Joey as to the amount of bedding he should give, now that the nights were cold.

Next came a clamorous group of turkeys and hens, and Mr. Clump called to the boys, "Feed 'em and have done with it; never saw such noisy critters in all time."

The pigpens were in a separate yard, more distant from the house. The men and boys looked at the pigs, and some one was heard to say, "How curious it is that such little-eyed, flat-headed critters as pigs can be so wise."

"They're about the wisest animals alive—beat dogs and horses clean out sometimes. I

could tell you several ditties about that," said Uncle 'Rias.

"I wonder why the Jews could n't keep 'em," said Joey; "they ai n't any dirtier in their eating than the fowls, if you come to that, and they're mighty tasty eating, too."

"I reckon there was powerful good reason for the prohibition, since it is in the Book," said Uncle 'Rias. "They're not half as healthy eating as fowls. The Jews were never allowed to use swine meat, and Jewish blood is good and healthy. I reckon 't was a parable and something mor'n a parable, a real useful law. Sometimes I've thought I'd like to try following Jewish lines of eating myself." With these remarks the grunting lords of the pen received some ears of corn and then Mr. Clump said, "Guess we might as well go up to the pasture and see how things look there. That old ram usually takes Sunday for his day to break out. If he knows of ever a weak place in the fence, 'pears like that feller saves it up for Sunday, and then butts it over and lets out the whole flock. Me and Joey've had to stop many's the time, right on the way to church, to drive them sheep into a field. The fall's been so open I left 'em up in the pasture. I wanted 'em to give it a good clearing up."

So they went on to the pasture. All the white,

woolly innocent creatures came running to greet their friends—except the old ram, which they found amusing himself by trying to butt his brains out against a stump. Not having succeeded in this, and noticing that salt, pieces of turnip, apples, and carrots were in order among his better behaved relations, he came prancing along after them.

“They ’ll have to come down to the stock yard in two weeks’ time,” said Mr. Clump.

The fence of the pasture divided the Clump property from the lost and much mourned Sinnet farm. Through here lay the path by which the members of the family had exchanged their frequent visits. A procession of four, which might have been a funeral, so depressed was its general expression, moved to the fence and halted. They stood in line, each one with his right foot on a rail, his right elbow on a top rail, his chin in his hand, and so eyed the beloved land. A sigh swept through the company like the roll of successive waves breaking upon the seashore.

“We mean to have it back,” said Heman. “We’re working for it. ’T won’t be very long truly, though it seems so, looking forward. It’s only a day at a time, and days go fast when you’re busy.”

“That’s the right sperrit, Heman,” said Mr.

Clump. "I don't make a bit of doubt you 'll do it. There's one comfort, you won't find the place run down. Sloane's a sharp man to look after property. He's feeding some of his blood-ed stock out here, and nothing's sold off the ground. The land won't wear out at that rate."

"Say, Heman, what time of the year do you mean to come back?" asked Joey; "it'll be a kind of celebration. When do you think would be the nicest?"

"I've thought of somebody's birthday," said Heman; "by way of keeping it, you know; Aunt Espey's, or Aunt D'rexy's."

"That would be partic'lar nice," said Uncle 'Rias, smacking his lips as at the mention of plum pudding, or mince pie.

"Yes; or fourth of July!" cried Joey. "Independence or Liberty day, you know; could make a sort of celebration, and have a bon-fire; let every one know you had come home and meant to stay."

"Yes," said Uncle 'Rias. "There's good ideas in that Joey. It'd be 'bout the best keeping of the Fourth I ever took a hand in. Much better 'n wasting a lot of good money burning rockets or crackers. There's lots of property destroyed by such carryings on, every year. If we had what is spent on fooling in this blessed

country, we could have it fair spotted over with churches and school-houses, and there would n't be a pauper person in it."

"That's so," chimed in Mr. Clump; "but since you're talking of the time to move back, would n't a Thanksgiving-Day be just the exact fit for it? You'd all be so thankful that you'd been prospered to carry out your intentions, and the 'membrance of it would kind of shine like a monniment of mercy to you ever after on Thanksgiving-Day."

"I jes' b'lieve you've hit the nail right on the head," said Uncle 'Rias. "Thanksgiving would be the very time to come—unless—unless it was Christmas. That's a joyful day, and a day of presents, and a good day to get back what we lost; a kind of present from the good Lord, you know. My mind sort of inclines to Christmas."

"Or New-Year's!" said Joey; "New-Year to start fair and square in; new year, new doings, all things made new."

"Probably that would be the best after all," said Uncle 'Rias. "I b'lieve on the whole, I sort of lean to New-Year's."

Heman laughed joyously. "I think you incline to come back any day you can get back, Uncle 'Rias, and any day will be the right day, that sees us all safe home again."

"Makes me think," said Joey, "of one day in Sunday-school, the boys got to talking what time of year it was when God made the world. Some said it was finished in spring, 'cause that was growing time, and seeding time; others said no, it must have been summer, because that was the perfect time of the year, and God said all was "very good;" others again said autumn, because fruits and harvests and seeds were all ripe. Nobody voted for winter."

"There's a heap of pleasant things to talk about," said Uncle 'Rias. "I could tell you a ditty about a man that talked all the time. Most gen'ly that kind don't say much worth hearing. Reckon the best time for the world to be created was the time it *was* created, seeing the good Lord had the doing of it."

The two men started back by the way they had come. Mr. Clump had the milking to do. The boys kept along the line of fence, to go home by the road. As they came out of the pasture lot, opposite Mr. Corrie's, Mr. Reynolds and Robert sat on the roadside on a log. Robert had a book in his hand which he had just closed. "Cousin, what was the Holy Grail, anyway?" he asked. The other boys sighed; they did not expect to be interested. Mr. Reynolds replied, "Grail or grael is from an old French word for dish, and San Grael meant Holy Dish.

The writers of the middle ages called in this way the dish which had held the Passover Lamb at our Lord's Last Supper. Tennyson treats it as the Cup which held the wine of that same supper, which Christ passed to his disciples, saying, 'Drink ye all of it.' There was an old legend that this cup had disappeared, but was not destroyed, and would one day be found by some one; and that the finder must be a person of a pure heart, steadfastly set on Christ, wishing to copy from his life, and seeking not self but service. An old legend goes on to say that Sir Galahad, the son of King Arthur, was such a one, true, clean and conscientious, loving God and men and forgetting self.

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

Through all trials and temptations he steadfastly pursued his way, sown with good deeds, until he saw three angels before him, bearing the Holy Cup, and voices cried,

"Oh, just and faithful knight of God,
Ride on, the prize is near!"

Then did Sir Galahad's faith and love increase:

"His spirit beat her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides
And star-like mingles with the stars."

It is only a story, boys, a myth, but there is truth in it; that the heart of every disciple may

be a holy one, filled with the life of our Lord ;
and if we want to reach this and be like and
near our Lord, we must keep mind and body
pure and clean, withstand temptation, do good
and fear not, and so every one of us may find at
last the Holy Grail."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MUSCLE AND MORALS.

“ In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And strong in Him whose cause is ours,
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given.”

THE days pass very quickly which transform the little playful child to the sturdy lad and the sturdy lad to the manly youth. Several years had elapsed since the sad winter when Uncle 'Rias, after being crippled, had lost his farm, and had come to the flat acre and a quarter, near the railroad, in Windle village. No matter how swiftly the years fly by they mark their way by changes. “Those thrifty Sinnets,” as people named them, had made marked improvement in the small place they had come to call home. There were vines, bushes, and shade trees; they had never felt rich enough to paint the house, but Heman whitewashed the whole front and the fence yearly. “Lime wash is healthy” Aunt D'rexy said, excusing this extravagance. The garden had currants and gooseberries, vegetables in plenty. Frequent repairs on the tumble-down barn had nearly rebuilt it. The shop also

was enlarged; for now that two sturdy workmen, who numbered twenty years each, were busy there, more room was needed. Work now crowded on the firm under the sign of "U. SINNET & Co." Windle village itself had improved greatly; the normal school, the library and association buildings had been the means of attracting people from many parts of the State to make a home there, several factories had been built, and increase of work had brought in a numerous working population. Simon Fletcher had never lacked contracts, and had faithfully kept Heman and Uncle 'Rias busy. Simon Fletcher often said Heman was one of the most accurate and enterprising young builders in the State, and he expected him to make his mark. The expectation of doing great things some day did not hinder Heman from doing to the very best of his ability the smallest piece of work which came in his way. Aunt D'rexy had often quoted a saying of Moody's: "If you can't be a lighthouse, be a candle, but be something," and this sound bit of philosophy had taken hold of Heman's life.

"D'rexy Sinnet and Aunt Espey were so terrible set on that boy, that I used to think maybe nothing would do them but to try to make a minister or a lawyer out of him," said Mrs. Sloane one day to the minister's wife. "It is kind of satis-

fyng to one's pride sometimes, to get a boy into a profession ; it appears as if he might be more thought of. But the Sinnetts were always level-headed folks, and they saw that a boy was likely to do the work best to which he took by nature ; there's lots of good men spoiled by trying to have them cut across the grain. There is Henry Fitch, in the next township, he intended to be a machinist, but his mother turned up her nose at it, she said it was dirty work, made his hands coarse, and spoiled his clothes. Well, she took on so about it, that Henry, to please her, studied medicine, that he had n't the least aptitude for, and can't make his salt by ; and he's tried life insurance along with it, and been drummer for a drug store, and failed in all, only being fit for a machinist. Sloane says no honest work is to be scorned, and he has the right of it. There was Henry Fitch's cousin, Hiram, had the same taste, all for machinery, and his folks were level-headed enough to let him choose for himself, and now Hiram is engineer of a trans-Atlantic steamship ! There was Allen Lane, his father was minister here years ago and died—Allen too was crazy to be a machinist ; his mother wanted him to be a minister, like his father and grandfather before him, and she had plenty of money to educate him ; but Allen when he got excited, stuttered, he just could n't be a minis-

ter, and what 's more, he did n't want to. Sloane says that 's why we have so many ministers without pulpits, and lawyers without cases, because boys are put into things they 're not fit for. He says God never called people to things they haven't any fitness for. Well, Allen could n't make any mark in study, because he could n't speak or recite. His mother had foolish notions about society and style, and would never consent to his going into the shops and working up, by learning a trade as a trade should be learned. He was just kept about, idle, discouraged, trying things he was bound to fail in, and I believe—so does Sloane—that that is why his health gave out, and he sunk away into a kind of decline before he was thirty-six."

There are many people as foolish as those described by Mrs. Sloane, but many more who are sensible. The town of Windle was proud of its strong young fellows working at the trades—carpenters, smiths, tanners and plumbers, factory men and farmers. The club which Mr. Renfrew had started had become a power in the whole county: there had grown up in it young men who knew how to think and how to speak, who interested themselves in great questions, and stood shoulder to shoulder fighting in any good cause. By slow, almost imperceptible degrees, these lads had been trained in strong

temperance principles; lectures and readings had been provided, discussions had been begun, and one by one, almost before they knew it, they were temperance workers. Their influence was felt in their homes, and among the business circles of Windle, and before they were voters themselves they had influenced the votes of others, so that local option had come to prevail in Windle, and the saloons had been driven out.

One night Joey Clump, Heman and Peter Forbes had been making a call in the country, and were returning home when they saw a man loitering near the "Last Chance," one instant almost going into the door, then retreating. In one of these retreats backwards he nearly stumbled upon the three lads.

"Queer name that," he said, to excuse his carelessness. "I never heard a name like that before. 'Last Chance,' sounds kind of funny, don't it? What does it mean?"

"It means," said Heman the practical, "that it's the last chance to get any whiskey, for the town has gone on Local Option, and there is n't a bar in it. Local Option is no farce in Windle, there's a club of fifty fellows, all with our eyes open, and if any shady games are tried, they can count on us to find them out."

"Last chance," said Peter Forbes, "means that here is your last chance to make a fool of

yourself, to waste your money, to get into a row and find yourself in the lock-up instead of a decent boarding-house when you wake up in Windle.

“Last chance! perhaps it is many a man’s last chance to hold up his head and be decent. Last chance, it is this, Harvey’s last chance to fleece hard-working fellows of their earnings, and fill his pockets out of other men’s ruin.”

“Now, see here, boys,” said the stranger, seizing Heman’s arm as if its burly strength could reinforce his own weakness, “let me tell you how it is. I’m going to Windle to try and get a job in the factory; my sister talked me into going there because it’s a prohibition town. I’ve been drinking some, but I want to turn over a new leaf, I do, upon my word.”

“What do you want to put on the new leaf,” said Joey, “same as was on the other one? If you do, here’s your last chance.”

“Oh, come now,” said the stranger, “I want to do the fair thing by myself, I do truly. But I’ve been walking since three o’clock this morning. You see I had n’t money to pay fare. I’m dead tired, after being on my feet eighteen hours with only one hour’s rest. I’m beat! If you haven’t been in a similar place you can’t tell how it feels. I’ve passed safely all the other saloons, but here I am so done out, it

seemed as if one good glass of whiskey would put me on my feet and find me in strength to get into the town and hunt up a bed. I hated to break down here, at the last; and then I've just forty cents, and that won't more'n get me a bed and breakfast, and a cup of coffee to-night. If I spend that little here, why I'd have to sleep in the streets of Windle."

"Yes," said Heman, "and you'd be drunk, too, so the constable would run you in, and that would be a pretty starter for finding work at the factories. Likely the boss would n't take you on, do you see?"

"I see," said the young man. "I'm in an awful hard case."

"Come along to town with us," said Joey earnestly.

"You can't tell how I feel, boys. I'm fighting with dragons inside! Seems like I'll sell myself to get just one big drink of that whiskey shining in that bottle in the window! It makes my mouth water to look at it. Seems like I'd rather drop dead in my tracks than touch it, after the way my poor sister cried, and the way I promised her. I ought to be keeping the poor, delicate creature, not taking her little earnings to pay my fines and get me clothes."

"Come along with us, and don't walk on this road again," urged Joey sympathetically.

"Oh, I can't! Seems as if my feet were just nailed to the ground here. I can't get past that bottle in the window. You go on, boys. I'll sit here on this stone and rest a bit, and mebbe I'll come after you, and mebbe I can't."

The three lads stood looking with curiosity and sorrow at this strange spectacle of moral conflict. The stranger's white, drawn face was contorted with agony. The boys, untried and untempted, did not know that he was really doing more heroic warfare than they had ever done in their lives; they merely thought him singularly weak, but they had grace enough to pity and not to scorn his weakness.

"If he wants to come and can't come, let's make him come," said Heman. "He can't stand one to three; we're strong, and he looks a puny kind of chap. I say, boys, I'll catch him by the shoulders, you each take a leg, and we'll carry him into town."

The stranger made a dart for liberty and whiskey, but Heman had him by the shoulders, and Joey who always obeyed Heman, caught one of the feet turned towards the "Last Chance" for ruin. Peter, not to be behind the others, seized the man's free leg, and the boys ran a few paces along the road.

"Halt!" said Heman. "Let's get an easier grip."

"Suppose he hollers?" said Joey.

"Suppose he sues us for assault?" said the prudent Peter.

"Let me go, boys! This ai n't any joke," said the stranger.

"No," said Heman, "it's good earnest; we're helping you to help yourself. You're tired, we'll carry you to town. You don't want to go into that 'Last Chance' and lose yourself."

'I'll sue every one of you!' roared the man, crazed with thirst, and seizing his cue from Peter's words.

Heman laughed. "It would n't help you any. Yon'd lose your chance of getting work by it, because you'd proclaim yourself a drunkard. No one would fine us for our trick; they'd call it a bit of boys' fun, well-intended into the bargain. You hold easy, my friend, and we'll run you into town in no time."

The boys ran a few rods more. Then their prisoner began again:

"Let me down! I'm on fire inside! I'm burnt up! I don't care for you or for myself. Let me down to go back to that 'Last Chance,' or I'll be raving crazy."

The boys halted; there was agony in these tones. Heman said,

"Peter, you let loose; Joey and I can hold

him while you run into Mrs. Park's yard and fetch water from her pump. There's a pail and a cup on the platform. I made that platform myself to-day. Hurry up, Peter."

When Peter returned Heman filled a quart cup with water and offered it to the captive. He shook his head.

"I can't take it. I'll have whiskey."

"Hold him, boys!" said the masterful Heman, and with one hand bending back the captive's head, he poured over it in quick succession three quart cupfuls of water.

"Now," he said, filling the cup the fourth time and presenting it, "will you drink it, or shall I pour it down your throat?"

The man began to drink.

"Drink slowly," commanded Heman, "for you have to drink the whole quart."

"I can't," protested the victim.

"You shall. I'm bossing this job," said Heman. "It's our good muscle against your bad morals, and we'll win."

The man drank, then refused, was stormed at, then drank again, and at last had finished the quart. Heman coolly poured the rest of the pailful over the man's head, which was already soaked, and bidding Joey replace cup and pail, they took up their now thoroughly-quieted burden and resumed their way. In a few mo-

ments they came to where houses multiplied and people could be seen on the streets.

"Now," said Heman, "we can't carry you like a dead pig any further. It will ruin your character in the town before you have any chance to make a better one. Straighten up there, and wipe your head. If you go back to the 'Last Chance,' you'll have about half a mile to walk. I don't believe you want to do it. Come on home with me and Joey, and we'll make you a shake-down in our shop. We'll give you supper too, meat and pie and coffee. You shall have a good, hot breakfast in the morning and all for nothing. I'll take you to Mr. Renfrew and ask him to go with you to one of the factories. We want to help you, honest, we do. This was n't all fun on our part. We are not joking, we want to give you a better 'Last Chance' than you were likely to find for yourself out there."

"Oh, I don't bear any grudge," said the man. "You are acting friendly, boys. I'll go with you very willing. I was about down in that fight, I just could n't stand up against the gleaming and winking of that bottle."

"I say, Heman," said Peter, "that 'Last Chance' has to go. I'm bent on ending its days. We'll bring it up in Club to-morrow, and when Common Council meets I'm going before

it to make the best speech I've ever made so far. You boys go with me?"

"We will!" cried Joey, "the whole Club, and we'll clap you up till the Council don't know where their heads are."

The boys parted. Heman conducted his protégé home, made a bed of shavings and quilts in the shop, and fed him heartily.

"Now, in the morning," he said, "I'll give you soap and towel and brushes, so you can wash and clean your clothes well. We have our breakfast at six, and Aunt D'rexy can't bear folks at her table that aren't tidy. A good night's sleep to you."

Morning found the guest in his right mind. Heman's heroic treatment, the food and the sleep had driven out the demons that possessed him, and once more he was ready to do battle with his besetting sin.

Heman had been up for some time, milking the cows, cutting and carrying wood, drawing water, and between-whiles had told his family in the kitchen the story of his guest.

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! Suppose you were in such straits, Heman! We must try and stand by him till he gets better command of himself," said Aunt D'rexy, slicing bacon.

"I do feel for that poor sister," said Aunt Espey, who insisted upon setting the table.

Uncle 'Rias, sitting in a corner, was paring potatoes and apples to lighten D'rexy's work for the day.

"I allus heard it said, once you give the devil the reins there's no telling where 'll he drive," he remarked.

"I don't know, 'Rias, as you ought to use such free words, and you a church-member," remonstrated Aunt D'rexy.

Aunt Espey took her knitting to the front porch, and there the stranger soon appeared coming round from the shop. He had improved his appearance as best he could, and looked clean and seemed civil. At Aunt Espey's invitation he sat down on the steps.

"Our breakfast will soon be ready. Ain't it a pretty morning!" said the old lady, beaming at him.

"Oh, well yes, missis; but when a man's discouraged, and his heart's heavy, there don't anything look very pretty."

"I reckon you feel a great deal done up. Heman says you walked seventeen hours yesterday. That was a hard day's work."

"I would n't mind it if I was sure of anything now I'm here."

"You're sure of your breakfast," smiled Aunt Espey, "and of help in finding work. Don't be down-hearted, my man, something is

always rising up to vex us. This is a very troublesome world. The only way is to have patience. The Scriptor says to have patience and hope to the end. Mebbe you don't know any Scriptor?"

"No, I don't," said the young man curtly.

"That's a terrible pity. It's very strengthening and helping. Now if you'd had Scriptor, why yesterday when you was out on such a walk, you could have thought that the dear Lord walked up and down the length and breadth of Palestine, and got terrible weary too. When you was tempted so hard, you could have remembered that the Lord was tempted too, but never yielded. With so much to try and vex you, you could ask to have in your heart the patience of Christ. It would have helped. I tell you, and I know; I've lived a long time, and I've had my troubles. Now there's D'rexy calling breakfast, come right along, young man."

After breakfast Heman started with the stranger to Mr. Renfrew. Uncle 'Rias had him return and sleep in the shop one night more, and they would help him look up a boarding-place as soon as he had work.

"You'll feel more heartsome beginning if you have some friends," said Uncle 'Rias. "I know how it is. I've been there myself."

"They're the kindest folks I ever saw," the man, Happer, confided to Mr. Renfrew, "and the old man's lost his leg, and the women look as if they'd seen trouble. Don't see why such folks have trouble."

"You seem to be a man of some reading and education," said Mr. Renfrew. "No doubt you've heard of Carlyle. One true thing he said was, 'The eternal stars shine out as soon as it is dark enough. Some of us have to get into the dark to get God's highest blessings.' If you get the blessings, Happer, it pays for the dark."

Happer shook his head. "Truth is, sir, I've only heard religion and the Bible spoken of to be made fun of, and it was by people who seemed very smart, and who thought they knew. I never read the Bible and I never met any religious people before, to say I was acquainted with them."

"And what have these people who were so smart, and who thought they knew, done for you?" asked Mr. Renfrew.

"Not much," said Happer, shaking his head. "There are some folks who cut your hawser and leave you adrift, without a helm or a sail or anything to help yourself with."

"How much reason or charity is there in that, Happer?"

"Not much. Once I heard a street preacher

say we ought to think regularly of God, before whom we must sometime stand. But, sir, God is so far out of sight, and that sometime is so far off, it don't take hold much—at least not of me.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Renfrew. “Well, Happer, you've got it wrong. Think of God as one before whom you *do* stand every single minute.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

“God shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide, my lantern to my feet.”

“HELLO!” said Heman, “you here, Happer? I did n’t know but you had skipped. Come, sit down on the steps. How are you?”

“I’m all right. I got work the first thing. I found a place for my dinner and supper, but as you asked me to come and sleep in the shop again, I came.”

“That’s right,” said Aunt D’rexy. “Our way’s poor; we can’t do for folks as we did when we had our farm and the nice house, but we like to entertain strangers all the same; it’s only common Christianity. You’ll stay to breakfast. You ought to have come in to tea.”

“Thankee! You’re very kind, Mistress, but I did n’t want to intrude. I wish what you call common Christianity was a deal more common! It would help keep many a poor fellow up.”

“If you paid for dinner and tea,” said Heman, “it took your last cent. How’ll you get on now?”

“I found a boarding-place, and I’ll be paid

Saturday. I didn't mind laying out my last cent."

"Likely it saved you a 'last chance'," said Heman drily.

"Mebbe it did. But I don't have such thirsty spells, as I had last night, every day. It may not come on me again for three or four weeks."

"I see," said Heman, "you 'll have board and washing to pay, and some shoes and clothes to buy, so you 'll keep low in pocket for a while. Then, when you have a week's wages to the fore, it will begin to sing in your pocket, 'last chance! last chance!' and when you take out a dollar it will wink and gleam like that whisky-bottle last night, and you're a goner! It would be a good thing if you had some one to keep your money for you. Aunt D'rexy takes care of all ours."

"Oh, but Heman," cried Aunt Espey, zealous that no reflection should be cast upon her boy, "you never had longings to go to saloons with your money!"

"No," said Heman, "but if I'd kept money rattling in my pocket, and had n't felt that I wanted to save it all to buy the dear old farm back, there's no telling what I might have fallen into. I'm pretty sure I might have learned to smoke, and I might have begun on beer, or had the habit of staying out nights in

all kinds of foolish shows. Oh, it is a rare good thing to have some one hold your money, and some good cause to lay it up for."

Aunt Espey thought if the loss of the farm had gone far to make her Heman the fine fellow he was, she could bear the loss of the farm. Happer shook his head and sighed. "Well, I had only my sister, poor girl, and I felt too big and man-like to let her hold me in—more fool I! She might have done me good. She's better than I am. Sometimes as I look at it, it seems no use for me to try to make a fight with so many odds against me."

"Oh, come now, young man," said Uncle 'Rias, "there's been fights won against the biggest kind of odds. I could tell you a ditty about that, and if you show as much pluck as the fellows in the ditty, you'll come out ahead and be your own man yet. This ditty my grandfather told me, and he had it from a cousin of his who went ever so far West, clear to the Missouri River, in the twenties. There was a little village called Côte Sans Dessein, on the river bank, and it was mostly French. I don't care for French people myself, they speak such a heathenish language without any meaning to it; but there were nice folks in that place. The village had a stout fort on account of the Indians, and one time all the men folks were off

on an expedition 'cept a very old man Roi and his son Louis; also a man with a broken leg, lying in bed, and another man, a kind of idiot. Louis Roi was middle aged, and there were a lot of women and children. Louis Roi found that a horde of Indians were on the way to capture the fort, so he hurried all his people into the fort, carrying all the water, milk and bread they could take. Then he set the women to loading all the muskets, and when the Indians came up and called them to surrender, Louis Roi said 'Never!' in his silly French way—and I don't see how the Indians could understand it. Outside there were three hundred braves, whooping, yelling and shooting, and one man for an army inside with a crowd of women folks to load his guns! For three days, sir, that brave man—brave, if he was French—kept up that fight. He ate what the women came and put into his mouth. What winks of sleep he got, he took standing in an angle of the wall between loopholes, his wife propping him up while he napped it, gun in hand. Don't you call them odds? He ran from loophole to loophole, shooting, and whenever the Indians tried to set the fort on fire, he had the women pour on water or brine. One blaze they put out with two churnsfull of buttermilk! Now what kind of a battle do you call that unless it was against

heavy odds? Well, sir, at the end of three days the old man came along. Said he, 'Louis, my son,'—speaking French, which I can't and am glad of it—'the powder is all gone from the fort. Then Louis Rio held up his hands and said, 'Oh, God! look at these women and children and pity us,' which was a good prayer, if he was a Frenchman, for in the Bible it tells us how the Lord's pity was moved to Nineveh where there were crowds of little children that didn't know one hand from t'other. Well, boys, if the fort powder had given out, so had food for those wild Indians, and they had eaten every crumb from the houses in the little village.

"There was one big strong, grim house there, all locked and barred up, and the Indians said, 'That house must be full of meat and meal, for it is so well locked up.' Since they could n't get it open, they proceeded to blow it open, and a brave put the muzzle of his gun right at the lock and fired, to burst it. Fact was it was the powder house, and the shot went plumb into a keg of powder and that exploded, and the house was blown up and about a hundred Indians were killed or hurt bad. Then they said—for Indians have some sense, and I wish they had more—'The Great Spirit fights for these white folks and lives in their houses.

It's no use to stay here any longer.' So they went off and never came back, and the fight of one man against three hundred was ended, the one man having come out the best. Young man, when you've fit as big odds as them, and come out on top, then you will be a man sure. That's the ditty my grandfather told me, full a hundred times."

"It's a mighty good story," said Happer, "but the difference is, that the Frenchmen's enemies were *outside* his fort, mine are *inside* me. It's the thirst that takes hold inside does it."

"Promise me one thing," said Heman, "when you do find you are going to the 'Last Chance,' come here and tell me."

"Oh, you could n't reason me out of it. Wild horses would n't hold me when the fit is on," said Happer, dejectedly.

"I sha'n't try wild horses. Only you come tell me," said Heman.

"All right. I'll call and let you know it's all no good, and I'm down again."

"Young man," said Aunt D'rexy, "can't you call on the Lord and get help out of his word?"

"No, I can't," said Happer. "I don't know either of them."

"Well, you're dreadful bad off, for certain," said Aunt Espey. "I would n't stand in your

shoes for a good bit. It is awful to walk in darkness and have no light. I could n't endure it."

Robert Corrie, who was staying over-night with Heman, a good-by visit before he started for college, said, "Our Bible-class teacher said that the phrase, 'lamps to my feet,' came from a kind of little foot-lamp people used to have in Palestine; they were tiny lamps fastened to the front of the sandal, and that would show where each step was to be taken,"

"So!" cried Happer. "What a queer idea, to have little lanterns tied to your toes; kind of a good idea too."

It was several weeks before Happer, who came with considerable regularity to call on the Sinnets, threatened an outbreak. Aunt D'rexy pitied the man and wanted to give him all the help she could, yet a man of his fashion seemed to her a terrible companion for her Heman.

"Why, D'rexy," said Uncle 'Rias, "there's a crowd of such men in the world, and Heman can't keep out of the way of 'em. He won't seek 'em or perfer 'em, but he may be a little help to 'em. Besides, woman, we need n't think our boy's so weak he'll be contaminated by every rascal that passes on the same side the street. That was a good bit Heman read out of 'Pilgrim's Progress' to us of one Godlyman that

had mud flung on him, but it all fell off and his garments were white as ever."

These remarks arose because, while Aunt D'rexy was getting supper and the tired Urias was watching her operations, they had seen Happer pass around to the shop door. The chat in the kitchen subsided before raised voices in the shop; then, as the sounds of a lively scuffle ensued, Uncle 'Rias rose slowly on his "patent leg" and opened the door into the shop from the kitchen. On the floor, red and foaming, lay Happer. Joey sat peacefully on Happer's breast, and Heman, having tied Happer's feet with a bit of rope, was making ready to bind his hands. Uncle 'Rias stared.

"Why, boys, that's goin' it pretty steep, ain't it?"

"Now, Joey, pick up his legs and we'll run him out," said Heman, paying attention to nothing but the business in hand. Uncle 'Rias and the two women, standing at the kitchen door, saw Happer held, face downward, under the pump and vigorously soused. Then, seating him on the platform, Heman offered him a quart-cup of water. Happer used some very evil language and made violent threats. "Will you drink that, or shall I pour it down through a funnel into your throat?" stormed Heman. There was danger in his eyes, and Happer

drank. The amazed Aunt D'rexy saw Happer under duress drink three quarts of water, and that not so very cold. The draught occupied half an hour, it was swallowed so slowly and with so many protestations.

"Run him in," said Heman, and he and Joey ran their victim into the shop to a bed of shavings and quilts. "I'll give you strong coffee and beef at nine o'clock," said Heman coolly to his enforced guest, "and to-morrow you'll like me again."

"You've saved me again," said Happer to him next day, "but you make me terrible mad while you're doing it."

Before another outbreak on Happer's part the "Last Chance" was overthrown, the county went prohibition, and those new-fledged voters, Heman, Joey, Peter, and many of their Club-mates, had much to do with it: they had made a regular campaign through the county, going in great hay wagons from village to village, taking with them singers and speech-makers. Peter Forbes crowned himself with glory in his speeches, and had no more hearty admirer of his eloquence than Heman. Of course there was some opposition, and always there was a minority that could at least make remarks, and some strife was stirred up. Heman and Joey took umbrage at much that was said, and very

unsparingly criticised their opponents. Uncle 'Rias thought they far exceeded the limits set by Christian charity.

"Now see here, boys," he said, "you're going too far. There's a good rule you ought to remember. It is, 'Speak well of everybody; and if you can't speak well, don't speak of 'em at all.' I mind D'rexy's uncle, the deacon, often used to say that. He was an uncommon powerful man in meetings at speaking and praying, and what made his remarks take hold so strong was, that he always practised what he preached. He was a master-hand at practising. More'n any man that ever I saw, he had in him to lay the Scripture up in his heart and practise it in his life. Now, sirs, that man never spoke evil of anybody. Some one says to him once, 'Deacon, I never hear you criticisin' other people.' 'No,' says he, 'I've got all I can do to criticise myself.' There's one thing I've observed, boys, the more upright folks is, the less carping and picking they do at other people. I suppose they have more charity, and Scripture is, that charity 'is not puffed up and speaketh no evil.'"

"Well, is it evil to say of folks what is *true*?" asked Heman.

"I reckon so, if the true isn't good. We might have to give testimony in court, or to warn some one, or to ask some proper person to

take them in hand and deal with them ; but this picking and finding fault is n't right."

Heman was now a full-grown man and a well-skilled carpenter and builder. At Mr. Renfrew's suggestion he had taken lessons in mechanical drawing, and now he could make very beautiful architectural designs. He had faithfully studied his business in its theory and practice ; he had read works on architecture and subscribed to magazines and papers bearing on the line of his work ; he read of house-building in other lands, and bought and studied works on trees and various kinds of woods. This had been to Heman the hardest part of his business ; he did not like study ; heavy reading of any kind made him desperately sleepy ; but the rule he had taken for himself as a boy, "Be the very best you can in the business you choose," had carried him safely through considerable hard work, and he reaped the benefit of it in a growing reputation. Uncle 'Rias had regarded Heman's "book studies" with some suspicion ; he had "never learned carpentry out of books," he said. However, as Mr. Renfrew and Simon Fletcher seemed to think Heman was doing well, Uncle 'Rias remarked that the world changed and took on new notions, and he supposed it was all right. When he was a boy, he remarked, there was n't a round wire-nail in the

market; but the fact was, as he himself admitted, the wire nails "beat the old kind clean out of sight."

Windle still grew, and new buildings and more substantial stores were constantly erected. One day Heman was at work rebuilding the front of a store, putting in great windows and an arched doorway, and arranging various little brackets and revolving stands to exhibit the small wares, for this was a "Notion Store," the first one in that county. A drummer, in haste to get the first orders, came in with a huge bag of samples and several catalogues, which he laid on a counter before the proprietor. After long chaffering and some fairly large sales, the drummer asked, as he closed up his bags, "Are there some Sinnets living out here in the country now? I was at their house once, twenty years ago, just about."

"They're alive. They live in town now. There is one of them at work on the front, Heman Leslie; he's a Sinnet."

"What, that tall, big fellow! I say, Mr. Leslie, you can't be the kid I brought from the West to Urias Sinnet's wife."

"Well, I was brought from the West to my aunt by some one," said Heman, laying down his chisel and coming forward. "Were you the man who came out of the way to escort me?"

"You're changed," said the drummer as they shook hands. "Are the folks well? No need to ask if you're well, you look in fine shape, and I see you can do handsome work."

"Oh, yes; I'm fond of my trade. You're still in your old business? Aunt D'rexy reckons me about the best piece of goods you ever brought round. She'd like to see you;" and Heman, who lost few minutes, picked up a bit, examined the point, and attacked a piece of cypress.

"Can't call, but you give her my compliments, and tell her I'm glad I did her the good turn to bring her such a nephew."

When Heman told his aunt, she held up her hands with many exclamations; among the rest—"Why, Heman, how old you're getting to be! Twenty years! Yes, it is twenty years since you came, and you'll be twenty-four next birthday. Dear me, boy, we ought to celebrate your birthdays. We never do, not even when you were twenty-one."

"Well, we had a big job on hand that time, and could n't stop. We'll celebrate some time," said Heman.

"I've read," said Joey, "that when princes come of age, whole countries celebrate themselves wild over it; they have bands, processions, feasts, fireworks, bells. And when lords and

such men come of age, they make big dinners, and have balls and fireworks. Even people here make some kind of a fuss over it. Lawyer Brace gave his son a splendid watch."

"Yes; he said he did n't begrudge it, since he'd learned to use his time properly, which once he feared he never would," said Uncle 'Rias. "Well, Heman, I dunno but your silver watch is as good as a gold one. I never had any."

"I'll buy you one some time," laughed Heman. "I needed one in my business."

"Yes; young fellows nowadays 'pear to need more than old fellows did." Uncle 'Rias still clung ardently to money, and while he did not begrudge giving to the church work, he looked with suspicious eyes on Heman's silver watch and on the bookcase built by Heman and Joey, and where now all that famous list of books stood in veritable bulk, and more beside. Some of them were nice books Uncle 'Rias admitted, and he liked to hear them read. "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," and "Tales of the Covenanters" were still his favorites, yet in spite of them, Uncle 'Rias did "wonder why people bothered to put so much print into the world."

Heman's twenty-fourth birthday came, and had a most unlooked for and splendid celebra-

tion. In the evening they were all asked to tea at Simon Fletcher's, and then and there Simon Fletcher offered Heman a partnership in his business. Uncle 'Rias pounded the floor with his "patent leg" until the house rang; Aunt D'rexy polished away a few happy tears; Aunt Espey smiled in childlike happy peace, and remarked, "This is just like the Lord's ways of doing things, he never disappoints his people." Then everybody shook hands, and Mrs. Simon Fletcher, a buxom, jolly lady, passed about lemonade and pound-cake. As the Sinnets went home Heman wondered how it was that the people they passed in the dim gas-light, and the houses shut for the night time, did not yet know of his great good fortune, that he, Heman Leslie, was now one of a big firm, "Fletcher & Leslie, Carpenters and Builders."

"What 'll you do for a partner, Uncle 'Rias?" said Heman, laying his strong brown hand on the old man's shoulder.

"I'll have Joey. It'll be 'U. SINNET & J. CLUMP, CARPENTERS'—not so big sounding as your sign, Heman, but we'll do; we'll get on, Joey and me."

"Aunt D'rexy," said Heman next evening, "you've been our banker eight years, and it is time we called you to account. How much have

we got laid up for the farm purchase? Bring out your books, dear old lady."

Aunt D'rexy beamed. She found the various books and papers in the pigeon-holes of the old desk, and laid all out under the lamplight. Eight years of savings, but not such a great amount after all. For four years Aunt Espey had done nothing, and Aunt D'rexy had almost ceased to do any work for people outside, as much of her time was needed for Aunt Espey, and Heman and Uncle 'Rias had concluded that the busy D'rexy worked too hard. The household had been supported comfortably, and Heman had had lessons in drawing and mathematics at some expense. Aunt D'rexy thought the hoard a fair one, a round thousand dollars!

"See! all that," she said, presenting a little bank-book that a kindly cashier had kept in clear order for her. It was more than they had expected: the faces of the family fairly shone.

"Uncle 'Rias," said Heman, "what do you reckon this place worth?"

"I paid two hundred dollars for it about thirty years ago," said Aunt Espey, with her calm child-like smile.

"You might n't think it, but it's so. I kept exact count," said Aunt D'rexy. "We've spent a hundred and forty dollars here on improve-

ments, not counting the work, because we did that ourselves. There was the brick chimney for the kitchen, the fence, the new pump, the filling in the hollows."

"Yes," said Uncle 'Rias, "and property has improved here in Windle. It's true this lies low, and is too near the railroad track, but I do say it ought to fetch seven hundred dollars."

"Seventeen hundred then, we can see clear," said Heman eagerly. "Twenty-eight hundred will buy back the farm."

"Yes, boy; but mind, a pair of horses, a wagon, farm tools, another cow, some more fowls and pigs, and some sheep would have to be bought if we meant to do any good with the farm when we got it. I'll soon have to stop carpentry, but I could farm if I had half a chance!"

"You're good for a long while yet, dear old man," said Heman touching his uncle's arm. "Say thirty-three hundred would buy us the farm and re-stock it. Whew! We need sixteen hundred yet! Never mind: now I'm a partner with Simon Fletcher I can lay up five hundred a year maybe, and you can do the rest, Uncle 'Rias."

"With God's blessing we'll have our home again," said Aunt D'rexy. "You'll like to be back in your own room, Aunt Espey!"

"Oh, yes; but I'm happy anywhere," said the dear old soul, who after her long hard-working life had entered days of peace, dwelling serenely in Beulah land, and looking to the golden hills across the river that parts us from Life.

It was in that same spring, when all the world was just awaking after the winter's sleep, that the Sinnet family took a holiday and went to visit their friends the Clumps. They found that Mrs. Clump had sent them an un-received message that they must stay all night, as she had invited the neighbors for the evening. "You 'll have to stay," she said decidedly.

"But there is the cow to milk, and the pig to feed, the fowls to feed and shut up. Why, they have to be seen to," said D'rexy.

"All right, aunt," said Heman, "I'll ride over on horseback and attend to them all and be back before you know it." He went off at a pretty good pace, and Mrs. Clump timed him fairly as she thought, while she prepared her supper. Supper was ready and waited: finally they sat down without Heman. Aunt Espey was placid. Uncle 'Rias said, "Fletcher's stopped him for business;" but Aunt D'rexy could not eat. Had anything happened to her boy? Finally he came, rattling along the road, a flame of excitement over all his face. He volubly

begged pardon for delays, declared himself starved, was bountifully helped—then could not eat. What did it all mean?

It meant that as he mounted his horse to ride back, a gentleman had asked him, "Who owns this place?"

CHAPTER XX.

WORKS PRAISING IN THE GATES.

“If solid happiness we prize,
Within our hearts this jewel lies,
And they are fools who roam:
The world hath nothing to bestow,
From our own selves our joy must flow,
And that dear hut, our home.”

“I DO,” said Heman, in answer to the stranger’s question.

“You look of age, and over,” said the stranger.

“Certainly. I’m Leslie, firm of Fletcher & Leslie, Builders.”

“Oh! Glad to be talking to a business man. I’m on business. Do you want to sell this place?”

“Why, no,” said Heman, “we have n’t thought of it. We counted on living here. It suits us pretty well for now.”

“I did not come here to dicker or try any sharp tricks,” said the gentleman, “but to make a fair straight-forward bargain. I represent the railroad in the matter in hand. You may have heard that we are going to move our shops? We want to bring them to Windle. The rail-

road, as you know, owns that piece of land between the cut and Sloane's. We need more, and should buy beside it. Sloane's land is rich, under high cultivation, and has fine buildings; it would command too high a price, and he is probably not willing to sell a portion on any terms. This land of yours is of no especial value except for our purposes, and for them it comes just right. We would give you more than you would get in any other market. Railroads usually have to pay more than other buyers. We have no time to waste, and no bargaining to do. These small buildings here would serve as well for tool-houses, as we begin work, and you have an acre and a quarter? We will give twenty-five hundred cash down for it, with immediate possession."

It seemed to Heman as if the sky had fallen about him in a rain of parti-colored stars. He nearly tumbled off his horse, so overpowered was he by the splendid suggestions of the words "twenty-five hundred dollars in cash." That meant the farm back again and plenty to stock it. Two hundred dollars more than Uncle 'Rias had required. Twenty-five hundred dollars, that was independence!

A life accustomed to doing his duty honorably, and not to yielding to passing emotions stood Heman in good stead; he did not fall off

his horse or otherwise betray himself; he said calmly, "When I said this place was mine, I spoke as we all do in our family, no man disputing about ownership, but all owning all. When you talk of buying and of deeds, and so on, the place must be sold by my aunt, who really owns it. She will follow exactly the advice we give her. I am sure she will be willing to sell, and will be satisfied with your offer. Still we shall want to consult lawyer Brace before we advise her. Will you wait until to-morrow noon? At twelve sharp we can give you an answer, at lawyer Brace's office. I think there is no doubt but we shall make the sale."

"All right then: until twelve to-morrow, and not an hour longer. Sharp's the word in this business.

It was this conversation that had delayed Heman, and which sent him along the road back to Mr. Clump's in such a happy excitement that his face shone and he could not eat his supper. Neither could he talk sense.

The neighborhood friends were coming in so soon that he could not begin with the details of the railroad's offer, still he felt that he must tell somebody of the approaching good fortune. Dolly was presently out on the wide back porch washing the tea dishes, while Mrs. Clump, in the dairy-room strained the milk and scalded

the pans and pails. The sleeves of Dolly's pink gingham frock were turned back at the elbows; she wore a big coarse linen apron with a bib and her fingers moved very nimbly as she wiped cups and spoons. Heman leaned against a post of the porch. "Dolly, we can just see the tops of the chimneys of our house over the pasture ridge from here, can't we?" said Heman.

"I wish it was your house," said Dolly, wiping a saucer. "I heard that the people who took it when you left are talking of going West, and nobody knows who'll come in their place. The farm will all run down too, if it is in the hands of careless tenants. Moshier says the house needs painting outside and in, and three rooms ought to be papered. It would cost a hundred dollars, and you know Mr. Sloane hates to spend money. If I had that place I would put a ring seat around that big willow, it has grown so big it looks like a grove; and I'd have an arbor in the back yard; but people who rent won't fix up things that way, and of course Mr. Sloane don't care to do it."

"What else would you do, Dolly?" said Heman, with interest.

"I don't know," laughed Dolly, "I'm not thinking of buying it."

"But I am," said Heman, jubilantly, "soon too—right off! I hope the place *is* to be va-

cated so we can go home at once. Don't you tell a word of it, Dolly, until the folks go away this evening, then we must talk it over. I had an offer, a good offer, while I was over there fixing things up for the night. All we've got to do is to close it to-morrow noon, and buy our own old home from Mr. Sloane before night."

Dolly suspended her dish-washing. "Do you think he'll sell for a fair price?" she asked anxiously.

"I think so. He and Mrs. Sloane have promised, and then I heard he was talking of buying a place by the Normal, and he may like the money."

"Won't you be dreadfully lonely after being so long used to the town? It will seem dull out here, maybe," said Dolly.

"Maybe it won't then. I'll have a horse to ride to my work every day. And, Dolly, here's another secret. Lawyer Brace wants to sell his Surry for fifty dollars; he wants a new carriage; but this one is as strong as ever, and I can repaint it myself. I mean to buy that, so that Aunt Espey and Aunt D'rexy can get to church comfortably in most any weather."

"You must be getting rich," said Dolly, piling the clean dishes on a tray. "Are you too proud to empty that dish-pan into the drain for me? I hate to see young men idle."

Heman laughed, emptied the pan, and brought the tea-kettle from the kitchen to pour hot water over Dolly's dish-towels. Heman was accustomed to all these little services; his Aunt D'rexy had early taught him to help her in the house.

"I shall have the house painted and the rooms papered," he said, for he was so happy he could talk only of the beautiful home-coming; it was to shine in his life like the "Glorious Return" of the Vaudois, "if it be lawful to compare small things to great." He said, "I'm joy crazy."

"I'm wild," said Dolly, "to know how your Uncle 'Rias will go on."

"If he is more frantic than he was at Mr. Fletcher's, the day I was taken partner," said Heman, "I hope you'll not leave any breakable things about."

"Come, Dolly, and Heman!" called Mrs. Clump, "there's friends in the sitting-room." It was a pleasant evening with the dear old faithful friends, but for the first time in his life Heman, who was of a distinctly social nature, found himself wishing that the guests would go away. He wondered if it would be right to tell the family his news that evening, and if joyful excitement might not harm Aunt Espey by keeping her from sleeping. However, he could not withhold such splendid news. Scarcely had

Mrs. Clump closed the front door behind the last of the friends, when Heman began seating his family and the Clumps, and demanding attention to a very big piece of business."

"Got a big contract, Heman?" cried Uncle 'Rias, all eagerness; "going to build a new church, or a Court House, or have you been figuring on plans for the new School for the Blind down south part of the State?"

"Better than that, better than that!" cried Heman; "we've got back the Sinnet farm! YES, SIR! By to-morrow this time we can own it out and out, every foot and timber of it—that is, if Aunt Espey says so; and you want to come back, don't you, Aunt Espey?"

"Oh, yes, Heman, if it's only for me to say. It's many a day since I earned a dollar," replied Aunt Espey.

"But it seems you own the worth of a many dollars. The railroad company wants to buy your place where we live to put up a shop, and they offer twenty-five hundred dollars cash down to-morrow noon, if we'll take the offer. It is a good fair offer, and I suppose, Aunt Espey, you'll take it?"

"Why, certainly, if you and 'Rias and Mr. Fletcher say so. Isn't it beautiful of the Lord to make a poor, old, helpless woman like me the means of getting back the home! Why, the

longer I live the more entirely good God is to me! You are all so kind and loving, and I'm so comfortable, that 'pears like he wants to make me realize what heaven is before I get there. Well, Mrs. Clump, we will all be glad to live neighbors again. There's a deal in being neighbors. It says in Scripture, 'Better is a friend that is near than a brother far off.' Well, yes, I am pleased."

"Of course we 'll talk with Lawyer Brace and Mr. Fletcher early to-morrow morning; they're solid business men, and Mr. Brace knows how things ought to be done. We have one thousand laid up; the place will cost twenty-eight hundred; if we put five hundred to your railroad money, Aunt Espey, the place can be bought, and we 'll have funds for repairs, stock, and tools," rattled on Heman.

"Has n't that boy come to have a good business head!" cried Uncle 'Rias in great admiration. He had pounded with his "patent leg" until he was tired.

"I have business head enough, Uncle 'Rias, to see that when the place is bought it will belong to Aunt Espey."

"What, me!" cried Aunt Espey. "Why, I don't care a mite about that; you people would always take care of me, and I have n't long to live any way. Why, I'm past eighty."

"I hope I'll see you past a hundred," cried Heman. "Folks like you, Aunt Espey, make the world better just by living in it. Whether you care about it or not, the place will be yours and held entirely by you."

"But there's that other five hundred," said Aunt Espey, who still had the Sinnet business instincts.

"My opinion," struck in Mr. Clump, "is that the place is Aunt Espey's, Aunt D'rexy holding one-sixth interest in it. That's the way to arrange all that."

"I shall make a will to-morrow," said Aunt Espey, "and will it all to—well, Heman, you can have it; you've been the best kind of a boy to us always, and you would never let any of your folks come to want, I know."

"Hold on," said Mr. Clump, "I heard Mr. Reynolds say once that justice was better than sentiment, and legal rights than anybody's bounty. Aunt Espey, it's all fair to will the place to Heman, but you ought to will a home-right in it so long as they live to 'Rias and D'rexy."

"Oh, I see," said 'Rias, "you all want to fix it so I can't speculate myself out of a home again. Well, maybe I've got cured of that idea. I hope, after all my experiences, I am better than a washed pig."

"You 're all right, Uncle 'Rias," said Heman heartily, and Aunt D'rexy reached over and patted her husband's work-hardened hands. Friend Clump had been troubled with doubts enough about Urias' condition to interpose his suggestions, but now he wanted to get all affairs on a kindly neighborly footing.

"It's awful late," he said, "nigh about ten o'clock, but we feel like talking. 'Rias, I've a plan in my mind I'd like you to think about. You always had plenty of work in this neighborhood, and people build and repair more rather than less. There's more doing over at the Inlet too. Fletcher and Leslie are likely to sweep the town, I s'pose, seeing they're all so smart; but my plan is for you and Joey to set up your shop out here. You can put up a shop right on the main road, on the corner of your old potato field. Would n't cost much; the three of you would make light work of it, and it would be much easier on you, 'Rias, than trying to go to town every day."

"That's sense," said Uncle Urias, "and I believe it is just the thing I'll do; hey, Joey?"

The news of the good fortune of the Sinnets spread among their friends, and many hospitable doors were open to them during the time the family in possession of the farm were preparing to move and the repairs were being

made. It did not take many days to pack up the goods in the four living rooms and the shop at the little home of the past seven or eight years. Happer, who under five years of Heman's tutelage had become entirely reformed, left the factory for three days and came to help his friends. Aunt D'rexy found great comfort in his work, he did it so exactly as she wanted to have it done, and it is a comfort to have one's way even if it is not the best way that ever was heard of. Happer provided long boxes and took up Aunt D'rexy's shrubs and plants with plenty of earth, so that, as Aunt D'rexy said, "they made the change from the village to the farm and never knew they had been moved." As they worked at moving the plants or packing, Happer and Aunt D'rexy found plenty to talk about. Happer had joined a Building Association, and a little four-roomed house was just finished for him. He had made his garden with plenty of "seeds, slips, and sets" from Aunt D'rexy's premises, and now he had his share of the currant bushes, fruit trees, grapevines, honeysuckles, and various other plants that were making way for railroad shops. "I've laid up enough to get the rooms furnished, Mrs. Sinnet, if you'll go with me these two evenings to buy. I expect to have all set up and a fire in the stove when my sister gets here. Poor girl,

she is wild with joy to think we're to live together and have a home. She's been saving money and making things ever since I talked about it two years ago. We'll be real comfortable, and she sha'n't slave any more as she's had to do, poor thing. It was a blessed happening when those boys found me in front of the 'Last Chance,' and that Heman was willing to stick to me when I was in my tantrums and make me behave. Many's the time I felt so mad that I could kill him when he put his strength against mine and forced me to keep sober. Now I feel that he has saved my soul from death. I'd have been in the penitentiary or in a drunkard's grave, I reckon, if it had n't been for you all. I'm going to bring my sister to spend Fourth of July at the farm. I want her to know how good you all are."

Thus Happer and Aunt D'rexy kept tongues and hands at work, Aunt D'rexy, full of happiness, replying,

"Well now, Happer, I don't mind telling you that I used to feel as if nothing could make me so happy as to have my Heman a minister; seems like then he could serve God sure enough; but I've learned that in every business that's fair and honest and lawful, a man can do good and serve God and help other men. You ain't the only one Heman's helped, though he don't

talk much about it. He may brag about his strength, but not about things like that."

"I wish there were half-a-dozen fellows of that kind in every factory and shop and mill and mine through the whole country," said Happer heartily.

Finally the procession started for the Sinnet Farm. It was like the journey of Jacob, with family, goods, and chattels, going down into Egypt, only the Sinnetts had less people and fewer impedimenta. Heman had bought Lawyer Brace's surrey out of his first firm earnings, and in it at the head of the line of march, amazed at their own magnificence, rode Aunt Espey and Aunt D'rexy and Uncle 'Rias, with the clock, the family Bible, two pots of Begonias, and a tin box of eatables. Joey and Heman followed, each driving a wagon loaded with goods. Happer had borrowed a spring-wagon and came along with the plants, three lads of the neighborhood drove the cow, which moved majestically along in the appointed path, and two pigs who erred vehemently in their ways, and gave the young drovers no end of trouble with their vagaries. There was a very lively clucking, screaming, crowing, from several coops of fowls perched on the wagon-loads; and much distracted peeping of young chicks in baskets carried on the knees of the drivers. Aunt

D'rexy had secret fears about her sewing-machine, and Aunt Espey hoped that neither moths nor mice had harmed the goods so long stored at Mrs. Clump's house.

As the returned exiles came into the dear old neighborhood, at doors and windows appeared kindly faces, while aprons, sun-bonnets, hats, and kerchiefs, were vigorously waved.

"Dear me! Isn't everybody good to us," cried Aunt Espey.

"I could tell you several ditties about that," said Uncle 'Rias, "and I mind some remarks D'rexy's uncle, the deacon, made once in prayer-meeting on the text about 'the measure you mete shall be measured to you again,' and you and Aunt D'rexy certainly have been good to folks. Why if that Heman hai n't drove through the West Lane and got to the house first! Unloading all by himself too! D'rexy, do you mind what a bit of a boy he was when he first come to us, and now our Heman's grown up into a MAN!"