

# The Summer Holidays eBook

## The Summer Holidays

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## THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

### CHAPTER I.

Uncle Harvey's parlor.

Mr. Harvey's two sons, Thomas and John, were very anxious for their cousin, Samuel Reed, to spend the August holidays with them. His father said that he might; and when school was closed for the season, Samuel bade his father good bye, and was soon in the carriage, driving toward Uncle Harvey's country seat.

The boys had not seen each other since New Year's day. It was a happy meeting when Samuel jumped out of the carriage, by the gate leading from the main road up to Mr. Harvey's house; for there his uncle, and two cousins, were waiting for him. Thomas and John, each grasped a hand, while their father led the way to the house. "We were afraid you were not coming," said John. "How tall you have grown since Christmas," exclaimed Thomas. "Were you not tired of being in the hot city such weather as this?" Samuel said that he was; and then they all entered the house, while the driver brought in Samuel's baggage.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when Samuel reached his uncle's house. He was taken into a small parlor, which opened upon a garden where many flowers were in bloom. It was a warm day, but this room was cool and fragrant; and on the table were several plates of fruit, and some cakes, which his uncle caused to be placed there, so that he might eat some as soon as he arrived, While Samuel was eating some of them John said:

"We are so glad you have come, Samuel. Last winter you could see nothing but snow."

"What became of the snow-man we made last winter?" asked Samuel.

"It froze very hard for more than a week after you left," replied Thomas; "but John and I broke its head a great deal, with snow balls, and afterwards a warm rain fell, and washed it away."

"Is it warm in the city now?" asked John.

"Yes," answered his cousin. "In the middle of the day the pavements seem to be about on fire, and people are afraid to walk far, lest they may be sunstruck. Yesterday two men died with the heat. There seems to be no air stirring from morning till night. Besides, there is much sickness in town, and many persons have left their houses, and gone into the country."

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"Father," said Thomas, "how miserable we should be if we had no water to drink this weather, like those poor Arabs that you told us of the other day."

"Yes," answered Mr. Harvey, "the sun must be burning hot in Arabia now."

"How can they live in such a place?" asked John.

"They are not all so miserable as the party I told you of the other day," replied his father. "Besides, you know it is their country, and God has taught them to love it. If an Arab were brought here, he would, probably, think it a most dreary land, except in summer."

"But what do you do in town, Samuel," asked John, "when it is too warm to go out?"

"It is very hot only in the middle of the day," replied his cousin, "and then, you know, we are at school. In the afternoons, I sometimes rode out with father, or went on the steamboat. Last week a balloon went up, from the other side of the river. We had a fine view of it from the roof of our house. Two men were in it, and when they had risen so high that the balloon appeared quite small, they threw out a little machine, called a parachute. It looked something like an umbrella, and had a dog to it. The balloon sailed a great distance through the air, and came down safely."

It was now six o'clock, and Mr. Harvey told the boys that they might go to supper, which he had ordered to be ready earlier than usual.

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER II.

### *The evening walk.*

After supper, Samuel and his cousins took a walk in the meadow, toward the mill pond. The air was now cool and pleasant, and as the boys moved through the narrow path, among the low grass, thousands of grasshoppers, and other insects, filled the air with their cheerful hum. Thomas, with his companions, passed round the mill, and then climbed a fence which led through a field of corn. The corn was not very high, so that they had to be careful not to tread upon it. When they reached the other side, Samuel saw that the fence was covered with raspberry vines, from one end to the other. He asked what they did with so many. "All that father wishes to use, or to eat," replied Thomas, "he gathers out of the garden; but these he leaves for two or three poor families, who live not far off, and who take them to town to sell. It helps them to pay their rent."

"And does he give away blackberries, too?" asked Samuel.

“Yes, and many other kinds of fruit,” replied his cousin. “He has such large fields and orchards, that he can afford to give away great quantities of apples, peaches, currants, grain, and vegetables.”

[Illustration: *The old SOLDIER’S house.*]

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The boys roamed about the fields, talking in this manner, until after sunset, when Thomas said it was time to return. They crossed into a bye path, and walked toward the house through a field in which wheat had been growing. Among the short straw, left by the reapers, Samuel saw many birds' nests, and deep holes that had been dug by rabbits, field mice, and other small animals. In a short time they passed a very old house, whose sides appeared as if they would fall every moment. The roof was covered with moss and grass, and the boards had crumbled and separated from each other; a number of bats and swallows were flying about it, and Thomas said that dozens of these little animals, beside rats and mice, lived inside. Samuel asked him if any body lived there. "No," said his cousin; "but father remembers very well when an old soldier, that the farmers called Jack, did live in this house. His leg had been shot off in battles with the Indians. After it healed he moved to this place, and lived on the vegetables he could raise in a little garden, besides what people gave him. Every night he came out and sat on the log by the door, playing on an old fiddle. Then the school children would collect around him, and give him pennies, or fruit, and such things. Sometimes he told them stories; for he had travelled in many lands, and knew a great deal about them. In the summer nights, father says, he often heard poor old Jack singing the songs that he had learned when he was a boy; and sometimes he could be seen hobbling down this lane, on his crutches, or sitting by the water catching some fish for his supper. One day he was missed, and folks thought he was sick; but they waited till the next morning, and then a great crowd collected round the house, and called him. No one answered; so some one lifted the latch and went in. Old Jack was not there, and the people began to get frightened. They hunted for him all that day, and many days afterward; but he was never found. Some think that he was drowned; others that he went away with strangers, and a few are foolish enough to believe, that he is still living, and will one day come back. Since that time, no one has ever lived in his house, and in a few years it will tumble down with old age."

While Thomas had been giving this account of Poor Jack, the Soldier, John was very busy moving round the old house, and peeping through the cracks in the boards. At last he motioned Thomas and Samuel, to come to him, and then whispered:

"Stoop down—don't make a bit of noise—and peep through this crack. You'll see the biggest owl that ever you did see, in all your life." Both of them looked through. It was very dark, but Samuel saw two great eyes, like balls of fire, and in a little while he could perceive the body of an owl, which, as John had said, was the largest he had ever seen.

"Let us go in and catch him," said John. But Thomas answered, that as it was now dark the owl could easily fly away; and besides, as they did not wish to kill it, it could be of no use to them, if they should catch it. "It might do for cousin to look at," replied John; but he did not insist upon entering the house. As they were going away, Samuel asked his cousin if he did not think owls were ugly.



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"No, indeed," answered John. "I would rather see an owl any time than these little birds that can do nothing but sing. See how soft his feathers are—all barred and spotted with black and brown, which is more handsome than to be all over red or yellow. I know he can't sing; but he's got nice, long ears, and that no other bird has. And how nice and round his head is. Then he sits on a tree, and looks wise, as father says. The Canary, and the mocking bird, are good enough to keep in cages, but of all birds, give me an owl."

Thomas and Samuel laughed at this notion, but John continued:

"Thomas, did not some people, who lived a long while ago, call the owl the 'bird of wisdom?'"

"Yes," replied Thomas. "I have heard father say that it was the Athenians."

"That shows how wise they were," said John. "I seems to me as though that owl, which we saw, was keeping house for poor old soldier Jack."

"Do hush about owls," said his brother, laughing; and they ran together through the gate, and into the yard.

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER III.

*A visit to daddy Hall.*

Next morning, Mr. Harvey told his sons that they might go to see an old man, who lived in a small house, about two miles off, and who was so sickly that he could not work. This old man's name was Hall, and the boys of the school called him Daddy Hall. He had once been rich; but sickness and misfortune had reduced him to poverty, so that he now lived with his little son, in a small hut, near a hill. Every week he sent fruit and vegetables to market, in a cart, drawn by a donkey, which some of the neighbors had given to him. Every week Mr. Harvey sent either a servant, or one of the boys, to see how he was getting along, and to carry him something nice.

The two boys, with their cousin, were soon off, carrying with them a basket full of things for the old man. They went by the road across the meadows, and through a small gate in the hedge. Samuel observed, that the hawthorn of the hedge grew very thick and close, so that a bird could scarcely get through it. The roots and branches were twisted into each other, appearing like strong, thick chains woven together; and on the vines grew sharp thorns, longer than a needle. Mr. Harvey's boys told their cousin, that neither man nor beast could get through such a hedge; and that if a man were placed on the top, he could walk on the vines without sinking down, they were so strong and

close. “It would be uneasy travelling, though,” added John; “for his feet would be torn to pieces by these spiky thorns.”

They now left the hedge, and went on through two wide fields, until they reached some hills that stood by themselves, and were steep and bare. Three of them had deep pits dug in them, while piles of rock, stones, and sand, were lying around. Samuel asked his cousins what place it was.

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"It is an iron mine," said Thomas; but it is not worked any more, because there is not enough of iron found to pay for the trouble. All these stones lying about here are pieces of ore; but the quantity of iron in them is so small that it will not pay for the expense of taking it out from the ore."

"How is iron taken from the ore?" asked Samuel. Thomas replied:

"The ore is first crushed into coarse dust, and then washed. Afterwards this dust is melted in a hot furnace, and the iron is separated from the melted stone, or dross, in a manner which is very troublesome, and which father can explain to you better than I can. Sometimes the ore is almost all iron; John and I have some pieces in our cabinets, in which you cannot see any stone."

"But did men go down this deep well?" asked Samuel.

"Yes; they were lowered down in buckets. And the water was pumped out by a machine. The water was so cold, even in the middle of summer, that one could scarcely hold his hand in it."

The boys began to throw stones down one of the wells, so that they might guess by hearing them strike the bottom, how deep it was. The first stones were too small to be heard; then they threw larger ones, and listened, but could hear no sound. At last, John took up a piece of rock as big as his head, and rolled it into the well. It fell with a hollow, rumbling noise, and all was then still. The boys thought it had reached the bottom; but all at once they heard it splash into water. Then the boys knew that the well was very deep, for the stone had been falling several seconds. They then hunted among the piles of ore for some handsome pieces to give to Samuel; after which, they picked up their basket, and hurried on toward Daddy Hall's.

On reaching his house, they found the old man sitting at the door, while his son, a good boy, was preparing to take the donkey to market, with a cart load of turnips, radishes, peas, beans, and cabbage. Daddy Hall was pale and thin; but he arose to meet the boys, and seemed very glad to see Samuel. Although he was sick almost every day, and sometimes suffered great pain, yet no one ever heard him complain. He loved children, and was very fond of talking to them; and before he grew so weak and feeble, many of the farmers sent their little ones to him, to learn to read. After they had been seated a little while, John asked him if he did not get tired of staying in the house.

"Sometimes," said the old man, "I wish I could go out, as I once could, and work for myself; but I do not feel tired. Besides, this is the best condition I can be placed in; and if you ask me why, I will tell you. God, my children, has placed me in it; and he knows what is best for each of us. He has given me many comforts, kind friends, plenty to eat and drink, and a son, who is one of the best of boys. There is nothing, John, more cheering to the heart of an old man than the kindness of a dutiful son; and let me ask

each of you, to listen to the advice of one who owns such a blessing, and always to show honor and respect to your parents.”

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[Illustration]

### CHAPTER IV.

*The walk through the woods.*

The boys left their basket with Daddy Hall, and set out on their return to the house. "Let us go through the woods," said Thomas, and they all walked toward a thick wood which stood not far from the hill, near which Daddy Hall's house was built. They were glad to reach its cool shade; for the sun was now getting warm. Samuel saw a number of birds among the branches, that he did not know the names of; and many bright little flowers were growing in the shade, among the roots of oak and beech trees. A little distance in the wood, they reach a small rock, near which some large stones were lying, as if they had been thrown together. Thomas stopped, and said, "Samuel, this is the place where we killed a big snake last spring. You can see his hole under this rock. John and I tried hard to move these loose stones, but we could not. I dare say there are snake nests underneath."

"Perhaps we three can move one of them," replied his cousin. They all caught hold, and at last pulled the stone from its place. There was nothing underneath, but some old nut shells; but John said he was sure they would find snakes if they could but move the other stones. After much pulling, they raised another one; and under it was a large land tortoise, with several little ones, no larger than a walnut. After examining these, they observed a hole running under another stone, into the ground. Samuel also found two or three snake skins, which his cousins told him the snakes threw off every spring, after which, a new and larger skin grew on them. They pulled hard at this third stone, but could not move it; but while they were going away, Thomas said that they could bring an iron bar some day, and easily root it up.

In the middle of the wood was a fine spring of water, which gushed from a rock, and then spread out into a little pool, so clear and quiet, that the smallest stones could be seen at the bottom. Samuel tasted the water, and found it cold and refreshing. He asked his cousin how so much water could come out of the rock.

"It does not come from the rock," replied Thomas; "but only runs through it. Father says, that spring water often comes from the hills and mountains, running under the ground through cracks and holes in the rocks, until it finds some outlet. I suppose this water runs down from the tops of the hills near the iron mine."

"But this is not rain water," said his cousin. "It neither tastes nor looks like it."

"It has become changed while passing under the ground," replied Thomas. "After a heavy shower the water soaks into the earth until it reaches the sand, or rock

underneath, then it runs through every little crack down the hill, and under the ground to some place like this where it can escape. The sand and gravel, which it meets with, make it pure and the lime and other substances of the rocks, alter its taste."

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[Illustration]

### CHAPTER V

*What uncle Harvey said about rain.*

When the boys reached the house, Mr. Harvey was in his study. Samuel was anxious to ask him some questions about springs, but he would not go up stairs to disturb him. But after dinner his uncle came into the parlor where the boys were, and then Samuel asked him where all the water comes from that flows in the rivers and other streams.

"From the ocean," answered Mr. Harvey. "I suppose you have seen water boiling, Samuel."

"Yes, sir."

"And have you seen the steam rise up from the water into the air?" Samuel said that he had. His uncle continued:

"Whenever water is heated, it is turned into steam, or vapor, as it is sometimes called. If there is enough of heat to make water boil, the vapor passes off very fast, until the water is gone. Now the sun is continually changing the water of rivers, ponds, lakes, and of the ocean, into vapor. This vapor rises. The air about a mile above the earth, is much colder than it is on the earth; so when the hot vapor from the ocean meets the cold air, it again becomes water, and forms clouds. I see you are ready with a question, John."

"Yes, sir," said John. "I cannot see, father, how the clouds can float in the air if they are nothing but water. Why do they not pour down?" His father answered:

"I expected this would be your question. The clouds, my son, are water, but not in a close mass, like that in a bucket or in the mill pond. You have seen soap bubbles, and know that a great many of them may be joined together without breaking. It is supposed by learned men, that clouds are nothing but many thousands of bubbles, which, being lighter than air, would, you know, float on it."

"But, father," said John, "what makes it rain?"

"That is not certainly known," replied Mr. Harvey; "but, no doubt, lightning has much to do with it. I will show you, this evening, several pictures about clouds and springs of water, which will help you to understand what I have said."

"Uncle," said Samuel, "there is one more question which I would like to ask."

“Ask it, my boy,” replied Mr. Harvey.

“I have read, sir, that the water of the ocean is salt; why, then, is not rain water salt, too?”

“Because,” said Mr. Harvey, “salt cannot be changed to vapor, and it is too heavy to be raised, in any quantity, in the air with the water. Yet, I suppose, that a little salt is always mixed with the bubbles that form clouds.”

## **CHAPTER VI.**

*How Thomas killed A hawk.*

This afternoon was very hot, and the boys spent it in their room, arranging their books and pictures, and in reading. At five o'clock, while Thomas was standing by the window, he suddenly exclaimed: “There’s a hawk!” Both the boys ran to the window, and saw a large hawk, sailing slowly toward the barn.



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"He is the one that steals our chickens," said John. "And see, he's flying straight for the barn. Thomas, run and ask father for the gun."

Mr. Harvey kept two guns in his house; but he used them only for shooting hawks, when they were flying about to steal the poultry. John and Thomas had learned to use them, and sometimes spent an afternoon in firing at a mark. But they never did so without their father's consent.

[Illustration: *The hawk.*]

Thomas soon joined the other boys, having the gun in his hand; and after Mr. Harvey had bidden them to be careful, they followed in the direction the hawk was flying. They kept close by the fence, so that it could not see them. In a short time it was over the barn yard, and sailing round and round, in order to make a sweep downwards. "Hurry, Thomas," said John; and Thomas ran stooping along some bushes, followed by John and Samuel, on their hands and feet. The hawk was now quite low, and the boys could hear the hens screaming and running about. At last Thomas reached the barn fence, and his brother told him to fire. But he could not take aim, because the hawk was partly hidden by the corner of the barn. "I am afraid he'll get that little chicken," said Samuel. "See if you can take aim now," whispered John. The hawk now made a sweep at one of the chickens; but it ran under the barn, and the hawk flew up a little higher. Just then, Thomas fired. The hawk came down head foremost, and Thomas threw away his gun, and sprang over the wall. John and Samuel jumped after him, shouting as loud as they could. In a few moments the hawk was dead. It was the largest one that either of them had ever seen. When they reached the house, Mr. Harvey was waiting for them; and on seeing so large a hawk, promised to have it stuffed for them. The gun was then hung up in its place.

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER VII.

*About bats.*

This evening, while the boys were reading and talking to Mr. Harvey, several bats flew in at the window. John caught one of them in his hat, and placed it on the table for his cousin to examine. Samuel asked his uncle if it would not fly away.

"No," said Mr. Harvey, "it cannot raise itself from the ground. What we call its wings, are, you see, nothing but two thin skins, or membranes, stretched from its hind legs to its fore ones, and fastened to its sides. When flying, it spreads out its toes, so as to unfold these membranes, and thus balances itself in the air."

"Do not some people think that the bat is a bird?" asked Samuel.

“Yes. But probably they never examined a bat closely. You see that it looks nothing at all like a bird.”

“Father,” said John, “where did those great bats come from, which you have in your cabinet?”

“From the island of Java,” said Mr. Harvey. “They are called Java bats. I have seen some with bodies as large as hens, and wings like umbrellas. Hundreds of these animals fly about the gardens and orchards of that island, every night, destroying great quantities of fruit. The people there, spread nets over the trees, to protect the fruit, and shoot the bats with guns, as you did the hawk.”

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"I have read, in a book of travels," said Samuel, "that while persons are asleep, these bats, or some other large kind, suck their blood. Is that true, sir?"

"No," said Mr. Harvey. "Such tales were long believed, even by writers on natural history; and I have some where a picture of a monstrous bat sucking the blood from a man's veins. But all this is now known to be fabulous. No kind of bat will attack an animal as large as itself, nor enter a house when there is an abundance of fruit and insects in the field."

"Shall we let this bat go now?" said John. Mr. Harvey said yes; and then John lifted it on a large sheet of paper, and threw it into the air. In a moment it spread out its thin wings, and after flying about the room two or three times, passed out of the window. Mr. Harvey told them, that although the bat was so feeble when on the ground, yet its strength of wing was greater than that of any bird.

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The walk to the creek.*

The next day there was a heavy thunder shower, in the morning, which compelled the boys to stay in the house; and in the afternoon the teacher of the academy paid Mr. Harvey a visit. During the time that he staid, Thomas, with his brother and cousin, were told to remain in the house. But the next day was cool and pleasant, and they started early on a ramble through the fields. As they passed close to a farm house, Samuel saw a large dog chained to a tree, in the yard. It looked very fierce at them as they passed, and then began to growl and bark. Thomas told his cousin, that this dog had bitten several persons in the neighborhood, and that some of the school boys had tried to poison it; but that the farmer was careful always to keep it chained, so that no body might get a chance to catch it in the road.

About half a mile further onward was a fine stream of water. It began in the hills, and ran winding along, deeper and broader, to a great distance. Mr. Harvey owned several farms along this creek; and here Thomas and John often came, in summer evenings, to swim. The water was clear and pure, so that hundreds of fish could be seen sporting around the shores.

When the boys reached this creek, they sat down under a shady tree, to watch the fishes, and listen to the songs of the birds, on the bushes that hung over the water. In a short time, a number of eels came from under a large stone, one after the other, and after swimming about for a little while, buried themselves in the mud. Samuel asked Thomas where so many came from.

“They live in the water,” replied his cousin. “On a pleasant evening you can see many more swimming among the stones, and the roots of trees, by the edge of the creek. But, do you know, that they sometimes come out of the water, and glide about the meadows.”

“No,” said Samuel; “do they?”

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“Yes,” replied Thomas. “At night you may sometimes see a great many among the grass. One evening last summer John and I met a whole company of them, going from the little creek, near Daddy Hall’s house, toward the mill pond. We thought, at first, that they were snakes, and so moved out of their road; but by and by, we perceived that they were eels. The weather had been hot and dry for two weeks before, and these eels were travelling to find more water. So father told us afterwards.”

The boys now walked on, down the creek, until they came to a small bridge. On this a boy, about as large as Samuel, was standing, throwing stones into the water. When Thomas, and the other two, got near enough, they saw he was stoning frogs. Every time one of these little animals put its head above the water, the boy pelted it with a stone; and two or three had been mashed to death, as they sat on the broad stones, near the water’s edge.

[Illustration: *Stoning frogs.*]

Now, all good boys and girls, who read this book, will say that this was a cruel boy—and so he was. As soon as John saw what he was about, he called to him to stop. The boy said he would not, and stoned harder than before. Then John began to grow angry. You remember, children, I told you, that though John was a noble hearted fellow, yet he was quick of temper; and when he saw boys doing wrong, he was apt to get angry very soon, if they did not stop when they were told. So, seeing that the boy still threw stones, he called to him again, louder than before.

“What shall I stop for?” said the boy.

“Because,” said John, as he stepped on the bridge, “you have no business to stone frogs. What hurt do they do you?”

“A good deal,” said the boy; and he threw another stone.

“I tell you to stop,” replied John; “this is father’s field, and they are his frogs, too; and you have no right here, if you can’t behave yourself.”

The boy now threw off his cap, as if to fight, and said: “I don’t care for you or your father either; I’ll stone as long as I please, and no one shall hinder me,” and as he spoke, he shook his fist in John’s face. John was now very angry.

“If you touch me,” he said, “I’ll throw you, head foremost, over the bridge. I tell you to quit stoning frogs, and you shall quit.”

Thomas and Samuel now came forward; for they were afraid that there would be some fighting. John and the boy stood looking at each other for a little while; but at last, the boy seeing that John was not afraid of him, picked up his hat and walked off, muttering that he did not care for any body. “He had better go,” said John. When his brother

began to grow calm, Thomas told him that he ought not to get so angry, for he could have driven off the boy just as well, by speaking quietly to him. "I have seen him once or twice before," added Thomas, "and I hear that he is a very bad boy."

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[Illustration]

### CHAPTER IX.

*The hard battle.*

In coming home by some cherry trees that stood near the fence, Samuel saw a little animal, larger than a bat, fly swiftly from one branch to another. He asked his cousins if it was not a flying squirrel. Thomas answered, "Yes. Several nests of them are in these trees. If you could examine one of these squirrels closely, you would see that its wings, as they are called, are not like bird's wings."

"They seem more like a bat's wings," said Samuel.

"So they are," replied his cousin; "only thin skins, stretched along the sides from the fore legs to the hind ones. But these squirrels cannot fly far, nor stay long in the air, as bats can. They merely dart swiftly from one branch to another."

"What other kinds of squirrels are there?" asked Samuel.

"The grey squirrel," said Thomas, "much larger than this one. It is not often found about here. Then the ground squirrel, that lives in the ground, instead of on the trees. The common squirrel, such as you see running about the fences and woods; and two or three other kinds. Some people eat squirrels; but I have never tasted one."

The boys now heard some one screaming, and stopped to listen. "It comes from that field," said John; "let us run and see what is the matter." They did so, and soon saw that the big dog they had passed in going to the creek, had got out, and was chasing a boy. This boy was screaming with fear; and John perceived that he was the boy who had been stoning frogs. But the boys ran with all their might to help him, picking up such stones and sticks as lay on the ground, in their way. When they reached the boy, he was pale with fear, for the dog was close to him. Samuel also felt a little afraid; but he joined his two cousins in trying to beat the dog back. The fierce animal got John's stick in his mouth, and wrenched it out of his hand; but he kicked it in the jaws, and so kept it off with his feet, while Thomas and Samuel struck it over the head with all their might. As to the boy, he ran as hard as he could, until he was out of sight. Thomas's stick now broke, but Samuel ran his down the dog's throat, and John ran to bring a great pole which was lying a little distance off. With this they kept the dog from biting them, until some men came running down a lane, and over into the field. They had seen the dog run out of the farmer's yard, and were anxious to kill it. So they threw a rope round its neck, and dragged it away. They said it should be shot. The boys were very warm, and could scarcely get their breath. They walked, therefore, to a tree which stood in the field, and sat down to get cool, and rest themselves. Thomas said he would be glad if

the dog were killed, for such an animal was not fit to keep. "If we had each had a good stout club," replied his brother, "he would never have run after any of us again."



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They looked for the boy, but he could not be seen; and after resting themselves, they walked home. When Mr. Harvey heard of their battle with the dog, he said that it was a great blessing they had not been bitten; for that in summer the bite of a dog often caused madness, followed by certain death.

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER X.

*About corn and the uses of animals.*

When Samuel had been at his uncle's about two weeks. Mr. Harvey told him one morning, that he might go with his cousins to a field where early corn was growing and pull some to cook, if it was ripe. They had a merry time among the high corn. As they came back to the house, carrying their basket of ears, Samuel asked his cousins, why corn was sometimes called Indian corn.

"It is because it formed the chief food of the Indians, before white men came to this country," replied Thomas. "Father says its proper name is maize. It was first found in this country; and there are some parts of America where it is used altogether instead of wheat or rye. Did you ever taste cakes made from it?"

"Yes," said Samuel; "they were sweeter than wheat bread; but I would not like to eat them every day."

"Nor I either," said John; "but I like Indian meal with sugar, eggs, and milk in it, and then baked brown in the oven. Don't you, Samuel?"

"I never tasted it that way. But I think corn is best boiled on the ear, and eaten with meat and vegetables."

Mr. Harvey's library, as I have already told you, was very large. He spent much time in the room where it was, either reading or writing. In the afternoon, after the boys had gathered the corn, he called them into this room, and showed them some beautiful pictures of animals and countries. While looking at them, Samuel asked him if he thought every animal had been made for some useful purpose.

"Yes, my boy," answered his uncle; "we have reason to believe that even things which appear to be entirely useless, such as gravel stones, or weeds, have been made by God for some good end. The more we learn about animals and plants, the more plainly this appears. I will show you the picture of a very curious animal, called a Sloth. It looks a little like a bear. Now listen, boys, to a few words about this animal. It lives in thick, gloomy forests, so that it can scarcely ever be taken. When placed on the ground it cannot walk, but drags itself forward, with its fore legs, crying all the time, as if in great

pain. Its claws are long, and turn up under its feet. In the woods it lives all the time on the trees, hanging from a branch, with its back toward the ground. Tell me what you think of such an animal.”

“I think it must be miserable all day long,” replied Samuel.

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“So every one thought, about fifty years ago,” said Mr. Harvey; but men who have gone to the countries where sloths are, and seen them in the high trees, tell a very different story. They say that the sloth’s home is in the branches, as much as a fish’s is in the water; and he is there a strong and happy animal, although he looks so weak and miserable on the ground. He lives on fruit, and moves from one branch and one tree to another, with considerable swiftness. So you see that the sloth enjoys himself as well as any of us; and I have no doubt that he was created for some good purpose, although we may not be able to understand precisely what it is.

“But do not some animals eat each other?” asked Thomas.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Harvey; “but this is of great use to man. What would the farmer do with all the insects that destroy his grain, if many of them were not eaten by little birds; and how much of his fruit would these very birds destroy, if they, too, were not eaten by hawks! If animals did not destroy each other, they would soon become so numerous as to crowd man from the earth.”

## CHAPTER XI.

*Alice Gray.*

One morning, after the three boys had taken a pretty long walk, they came to a small cottage, standing by a garden, round which was a neat hedge. Part of this garden was planted with vegetables, and part with flowers, while many vines and sweet brier bushes stood before the cottage door. There were also large, white roses, which Samuel thought finer than any he had yet seen; and in a corner of the garden farthest from the house, stood two bee hives. As the boys passed by, a young woman came out on the piazza, and asked them in. John and Thomas had often been here; so they opened the gate and passed through with their cousin. The young woman, whose name was Alice, brought out chairs, and some new milk in bowls, for each of them to drink. Then she walked with them through the garden, showing them through the flowers, and telling their names. He was much pleased with the bee hives; they were made of wood, with glass tops, so that the bees might be seen at work. After watching them for some time, they returned through the garden to the cottage door. At this moment an old lady came to the door, and spoke to Mr. Harvey’s boys. Samuel observed that she was very feeble, and that her voice could scarcely be heard. She looked like one who had been often sick. When they left the cottage, he asked who she was.

[Illustration: *Alice Gray.*]

“Her name is Gray,” said Thomas. “Alice is her daughter. Mrs. Gray’s husband was a sailor, and when Alice was about three years old, he went on a voyage to catch whales, but was lost, with all the crew. Mrs. Gray was poor, and had four children; and as no

one in the town where she lived would help her, she opened a school for little boys and girls. The money she got by teaching,

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supported her family, until her two oldest children died. Soon after, the poor woman herself became sick, and the school was closed. Then she moved into this part of the country, and tried to make her living by weaving mats out of rushes. But in the fall, the child older than Alice, died; and Mrs. Gray again grew sick. Her landlord was a hard hearted man: he turned her out of doors, and the poor woman would have died, if some neighbors had not taken her in, and provided for her until she could work for herself. At last she went to live on one of the hills that you can see near the iron mine. She did pretty well that winter; but one day in the spring, a great freshet ruined every thing that she had, and almost carried away her house. Afraid to stay on the hill any longer, she was about to go to the city, and ask assistance from the societies which give help to poor people, when some persons, told her to move to the cottage she is in now, and that they would pay the rent. She did so. When Alice grew older, she worked hard to support her mother, and she it was who planted all the flowers and vegetables that you saw in the garden. Father made her a present of the bee hives. Every body loves her because she has so sweet a temper."

"And is the old lady still sick?" asked Samuel.

"Yes," said his cousin, "she will never be well again. Yet she is happy in having a good daughter and kind friends, and loves to see the young people, who sometimes stop to talk or read to her."

At some distance from the cottage the boys met a bull in the road. It was standing still when they first saw it; but in a little while it began to strike the ground with its feet, and toss about its head. Samuel was afraid to go on; but his cousins told him to follow them, without attempting to run. As they passed, the bull looked fiercely at them, and began to roar; but they walked on, keeping their eyes steady on it, all the while. It continued to make a great noise, but did not follow them. After they had passed it, Thomas said they could then walk as fast as they chose, lest the bull might follow them. Samuel asked him, if bulls had not sometimes killed people.

"Yes," he replied, "bulls are dangerous when any thing makes them angry. And at such times, if you run from them they are sure to follow. They often fight with each other; and farmer Smith had a bull killed by another one last spring. If you meet them in the road, it is best to face them, without showing any fear. It is not often that they will attack any one who has courage enough to look straight at them."

[Illustration]

## CHAPTER XII.

*Locusts.*

Mr. Harvey's boys had a very fine fig tree, which had been presented to them by a friend of their father, and of which they took great care. It was kept in a large box, so that it might be placed in the house during the winter. The boys expected it would bear fruit next year. One day John burst into the room where Thomas, Samuel, and his father were sitting, and exclaimed with a doleful voice:

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"Oh, father, it is dead—eaten by the locusts—I found a dozen on it."

"What's the matter, John?" said Mr. Harvey. "What have the locusts eaten?"

"Our fig tree," replied John. "It is gone past all remedy. Only come with me, and you'll see it."

They followed him down the garden walk. On reaching the fig tree, Mr. Harvey saw that nearly all its leaves had been eaten off, with most of the bark and young branches. Thomas and Samuel were very sorry, and John said he would kill every locust he met, from that day forward. Mr. Harvey examined the tree, and found, that although much damage had been done to it, yet with proper care, it might be restored. "We ought to have covered it with a net," he said to the boys.

While his father was talking with Thomas and his cousin, John was stooping on the ground, hammering something with a stone. At last Mr. Harvey turned round, and asked John what he was doing.

"I am killing these fine locusts that I have caught," replied John.

"Stop, my son," said Mr. Harvey, "that is foolish conduct, and very wicked. You are giving way to anger and revenge, two of the worst passions that a youth can indulge."

"But, father, they will eat more trees."

"The damage that a few locusts can do, is not much," answered his father; "and if we had taken proper care with the fig tree, they would not have reached it. Let those under your hat go, and when we go into the house, I will tell you about the locusts of the Eastern countries, of which you might kill as many as you chose, if you were there." John did as his father bade him, and said he was sorry for having acted so foolishly. Then Mr. Harvey trimmed the fig tree with his knife, and said he would send a servant to place a screen over it. When they came to the house, John reminded his father of his promise concerning the locusts. Mr. Harvey took from a shelf several large pictures of insects, and laying one on the table, asked his son what he thought it was.

"It looks like a large grasshopper," said John.

"It is the locust of the East," replied his father. "These locusts are shaped almost exactly like the long-winged grasshoppers that fly about our fields; but they are two or three times larger. What do you think this picture is?"

"It seems to be a great cloud of dust."

"It is a swarm of Eastern locusts. Hundreds of thousands fly thus together, darkening the air, and driving every thing before them. When alighting they cover the earth for

more than a mile round, and eat every green thing to the very roots. The noise of their wings is like thunder. They leave the country like a desert, so that the terrified people look forward to misery and famine. Men, women, and children, turn out with guns and stones, to kill them; and sometimes large fires are kindled for the same purpose. The dead ones are taken by cart loads to markets, and sold for food."



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"To be eaten, sir!" said Samuel.

"Yes," replied Mr. Harvey, "mixed with butter, and fried in a pan, they form almost all the meat that the poorer classes in those countries get."

"Its a shocking meal" said John.

"Not so bad as you suppose," said his father. "Perhaps, if it were not the custom in this country to eat lobsters or hogs, we would look upon them with as much disgust as you do upon locusts. What do you think of dining off of spiders?"

"Horrible," said John. His father continued:

"I have read of a man who ate nothing else, when he could get spiders. So you see that people's tastes differ. You know that John Baptist's food was locusts and wild honey."

"Do the people kill all the locusts in a swarm?" asked Thomas.

"No," said his father, "a swarm is so large that after hundreds of cart loads are taken from it, it seems no smaller. Generally, the wind drives them into the sea, where they perish. But their dead bodies, cast upon shore, become corrupt, and produce plagues."

"I wish," said John, "that the wind would drive all we have into the sea, or else a good distance from our fig tree. Who would think that such little animals could do so much mischief."

"Is it true that locusts return after every seventeen years?" asked Samuel.

"Yes," said Mr. Harvey; "but not the common kind, such as ate the fig tree. All locusts come from eggs. In first coming from the egg, they are not winged, but look like grub worms. After a while these grubs cast off their skins, and become locusts. Now, there is a kind of locust which is seventeen years in changing from the egg to the full insect It is this kind which is so numerous every seventeen years. If you go into the field when they are coming from the ground, you will see the grass and plants covered with them."

"Father," said John, "why did the locusts strip all the leaves from the fig tree, without touching any of the flowers or bushes around?"

"I suppose," said Mr. Harvey, "it is because the fig tree is very tender. It comes, you know, from warm countries, and is there the proper food of the locust. Had there been figs on the tree, they would, no doubt, have been eaten also."

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The return home.*

A few days after this conversation, a large fox came, in the evening, into Mr. Harvey's barn yard; but as a dog belonging to one of the farmers was near, he was driven off before he could catch any of the chickens. The boys heard the noise, and ran down. They saw the fox running very fast away, while the dog, which could not follow through the hole under the fence, had gone round the barn, to get into the field. Samuel and his cousins chased the fox as far as they could see it, and then returned to the barn yard to hunt for more. But none could be found, and they walked up to the house.

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[Illustration: *The fox.*]

At last the month of August rolled around, and the holidays drew toward a close. I have told you only about a few things that Samuel saw in his walks around the country with his cousins; but you perceive that he enjoyed himself very much. He also learned a great deal. I hope, children, that you have also learned something by reading this book. Samuel tried to remember all that his uncle and cousins told him, and often thought of it when he was by himself. It would be well if you would do the same. Have you a little brother, or sister? See if you can tell it what Mr. Harvey told Samuel about bats, locusts, rivers, the rain, and sloths. You may also tell the story of Alice Gray, and old Jack the Soldier.

You remember that Samuel was to go home at the end of August. Thomas and John looked very sorrowful as the time drew near; for they loved their cousin very much, and wished that he could stay with them altogether. On the last evening, Mr. Harvey took all the boys to a branch of the river about seven miles off, to enjoy a sail in a boat, on the water. It was a beautiful moonlight evening, and they rode to the place in a carriage. Samuel thought that the sight of the water, sparkling in the moon-beams, and stretching away so wide and still, with the dark bushes on each side, was the finest thing he had yet seen. When they were in the middle of the stream, and gliding slowly down it, Mr. Harvey and his sons joined in singing some simple song; and as they had brought plenty of food with them, they staid on the water until midnight.

Next morning, Samuel started for town, at nine o'clock. He had received many beautiful and useful things from his cousins, and as he pressed their hands, and again and again, bade them good bye, he felt how much he would miss their company when he would be in the city. But they promised to write to each other, and as often as they could, send presents from one to another. Then the horses trotted rapidly down the road, and Mr. Harvey, with his boys, returned to the house.

[Illustration]