

Watch—Work—Wait eBook

Watch—Work—Wait

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Page 1

Title: Watch—Work—Wait Or, The Orphan's Victory

Author: Sarah A. Myers

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*** Start of this project gutenberG EBOOK watch—work—wait ***

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[Illustration: *William at his mother's grave.*

Taking a piece of paper and a pencil from his pocket, he drew a sketch of the little square where his loved ones slept.]

WATCH-WORK-WAIT;

or,

The orphan's Victory.

by Sarah A. Myers.

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.... They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”—*Psalms* xxxiv.

London:

T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster Row; Edinburgh; and New York.

MDCCCLXII.

This little volume contains a simple record of the trials and temptations which a poor orphan boy passed through a few years since. It teaches that best of lessons,—the need of Divine help in the battle of life. It shows that a child may attain a beautiful character amid great trials and great evils.

The author assures us that the incidents in this delightful story are real occurrences. Some of them are “stranger than fiction;” yet they are not fancies, but facts.



CHAPTER I.

William's first grief.

In one of the many beautiful spots which the traveller sees in making a voyage up the Hudson, stands the village of M——. It attracts the notice of all tourists, for it seems to occupy the very place in which a painter or a lover of the picturesque would have chosen to place it. Its inhabitants love to boast of its antiquity, for it was founded by the original Dutch settlers, and its present settlers are mostly their descendants.

At the time of which we write, no city fashions had found their way to that remote spot. Its inhabitants were simple-hearted, pious, and contented to live as their forefathers had done; and the place seemed like a quiet little world within itself. None of the gross vices always to be found in large communities were practised there. On the Sabbath-day, when its only bell sent its voice distinctly over the valley, the humble dwellers met in the single church, not only bound together by the tie of human brotherhood, but by the sweeter ties of Christian charity, to hear the word of God and perform the work of prayer and praise.

Just at the end of the long street in this quiet village stood a cottage, which, although very rudely built, attracted the attention of the passers-by from the extreme neatness and order, those sure attendants of the pious poor, which reigned around it. In winter it looked snug beneath its coating of snow; in summer very beautiful, glistening, as it then did, in all its fragrant adornment of jessamine, honeysuckle, and sweet-brier.



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But if its exterior was attractive, the family life within was much more so. True piety and grace were found beneath that modest roof, most truly illustrating the truth, that the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place, dwelleth with *him also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

For many years this cottage had been occupied by a watchmaker, a German, who left his own country in early manhood, and came to the United States to find the wealth which foreigners used to believe could be gained here at once. This he never acquired, but he found something better; for although in an out-of-the-way place he could not expect to grow rich by his trade, he found a great treasure in his pious wife, and enjoyed more of pure and real happiness than often falls to the lot of man. His mind was originally one of strength, and he had turned his meditations and prayers heavenward, and the promised peace was vouchsafed.

He did not love his trade as well as he might have done; for having a very remarkable talent for painting and sketching, which the beautiful surroundings were well calculated to foster, he often found his business of watchmaking irksome. Although frugal, industrious, and possessing much skill as a seal engraver, in which art he received employment from New York, he never was able to lay up anything, although he could and did provide comfortably for his household.

His neighbours entertained for him a deep respect. He was of an independent spirit, somewhat taciturn; and, from his retiring, contemplative spirit, by some was considered stern. But his life was so entirely blameless, regulated as it was by the purifying and elevating influence of Christianity, that many revered him as an "Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

But Christians are by no means exempt from trials; indeed, the children of God are called to pass through the sorest ordeals, and the Raymonds had experienced many strokes of the chastening rod. When their children were taken one after another, until only the last born remained, they bowed submissively to this adverse visitation; and although for a little while stunned in spirit, as was natural, they murmured not, but were soon able to say with resignation, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But turning toward the one left, it may easily be supposed that for him they entertained a most anxious love. Nevertheless, no undue indulgences were granted because he was the only one and the last. They knew their duty as Christian parents too well for that, and spared no pains, both by precept and example, to instruct him in the lore that putteth to shame all worldly wisdom, and which only could fit him for the trials of earth or the joys of heaven. Well was it for the poor child that he had been thus taught, for the time was at hand when he would require all the Christian's armour to fit him for the great battle in which every one that lives is called to contend. To some the strife is more severe than to others; but to all, if they would win the goal successfully, a better strength than their own is necessary, and to teach their

child to rely upon the all-sustaining arm, was the constant endeavour of these faithful parents.



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A few years passed by, and their earthly comforts were not diminished; they still occupied the cottage their own hands had beautified, and having won the affectionate esteem of their landlord, a good old baker, he assured them that he would never raise their rent or suffer them to leave it. Their son William had reached his eighth year, and was what might be called a good boy; for, having no bad example, and being naturally of a docile disposition, and for the most part obedient and gentle, there was little occasion for fault-finding. To the anxious father the thought had often occurred, "What is to be his future lot—in what line of business is he to be brought up?" and he mostly concluded he could never bear a separation from this boy, who was as the very apple of his eye; he would teach him his own trade, which, although by no means a profitable, was at least a respectable one, and would furnish a livelihood. There were times when, looking into the intelligent blue eyes that would be lifted up so lovingly to meet his gaze, he would wish that he might be able to educate his boy; but almost at once he would conquer the longing, and say to himself: "It is God who appoints to every man his station, and I must not murmur because my child's lot is destined to be a lowly one. There is danger in high places, and I ought rather to rejoice that our poverty removes him far from the temptation he would meet with in a more exalted station."

One evening, it was a dull and cloudy one near the close of December, George Raymond came home seeming more than ordinarily cheerful, greatly to the delight of his good Margaret, who did not like to see him too thoughtful. "Times seem to grow better, wife," he said, after he finished his supper; "I have had plenty of work at seal engraving this last fortnight; it seems my work has been approved in the city."

"We have always had enough for the supply of our daily wants," answered Margaret; "and we are told not to be too anxious about the goods of this world."

"I am not very anxious," said Raymond; "at least not on my own account; but sometimes I think if I should be called away, what would become of you, Gretta, and little Will?"

"The Lord would provide for us, George, as he has ever done," was the wife's reply; "he is ever faithful to his promise, and he has declared that those who wait on him shall not want for any good thing."

"That is very true, Margaret; but we must use lawful means to provide bread for our families," said Raymond; "but where is Will? I have not seen him since I came in; neither did he come to meet me as usual."

"I am here, father," said a sweet childish voice; and creeping from a dark corner between the cupboard and the wall, a little boy came forth and stood at his father's knee, and, without speaking, looked up into his face with an expression of more than ordinary meaning. Slight and delicately made, he was easily raised to his usual seat on his father's knee, when, kissing him affectionately, he inquired, "What have you been doing all day, Will? I believe you have had no school."



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“Wait, father, and I will show you,” replied the boy, as he slid down from his father’s knee; and running to the corner from whence he had come at Raymond’s call, he returned almost immediately with two or three half-sheets of paper in his hand. “I have been drawing,” said the little boy, as his father took the sketches and examined them with a grave look. “Please do not be angry, for I did not take your pencils.”

“And how did you draw without pencils?” asked his father. “Let me see what you have here;—a table, a chair, ah yes, and a house with trees! Very good, William; but I would rather you did not draw any more.”

The boy would have asked why, but taught that the parental wish was to be regarded as a law, he tried to conquer the emotion which would arise in spite of all efforts to restrain it. It seemed hard to be so disappointed: he expected praise, and now, if he had not received censure, certainly not the slightest approval was accorded. Accustomed, however, not to question, but submit, the little fellow threw his arms embracingly round his father’s neck and bade him good night, and having done the same with his mother, retired to bed rather to shed his tears unseen than to sleep.

And he did weep! Poor little fellow, his grief was very great; and although our readers may smile because he regarded the matter in such a serious light, they must remember that this was almost, if not altogether, his first sorrow; and we are far from believing the sorrow of a child the trivial thing it is generally considered, and perhaps but the beginning of other and severer trials.

But if the sorrow of childhood is severe, what a blessing it is that its violence is soon over! anger seldom rests in the heart of a good child, and as soon as the tears are dried, all is bright as before. William’s tears were very bitter, but accustomed always to ask the divine blessing before retiring, he knelt down beside his little bed, and prayed that if he had done wrong in drawing without asking his father’s leave, he might be forgiven. His childish petition, uttered in the full confidence that it would be heard, brought comfort, as the act of sincere prayer always does, and once more soothed and happy, in a few minutes the child sunk into so deep a slumber, that he was altogether unconscious of his mother’s kiss, and the audibly uttered blessing invoked upon him by his pious father.

There were two other hearts as sorrowful as his own, although tears did not attest the depth of their emotion. Margaret was distressed in her child’s distress, and could not understand why her husband did not praise what she considered the very creditable effort of her boy; but she was too judicious to utter a word in his presence, much as she sympathized with William. Raymond, however, was the most distressed of all, and that, too, because he felt that a father’s pride must be sacrificed at the shrine of what he regarded as a father’s duty; and he experienced

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a severe pang, as, on surveying the child's sketches, he dared not say one word in praise of them, although his very heart bounded, lover of the fine arts as he was, at the promise of superior talent they exhibited. After William had left the room he sat leaning his head on his hand, quite unrepentant, however, for his seeming harshness, but at the same time troubled that his views of duty made it imperative for him to appear so. Margaret was the first to break silence.

"George," said she, "why did you hurt poor William by not praising his drawings? the child was so sure you would be delighted; and although he knew where your pencils are kept, he never once asked for them, but took the charcoal from the hearth. I cannot understand why you did so."

"My dear Margaret," he replied, "I am far more grieved to be obliged to look frowningly on that which, in other than our present circumstances, would have given to me greater delight than to you or my good child himself. William's sketches, rude as they are, evince very extraordinary talent, but I should sin were I to encourage him to pursue such a work. I know too well how absorbing it is; how hard it is, when one's mind is filled with pictures of the grand and beautiful, to work at a trade one does not like. The boy, most likely, has genius; but even so, how is that genius to be fostered? I know, too, how toilsome and difficult is the early path toward the art, and how few, comparatively, ever gain distinction and reward."

"That is true," said Margaret; "I now understand and see that you are right."

"Yes, Margaret," was her husband's reply, "I think I am right; remember that it is the Unerring who has allotted our condition, and I have no higher ambition than to see my only child grow up an honest man, diligent in his calling, whatever it may be. My first wish is, that my boy may be a Christian: it will never trouble me that he must work hard and be obscure; for if he is pious, honest, and happy in his own mind, he will be a greater man than those who fill high stations without the qualifications I have named."

"He is such a good child," said Margaret, "I cannot bear to give him unnecessary pain."

"The proper discipline does no harm," said Raymond; "and the Scripture tells us that 'no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, but afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby;' and as we are in the same place commanded to 'make straight paths for our feet,' so in this instance I have preferred giving my child present pain in order that he may escape future and greater trials. Ah! Margaret, he may think I am harsh in this case, as he cannot fathom my motive; and how often do we judge hardly of the dealings of our kind heavenly Father when he thwarts us in some favourite wish, or smiles not on our undertaking. Be

assured that only those who commit their way unto the Lord are safe; and as I bear my
boy daily upon



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my heart to the throne of grace, and offer up the prayer of faith in the name of Him who hath promised to hear, so truly am I assured that all that befalls us will be right, and that although I may be removed from the earthly guardianship of my darling child, I know that he will never want for any good thing. Wife, we must teach him that his lot is to be a lowly one; but we must also teach him that any station can be ennobled by the upright and conscientious discharge of the duties belonging to it. But now, let us have our usual worship, and then we will look in on William, and see if his trouble is not all forgotten in sleep.”

CHAPTER II.

Toils and trials.

When William arose the next morning, he met his parents with as smiling a face as if his father had presented him with a case of pencils, instead of discouraging his attempts at drawing. Nothing was said on the subject, and the weeks rolled on quietly and peacefully as before, until William passed his ninth birthday, and the Christmas-time drew near. This is a festive time with most; and it seems right that it should be so, for can man ever be sufficiently thankful for the great gift of a Saviour, whose birth was heralded by the songs of angels on that day? All nations observe their peculiar ceremonies, but perhaps none are more faithfully observant of them than the Germans in the little community of M——, most of whose inhabitants at the time of which we write were descendants of the original Dutch settlers. Many ceremonies and customs, relics of a ruder age, and now nearly forgotten, were still practised. The Raymonds, although pious, and more intelligent than most of their neighbours, kept up many of the usages of Fatherland on the Christmas occasion, perhaps more as wafting them back in remembrance of early enjoyment in the home circle, than from any present love of the festivity common at this period.

The joyful season drew nigh merrily, and in the watchmaker’s family, as in all others— for the very poorest look forward hopefully to it—there was nothing but bright anticipations, which were for the present realized. The Christmas cake was prepared in the most approved old fashion; the dark-hued pine was duly ornamented, and occupied a conspicuous place in the family room, and little William was made most happy in the receipt of many gifts, although toy paints and pencils were not among the number.

But what says the Scripture? “Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;” and the holy man who admonishes to “rejoice with trembling,” well knew the slender foundation on which all earthly bliss is based.

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The day broke bright and cheerful; the morning prayers, never forgotten in this truly Christian household, were over, and the gifts and greetings exchanged; the village bell rang out clear on the frosty air, and sounded rejoicingly as it called the humble community to give thanks in the little old-fashioned church, as the custom was on Christmas-day. In the Raymond cottage the good dinner was eaten, and when the sun had gone down behind the mountains, the Christmas-tree was once more lighted up; and although not quite as well laden or as brilliant as on the evening before, it nevertheless illumined the cottage, and continued very attractive. It had been a happy day, and as they sat beside their evening fire, thinking over the many enjoyments and blessings that had marked its course, New Year's-day was the next point of expectation, and many were the pleasures to be enjoyed on that day, as well as many new prospects planned to be executed within the year. Ah! they saw not how the dark wing of the angel of Death was sweeping over them, nor could they forebode that from this night their path was to be a stern and rugged one.

In the evening of the day after Christmas, when Raymond returned from his work, he complained of feeling unwell, and his sickness increasing hourly, his earthly course was terminated in a few days; and instead of the promised pleasure on New Year's-day, his corpse occupied the lowly room. It was a mournful New Year's-day in the home of the widow and the fatherless. Margaret, passive in her affliction, for she was stunned by its suddenness, sat gazing with tearless eyes upon the corner where the dim outline of a human form was seen under its white covering; and little William, turning his eyes alternately from his pale mother to the corpse of his father, was too much awe-stricken by the presence of the dread destroyer to utter a word.

It was not until after the remains of poor Raymond had been laid in the grave, and the widow had returned to her desolate cottage, that she experienced the full weight of her heavy burden. Even when death comes slowly, when sickness, pain, and long suspense have made the issue certain, it is hard for the bereaved to realize the dread event; but when the scythe of the destroyer has passed so quickly over, when the home is made so speedily desolate, and the place vacant, is it wonderful that to the stricken mourner all seems dark, discerning no light behind the overshadowing cloud? But none, dear reader, are afflicted more than they can bear; the words of worldly wisdom would fall upon the ear unheard, but the sacred balm poured out upon the bruised heart by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter promised by our Saviour, soothes the soul into submission, and whispers, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will not forsake the widow, nor shall the orphan be forgotten."

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It was not long until the pious Margaret recognised the hand by which she had been smitten; and the first stunning effect of her grief being past, with the same patient, humble, and calm spirit that had always characterized her in her prosperous days, she prepared to make arrangements for a more frugal course of life than that they had hitherto maintained, although the housekeeping had always been of the most simple order. She could not afford to keep the cottage in which they had lived so happily; the vines her husband's hand had trained, the flowers she had planted, the little garden which they both had delighted to keep in order, must pass into the hands of strangers; and the thought of leaving a place so dear by association gave an additional pang to the grief already so great. She looked upon her child, her last, her only treasure, and blessing God that this comfort was still spared, she resolved to exert every energy in the endeavour to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Great was her adversity, but He who watches over the sparrow and feeds the raven had raised up friends for her time of need.

The cottage in the suburbs was speedily let to another tenant; but their landlord, Nicholas Herman, the baker, found a room, an attic indeed, but comfortable, in a house adjoining his own; and from the time in which she took possession both himself and his good wife showed her every kindness within their power. But still she found herself very poor; for after her husband's affairs were settled, and the rent and funeral expenses paid, there was nothing left, and she had to use such industry as she was able to pursue to maintain her little household. Very simple indeed was their manner of living now; but she knew no want, for having gained the respect and confidence of the community in her prosperous days, she was supplied with work almost constantly.

The winter was long and severe, and dark and dreary were many of its hours to the widow. As the season advanced toward the spring, her heart was illuminated by occasional gleams of light sent forth, not only by hope's smiling in the distance, but from the sustaining influence lent her by the hopeful spirit, ready obedience, and untiring industry of her boy.

It is astonishing what a sudden change such a blow of misfortune often produces in a child. We know not the mysterious workings of a child's mind, or by what process such a rapid change is accomplished; but we know from experience that the journey of a very few years in the path of life can make even the very young sensible that this world is not one of unmixed happiness, and that there is often but a step from careless childhood to a painful maturity,—painful because unnatural.

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Such was the case with poor Will Raymond; and new comfort dawned on the widow's heart as she remarked his untiring efforts, not only to cheer her, but to aid, by such labour as he was able to perform, in their mutual maintenance. With a maturity of judgment hardly to be expected in one of his age, he entered not only into all her plans, but, during the spring and summer succeeding his father's death, went regularly to some kind of work, by which he gained wages, small indeed, but which, added to the general stock, would help to provide against the severities of the coming winter. There are always some kind hearts to be found in every community, who are willing to comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and encourage all virtuous effort, although the service rendered be but trifling. A kind-hearted farmer, hearing of the little boy's exertions to aid his mother, employed him to wait on his reapers during harvest; and as the time of fruit-gathering and hop-picking in the autumn furnished plenty of such work as he was able to do, all his time was, as one might say, filled up. And when he brought home the hard-earned money, the fruit of his toils, and marked the lighting of his mother's eye as he poured his little treasures into her lap, child as he was, he felt there was a sweetness in the gains of labour which no gifts can bestow; and William and his mother were not the only ones to remark that bread earned by honest toil is sweeter than any other.

There was another, besides the farmer, whose heart turned warmly toward the fatherless boy. Old Nicholas Herman, the baker, was too truly benevolent to forget his late tenant, and although not a rich man, he had often something to send to the widow. He had learned the beautiful precept: "Give bread to the hungry, and from the needy turn not away;" and was a true believer in Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me."

Kept busy and from home throughout the day, the mother waited anxiously for the twilight hour, for then William would return, and great was the joy of her heart when, with bounding step and cheerful face, he entered the house. The night might be dark and stormy, but his presence always made her sun-light; and the tempest might beat upon her lowly dwelling, threatening its destruction, yet she heeded it not, for her earthly treasure was beside her. Although much enfeebled by grief, she spent no idle moments, but sewed, knit, or spun. William, child as he was, did not fail to note the faded look, and exerted himself not only to assist her in her household duties, but learned to knit; for he thought no occupation, however feminine, disparaging to his boyhood, if by it he could only lessen her labours.



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These hours were spent with double profit, for she taught him while she worked, and light from her window was seen to glimmer long after most of the dwellers in her neighbourhood had gone to rest. She taught him the ordinary branches of school learning, which she well understood; but she was much more careful to impress upon his mind the more important precepts of the gospel, that only true chart by which, man can steer through life safely, and which wisdom, she told him, was of more value than gold. She grieved not that his face was imbrowned, or his hands hardened by labour: toil is man's natural inheritance, and he is bid to rejoice in his "labour, for it is the gift of God;" but she rejoiced in the maturing of his heart, and saw that the good seed she was sowing was taking root.

She had, however, one trouble concerning him, and not being able to discern clearly what was her duty, it gave her more anxiety than even her poverty. His love for sketching could not be repressed. She saw that he shared his father's talent largely, but remembering what her husband's views in reference to the cultivation of the noble art of painting had been, the struggle between maternal pride and the natural yearnings of a mother's heart to gratify a darling and worthy child, in opposition to what seeming duty demanded, can scarcely be imagined. Her late husband's opinions, tempered as they always were by judgment and prudence, had acquired a character of sacredness in her view; but when William, in showing her his sums, showed also the rude but spirited sketches he had drawn on the border of his slate, she saw that the gift was from God, and she could not condemn, although she dared not praise. She was afraid of entailing misery on him by fostering a taste beyond what his means would permit him to gratify. He had no present prospect but that of earning his bread by the sorest labour. Even if his talent were an extraordinary one, it would take a long time to cultivate it to a profitable point; and in the meantime, how was he to be supported?

She told all this to her son; but when he begged her, as his only recreation (for he never played with any boys except George Herman, as good a boy as himself), to let him look over his father's portfolio of sketches, could she deny the favour? or was she wrong? Nor could she forbid some pen-and-ink sketches, in which she recognised familiar objects, although she warned him against giving offence by caricaturing; and while she described to him the wonders of this glorious earth, with its embosomed treasures of mines and minerals, and made him read in his Bible how God had created all and called it good, she also showed him that man was the crowning work;—beloved of God, notwithstanding his rebellion; made only a little lower than the angels, crowned with dignity and honour; and so loved by the Saviour, that he came to save those who otherwise would have been lost; and still bearing much of the original impress in which he was created. She explained to him how wrong it is to make game of the peculiarities of any human being, ridicule his infirmities, or win a reputation by exhibiting his defects; bidding him always, at the close of her lecture, to read the sermon delivered on the mount, and to walk by its rule, and he would not fail to do right.



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There were times, however, when the mother's heart would almost overcome this resolve. In her lonely hours fancy would portray her son's future; and when does maternal hope discover aught but a glorious one? She thought of what he might be, could he go abroad to study the works of the old masters; how, with his genius (for she knew not that *taste* was often mistaken for genius) and persevering industry, her boy might yet win a high place in the world, as many others as poor as he had done. But she was too sensible to let her thoughts dwell long on this flattering subject, and resolved to do what she considered right as present duty, committing the issue to God, in whom she so implicitly trusted.

Christmas-day came round again, and it was a mournful one in the home of the widow and fatherless. Margaret had changed much during the year: her face was deathly pale, silver lines showed themselves among her dark hair, and her usually placid and subdued expression was exchanged for a look of pain. A harassing cough troubled her by day and prevented her resting at night; an accompanying weakness created some little anxiety as to what its issue might be; but, with the hoping spirit which is ever attendant on that insidious disease called consumption, she believed that the coming spring would restore her.

It came with its wealth of sunshine, and renovated the earth to promise of fruitfulness and beauty,—beautiful type of the resurrection, when man shall rise to glorious immortality. All nature rejoiced in its presence; the flowers came forth and filled the air with healthful odours; the birds warbled as they built their nests; the merry children rejoiced as they played on the green, and exulted in the liberty the vernal season bestowed. But to the widow spring brought no renewal of health; and now, finding herself unable to wash, she consulted a physician, who told her it was too late; the disease had made large progress, and she could not live through the year!

Such an announcement would startle most persons. Death is so repugnant to man's nature, that there are but few who do not shrink from the dread encounter. Poor Margaret had more to fear than this. She dreaded not only the misery and poverty her tedious illness would entail upon them, but she wept the bitterest tears when she thought of her orphan child, poor, alone, and uncared for, when she should be taken away. She was, however, too sincere a believer to remain long within the shadow of the cloud. The God in whom she had ever trusted was ever faithful to his own word. Had he not promised, "Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will preserve them alive?" and is not his favour better than life! And when she prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," like Him whose true servant she was, she also added, "nevertheless, not my will be done, but thine." When does the Christian fail to receive comfort, when the child-like submission inculcated in the gospel



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is exercised? Is not the chastening rod in the hand of a Father who wounds but to heal? and he, who sees the end from the beginning, nevertheless afflicts his children. Margaret Raymond was therefore able to give up all into the unerring hand, knowing that He who feeds the raven and clothes the lily would not forsake her orphan child, but lead him, it might be by a narrow and rugged path—but such is the way that leads to the strait gate, and all who find eternal life must tread it.

CHAPTER III.

An orphan indeed.

The spring advanced into summer, and on one of its calm and bright evenings, Margaret, exerting her little strength, took William to the grave-yard, and both seated themselves on the little green hillock beneath which George Raymond awaited in peace the resurrection from the dust. No costly monuments nor storied urns were in that simple grave-yard. Some plain marble tablets marked the resting-places of the dead; but there were memorials of deeper meaning and more lovely. Trees waved their branches protectingly over the little mounds; kind hands had planted them with flowers and kept them sacred. Thus it was a pleasant spot, and full of hallowed remembrances. Margaret had never spoken of her coming death to her son; but now, seated on the spot of earth which must ere long be opened to afford a resting-place for herself, she told him that soon, in a few weeks most likely, he would be an orphan indeed, alone in the world, and with no friend but God.

How can the sorrow and astonishment of the poor boy be described? Motherless and fatherless! what a deep and painful impression did the words of that truly pious mother make upon him! He had dearly loved his father, but the exertion he had at once made to help to support his mother had prevented his viewing that great loss in all its magnitude; but now, to lose her on whom, since his father's death, he had hung his whole heart, was an idea so terrible that he could scarcely comprehend it.

“Mother,” he exclaimed, as he threw his arms around her and sobbed wildly, “you will not die! surely you will not! I cannot live without you; I shall have no home,—nobody to love when you are gone.”

Poor Margaret, controlling her own emotion, tried to comfort her weeping child, and at last succeeded; for strength from above was given to her heart, and words to her tongue. She spoke so convincingly of God's wisdom, and goodness, and righteous dealing in all things, that the boy's grief abated, his eye once more lighted up, and peace returned to his heart. The assurance that God, the Father of all, who never



forsakes the creature he has made, *would* be to him more than parents *could*, came plainly upon his soul, and filled it with trust.

“You will not be *alone*, my poor child,” said Margaret; “God will be with you. He has work yet for you to perform. See that you do all *that he has commanded*, and in a *proper spirit*, and you cannot fail to be blessed—not, perhaps, with earthly prosperity, but with that better portion, peace of mind, a good conscience, and the hope which maketh not ashamed, whose end is eternal life. Never neglect your Bible or the duty of prayer; avoid all bad company; keep your heart pure; and God will be with you, to bless and protect you.”



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As if endued with strength to utter a last solemn admonition, she told him of the evil nature and power of sin, how it separated man from his Maker; of the temptations to be met with in the world, from the deceitfulness and weakness of the human heart, and the example of the ungodly, with whom she begged him to have no communion. She spoke of the necessity there was for constant watchfulness and prayer; told him to avoid all exhibition of self-will or disobedience; but above all to shun falsehood, that most ruinous of all vices, since it is the first step on the way which leads to eternal death. She bade him remember how the Scriptures teach, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life;" and that it is ever open to the scrutiny of the All-Seeing Eye.

William listened attentively to her teaching, and it took deep root in his soul. Was he to endure the trial of temptation? or would it perish, like the seed sown by the wayside?

There were no near relatives of the family, to whose care Margaret could think of consigning her child. A distant cousin or uncle by marriage, who kept a shoe store in New York, and who had visited them sometimes, was said to be rich, and she thought that if he would undertake the guardianship of the boy, and keep him in his family for some years, he might at last be promoted to the rank of clerk. She therefore wrote to him, and as a satisfactory answer was soon returned, the arrangement was settled, the good baker promising either to take the boy to New York himself or send him with an acquaintance.

And now she felt more at ease. She had made this plan, as she judged, for the best; the rest she left to the never-failing Wisdom to order, as was right.

A few days after her walk to the church-yard she was confined to her bed, from which she never arose. The pastor visited her daily, and as William never left her for a moment, he was always present at their spiritual conversations. Oh, how powerful was the impression he received; how it operated, not only on his present, but future life; and how often afterward did he thank his heavenly Father that he had been thus early and spiritually taught!

William was very young; but we know that children at a very early period are able to comprehend the most important truths of God's word; and the sanctifying blessing accompanying, they are, like Timothy, made wise unto salvation. It was not until after his mother's funeral that William knew he was to go to New York, to be a shoemaker's apprentice, and he was greatly troubled at the prospect. He would have preferred remaining in the village. There was, however, no employment for him there, and he was hardly strong enough for steady farm work. His friend the baker had taken him home on the day of the funeral, and he was happy with that kind family, for George Herman was his friend, and they loved each other so well that they could not hear the thought of parting. The good baker would not hear of his going for a month or two, or at least until the first violence of his sorrow was past; and thinking it better he should he with companions of his own age, he sent him to school with his friend George.



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The rudiments of a kind of drawing were taught there, and although nothing but circles, squares, triangles, and ovals were practised, the teacher saw, by the borders of William's slate, which way his talent led; and pitying the boy who would be obliged to make shoes for a living, while gifted so far above the ordinary standard, he would gladly have taught him for nothing had his friend the baker permitted. But Mr. Herman knew the opinion of his parents on that subject, and he felt that it would be wrong for him to encourage that which they did not. William, however, although he took no lessons, learned a great deal of the, to him, forbidden art, and went on contentedly, knowing nothing of the teacher's proposal or his protector's objection.

CHAPTER IV.

William at his mother's grave.

As the time appointed for his departure drew near, William's heart became very sad. The prospect of being separated from his friend George gave him no little pain. He shrunk, too, from the idea of living with perfect strangers.

Time, however, waits for no one. The day but one before that on which he was to set out arrived; and having gone around to say farewell to his acquaintances, he made his last visit to the church-yard where his parents lay buried. His mother had been peculiarly fond of flowers, and when obliged to give up her garden, had beautified and planted her husband's grave with some of the choicest of her treasures. Her only recreation was this labour of love; for she took a mournful pleasure in thus decorating the little hillock, and she spared no pains to keep it in order. It is a well-known custom of the Germans to adorn graves with flowers; and inheriting this feature of her country's usages to the fullest extent, she had ornamented the little space allotted for their burial-place with taste and beauty.

Now she was herself sleeping among the flowers she had planted and tended, but no want of care was yet visible about the spot; kind hands had made up the grave, and William had removed the roses she nourished in pots, sinking them in the earth; and now, in the full bloom of summer beauty, they were shedding their fragrance and leaves over the little mounds.

The orphan boy came for the last time to visit the spot where his dearest earthly treasure was buried. He knelt down beside the graves, and wept as he prayed that God would go forth with and protect him in the new station which he must now fill.

When calmness was again restored, he seated himself on a grave at a little distance, and taking a piece of paper and a pencil from his pocket, he drew a sketch of the little square where his loved ones slept. There were no stones to mark the spot, but there was no need of any; the adornment of the place would have told the traveller that no



memorial of that kind was necessary, for true affection was keeping the record. The little drawing was finished, and once more he broke into a violent fit of weeping, from which he was suddenly disturbed by the sound of a footstep near him. He turned, and saw a stranger standing behind him, whose countenance was not only most prepossessing, but now wore an expression of sympathy that operated at once upon the heart of the desolate boy.



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William rose, and would have left the spot, but the gentleman laid his hand on his shoulder, and inquired, "Who are buried in these graves so beautifully adorned?"

"My father and mother," answered the boy, the tears again flowing from his eyes.

"Father and mother!" repeated the stranger; "poor orphan, what a treasure of love belonging to thee may be buried here! Have you brothers and sisters?"

"No, sir. I have no near relations; I am now alone in the world."

"Who, then, is to take care of you now?" asked the stranger.

"My guardian, sir," replied William, "from whom I am to learn a trade."

"That is well, my poor boy," rejoined the stranger. "God grant that he may prove worthy of his trust, and be a parent to you. But a great deal lies in your own powers. Be obedient and industrious, and thus endeavour to win his confidence and satisfaction."

"I intend to do so, sir," replied William; "my parents always told me obedience was right."

"Were your parents pious?" again inquired the stranger.

"Ah yes, sir, indeed they were," answered the boy. "I promised my mother time and again that I would love God and keep his commandments."

The stranger continued to gaze on the boy with much emotion. It was evident, from the expression of his whole face, that his heart had been subject to the transforming operation of divine grace; and he possessed the true Christian spirit, which leads to the practice of that Christian charity which "never faileth." He laid his hand upon the boy's head, and said, in a solemn tone, "May God bless and care for thee, poor orphan; may it be with thee as with the good seed sown in good ground; where it taketh root, by the blessing of God it groweth and bringeth forth fruit, even to a hundred-fold."

William looked up into the stranger's face in grateful astonishment; just so had his mother often laid her hand upon his head and blessed him; and now the stranger's caress did him good, although he did not comprehend the meaning of his words.

"You do not understand me," said he; "I will explain. When you plant a seed or little twig in the earth, it forms a root: you water it when it is dry; the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, all refresh and promote it's growth; so that at length it becomes a large and beautiful tree. So when any one receives the word of God into his heart in faith, it will strike deep root, spring up, grow and ripen with a rich increase, bringing forth abundantly those good fruits of the Spirit 'which are through Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.' But as, without proper attention, your tree would wither or grow into

wildness, so also is it necessary to nourish the good seed sown in our hearts; and this can only be done by constant and fervent prayer.”



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The stranger went on to explain, in such terms as a child could understand, the operations of the Spirit of grace and the exercise of faith. He told him of One who was mighty to save, who had said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and was ever near to those Who trust in him; who would hear their prayer in distress, and aid them In the hour of temptation. "But remember," he added, "there is no true happiness except in the service of God; and to do this acceptably it is necessary to 'watch and pray.' Watch that you may pray, and pray that you may be safe."

William listened to the words of the stranger with an emotion altogether new to him; he had heard such words before, but now they were invested with a new meaning. Was it not the quickening influence of the Spirit of grace that was now operating upon his saddened heart, like the silent but refreshing dew on the arid earth? Our tale must show whether the seed thus down by the way-side was to spring up, perish, or bring forth fruit a hundred-fold.

The stranger saw the impression he had made. He would not interrupt the workings of the child's soul by further words, and turning away toward another part of the graveyard, he left the boy to his self-communion.

After a while he returned, and found him still sitting on the grave where all his treasure of love was buried; but he had ceased weeping, and his countenance no longer wore the expression of despairing sorrow; trust in God and faith in the promise of heavenly protection, had strengthened his soul, and instead of the heart-breaking sense of loneliness that had rested on him since the loss of his mother, he felt the blessedness of assured protection from Him who has promised to be the orphan's Father. He was holding the little rude sketch he had made, to be treasured as a memorial of the spot so sacred, when far away, and was gazing on it attentively when the stranger returned.

"Are you going to colour your sketch?" he asked in a kindly tone; "it would make it more lively and natural."

"I have no colours, sir," replied William; "and do not know how to paint. My father could paint, but he never wished me to learn; but when I look on this little drawing, I can think of the bright roses and the green grass here, and that will do."

"Give me your picture, my child; I will colour it for you," said the stranger. "I am a painter, and have been staying for some days in the village; come this evening to my room, No. 24, at the hotel, and I will return your picture, and then you can tell me more of yourself and your parents."

And now they parted, each one taking opposite paths, for their present homes lay quite apart from each other. It was late before William found time to go to the hotel, but when he asked the landlord to show him to the painter's room, No. 24, instead of ushering him into the presence of his unknown friend, the old man handed him a small packet, telling

him, at the same time, that the stranger had received intelligence which had demanded his sudden departure, but that he had left the packet to be delivered by his own hand.



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These tidings fell like a weight of lead on the boy's heart; he would gladly have seen that benevolent face again; but, unable to utter a word or repress the tears that would force themselves into his eyes, he took the folded package and went home.

The stranger had taken a hasty departure, but he had not forgotten or neglected his promise; for, on opening the letter, there was his picture coloured,—and on the back of it was written, “Watch, that you may pray; and pray, that you may be safe.” The boy's heart was touched with even deeper emotion than before, and as he knelt down that night, the last he was to spend in his native village, he prayed that God would help him to nourish the good seed sown in his heart, and be his Father and Guide in the new life on which he was entering.

CHAPTER V.

William's new home.

Great was the change our poor boy experienced between living in the country and in the city. Instead of the brightly flashing river, with its sail-boats and schooners, the pleasant village environed by verdant meadows and flower-filled gardens, there was nothing but long rows of tall, stately houses, looking coldly grand, or narrow streets and dark lanes, where mud and filth mixed together were suggestive of cheerlessness and poverty. His heart sunk within him as he walked along the busy streets, where many people were passing to and fro, bent on their various errands of duty or pleasure, and felt that in that hurrying crowd there was not one to care for him, and among that wilderness of houses he had no home.

The shoemaker to whom he was apprenticed had once been a different man from what he was at present. During Raymond's life, and while on terms of intimacy with him, he had borne the reputation of a pious, and certainly was an industrious and thrifty man; but failure and the loss of an excellent wife had wrought a sad change in his character and temper; and having married a second wife, who turned out a virago and a shrew, there was little hope of his improving. He was still industrious, and owing to his former reputation for honesty and doing good work, he still retained many of his old customers. He had a small shop in a public part of the city, where he took the measures for shoes or sold those on hand; but he lived in a low-roofed, comfortless-looking house, far down the city, where he had also a shop, in which he kept a journeyman or two to do the mending, which was all sent there.

There were no children to gladden this sullen household by their mirth, and there was no piety to send its gleams of sunlight to lessen the gloom that dwelt within its precincts; there was no one there who loved God and honoured his laws, neither did the words of prayer or praise ever ascend from the family altar. They were contented to live for this world alone, caring nothing for that heavenly inheritance promised



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to those who love God and keep his commandments. Poor William! this was a dreadful place for him to be, with every inducement, from bad example, to stray from the true path in which he had until now been trained to walk; how great was the danger that he would now follow the leading of those to whose guardianship he had been thus mistakenly committed. A letter which he wrote to his friend, George Herman, will, perhaps, explain something of his condition and feelings:—

Dear George,

I should have written to you long ago, as I promised; but I am kept all the time so busy, and now I am afraid Mr. Walters will scold me for wasting time. I call him Mr. Walters (the others call him master), and not uncle, for he is not my uncle, although his first wife was my aunt. I do not like this big city of New York, everything is so different from my own home when my dear mother was alive. You never saw anything so grand as the houses here; but I would rather be back, living in the smallest house there, than have to stay in this great city, where there are so many rich people, and, yes, George, a great many more poor folks than I thought were in the whole world. I have cried so much since I have been here; Mr. Walters is almost always in a bad humour, and I cannot bear to mend shoes; I would almost rather do without wearing them. There is always a great pile of torn boots and shoes lying in the corner, and I have to help to mend them. Oh, how much pleasanter it was to work for the farmers round M—— all the week, and then go to church on Sunday! They have the grandest churches here, and I have heard beautiful music from the organ when I passed or stood at the door; but I have never been inside of a church since I left M——, for none of our people ever go, nor do we have any family prayer. There is one thing, however, in New York that I do like; you ought to see the beautiful picture-shops in Broadway. I cannot help drawing a little, although I resolve every time shall be the last. I did a very wrong thing two days ago, which I must tell you of. I do not love Mrs. Walters, for she is always scolding me, and she has a very sharp nose and chin. I had a piece of chalk in my pocket, and I drew her likeness on the end of the work-bench. Jem Taylor, our journeyman, laughed so, that Mr. Walters would know what amused him so. When he saw it, he beat me with a last, and hurt me greatly. I cried, not for the beating, but because I felt I had done wrong. I remembered what my dear mother said about caricaturing, and I was so sorry I had done it. I begged Mrs. Walters' pardon, and told her I never would do it again; and, indeed, I never will. I am afraid I shall become a bad boy here. Jem Taylor swears dreadfully, and tells so many falsehoods. He is the only one here who is kind to me; but when I hear his oaths, and know that he is saying what is not true, I cannot like him. My mother always warned me so against saying the least



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thing that was not true. Ah, if she had known what kind of people these were, she would never have placed me with them. But I will try to please them, and try to be content; and I do pray every day that I may not be tempted to lie and swear like those with whom I am obliged to live. There is a good old man, a tailor, who lives next door to us. He is going to M——, and will give you this letter; so good-bye, dear George, and do not forget your friend,

William Raymond.

He sealed the letter and sent it by the tailor, and he felt somewhat happier, for he had some faint hope that his kind friend, the baker, would interfere in his behalf. He had not, however, magnified the misery of his condition; for not only did he feel keenly the want of such comforts as he had enjoyed in his humble home, but his life was rendered miserable by the injustice and severity with which he was treated. His master was a man of violent temper, who, finding he possessed little aptitude for shoemaking, tried to make him love it, first by flogging, and afterwards by half-starvation; following in the last-named measure the advice of his miserly help-mate, who believed it the best way of developing genius. In vain did William try by gentleness and zeal to soften their harshness; he had no one to interfere in his behalf, and he was made boy of all work, and scolded and blamed from morning till night. None loved him, and while he pined for the loss of the affection he once enjoyed, he found no one to love. No one treated him kindly, and gladness became a stranger to his heart.

In the midst of Sabbath privileges, he was in danger of becoming a heathen. He could not go to church or Sabbath school, because he was wanted to assist in the regular Sunday cooking; he heard no word of prayer or psalm of praise, and he might well have exclaimed with the Psalmist, "I looked on my right hand, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

Still, he could not at once forget the teachings of his early childhood. He prayed that he might be kept from the power of the wicked, and the great and mighty Hearer of prayer was indeed his guard. His eye fell kindly on the desolate boy, and was only preparing him by present trials for future good. Still our young hero was not without faults. There was a little spice of pride in his composition, and, as we have learned from his letter, he hated the humble trade to which he was apprenticed. This was wrong: there is no occupation, however lowly, which cannot be made respectable by the proper discharge of the duties belonging to it; and if our young readers will remember that all their needs and changes are known unto Him who bountifully supplieth all, they will also recognise how possible it is to honour Him, whose servants they are, by an upright walk and conscientious advance in the allotted path.



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But there were some pleasures for the poor boy even here, although deprived of home comforts. How kindly has God appointed that the elastic spirit of childhood cannot be crushed! and to one of the fanciful and enthusiastic temperament of our hero it was indeed a great blessing. The objects met with in a great and populous city are always striking; and our little shoemaker, as he walked through the streets, felt himself elevated, not lowered, by the grandeur around him. It showed him what man was enabled to do by energy and industry, and he determined that, although obliged to cobble at old boots and shoes for the present, it should not be so for ever. As he was made errand boy, he was obliged to be often in the streets; and then the pleasure he enjoyed in standing before the windows of the picture-shops, made him forget the tears which he so often shed under his master's caning, his mistress's continual fault-finding, and his meagre fare. Sometimes, while gazing on the works of art, so entrancing to a child with the soul of a painter, he also forgot how the time passed, and, having far exceeded that demanded by his errand, was on his return accused of playing the idler, and received an idler's reward.

Even this could not cure him of his love of pictures. Like one who had found a treasure in a desert, he was not to be deterred by the difficulties in the way to its enjoyment. He did not persist in the course which would have provoked Mr. Walters' anger, but started off on a full run from the time he left the house, not stopping until he had delivered his freight of boots and shoes; and feeling that the remainder of the time was conscientiously his own, he spent it, without compunction, in the contemplation of the art he so much loved.

CHAPTER VI.

A time of trial.

A time of trial was approaching, a trial that was to decide whether the good seed sown by the pious parents had taken root in good soil, and was able to endure the ordeal of strong temptation.

Jem Taylor, the only one who ever showed poor Will any kindness, knowing of his great love for painting,—for to him only had he shown his little charcoal sketches—had no regard for truth, and, on account of his naturally kind and liberal disposition, was only the more dangerous as a companion for our hitherto differently trained hero. Seeing him one day returning exhausted and out of breath, his hands trembling so that he could scarcely hold his work, he began to administer the palatable poison which every human heart is only too ready to receive. "I tell you, Bill," said he, "you are the biggest blockhead I ever saw. If you like to look at the pictures, stand at the windows as long as you please, and do not run yourself to death. Just look at the other shoemakers' boys; they hang their string of boots and shoes over their shoulders, and go whistling and singing along



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the streets quite at their ease, playing marbles at the corners for pennies with the newspaper boys;—they know how to lie it out so as to escape beating, and have always some coppers in their pockets. When old Walters rates you for staying, cannot you say that Mr. So-and-So made you wait so long before he would give you the money; or that Mrs. Somebody was not at home, and the cook told you to stay, for she would be back in a minute, and you could not be paid until they were tried on?”

Will was startled. He let the shoe he was mending fall from his hands, and gazed with terror and astonishment on his reckless companion.

“Why, that would be—lying!” said he slowly and in a low voice, as if he dreaded to utter the hateful word.

“To be sure it is lying, and nothing else,” answered Jem, laughing; “everybody lies, cannot you do so too?”

The blood mounted to the temples of the indignant boy, spreading its glow over his fair forehead, and causing his usually gentle eyes to flush with righteous anger.

“I a liar! I tell a lie?” he cried. “No! not to escape a beating every day will I tell a falsehood!”

“And why not, you silly jackanapes?” asked his ungodly comrade, in a tone of derision.

“Because my parents taught me it was sinful, and God has forbidden it,” said William. “My mother always told me that lying was the first step in the road to ruin; and I read in my Bible that no one ‘that loveth and maketh a lie’ can enter into that Holy City of which God himself is the glory and the light.”

Dear young reader, how glorious is the majesty of truth! The dissipated and sin-loving journeyman, long since made familiar with vice, could not listen unmoved as the boy uttered the scriptural denunciation in the solemn and reverential manner he had been taught was proper, it was long since Jem Taylor had heard any word from that holy book, and now, awed by the dignity of the truth, that great principle of Christian life and conduct, he made no answer, but continued to work in silence. Perhaps he might have resumed the subject; but Mr. Walters came in and commenced the usual fault-finding, and Jem answering reproach with reproach, there was nothing more said.

One day soon after, William was directed to go to the upper shop for a pair of white satin shoes, which he was to carry to a wealthy lady who lived during the summer months in a handsome cottage in the suburbs. How happy he was at thought of seeing something like the country once more! and he started off at full speed, his elastic spirit happy and hopeful as if it had never known a sorrow. The sunshine was so cheering,



and rested so brightly on the spires as it bathed them in its golden radiance, that his whole mood partook of the genial glow. He had reached the upper part of the city, and was quite in the neighbourhood of the house where the shoes were to be left, when a large dog coming round the corner at a speed as rapid as his own, ran directly in his way, and threw him over. There had been a heavy shower in the early part of the afternoon, the gutters were still full of water, and although he was not hurt by his fall, yet in the shock the shoes were dashed from his hand, and fell into the muddy bath.



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With feelings of terror not to be described, our poor hero saw the black fluid streaming over the beautiful shoes; and after having stood for a moment as if paralyzed, he plunged his hand into the filthy pool and drew them out.

He might have served as a study for a painter as he stood surveying the consequences of the mishap; his countenance expressed almost every emotion of the human mind, as he held up the shoes and tried to wipe away the black mud which dyed them, until at length, finding all his efforts ineffectual, he burst into a fit of passionate weeping.

Do not think his tears were puerile; his spirit was naturally strong, but he was only a child, and his bodily frame weak from want of nourishing food.

Bitter was his grief; and altogether at a loss how to proceed, for a moment he was tempted to resolve never again to face his unkind guardian, and seek another home, no matter where; he believed he could not be worse off. But those early teachings drawn from the Scripture rules, which had been so prayerfully impressed upon his plastic mind in the little cottage at M——, now came back upon his heart; the remembrance of his parents came vividly before him, and he determined to act as they would have advised—namely, openly and according to the truth; he would be upright, let the consequences be to himself what they might.

Providence, however, that so kindly watches over all who put their trust in him, and suffers none to be tempted beyond what they can bear, had raised up a friend to help in this hour of need.

Attracted by the beauty of the sunset, an old gentleman of most reverential aspect was looking from the window of one of the handsomest houses in the square, but was not so lost in contemplation of the clouds that he had not observed poor William and pitied his misfortune.

“Did your father send you with these shoes, boy?” said he; “why do you cry so bitterly about the misfortune which cannot be helped?”

“Dear sir,” replied William, as he raised up the ruined shoes, from which the muddy water was still dripping, “I have no father nor mother now; my master will be very angry and beat me. I am sure I could not help it;” and a fresh flood of tears proved his grief for the disaster.

“How much did he tell you to ask for the shoes?” inquired the old gentleman.

The boy named the amount, at the same time wiping the shoes with the corner of his blue blouse.



“Here, boy, give this to your master to pay him for the shoes,” said the gentleman, throwing him some money from the window; “and here is a shilling for yourself; I think you are an honest boy, so keep that to indemnify you for your fright.”

William was amazed, but before he had time to thank the kind stranger, he had turned away, and the vacated place was filled by a different-looking object. A little, mirthful-looking, fair-haired girl, about seven years old, carrying a doll nearly as large as herself in her arms, looked from the window, and seeing our poor hero, burst into a loud fit of laughter, for which he could not account. Although anxious to know the cause, he was too bashful to ask the reason, and as she retreated almost immediately, he, after waiting a few minutes in hopes the gentleman would re-appear, was compelled to retrace the way which led to his cheerless home.

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“What have you been doing, you idle scamp?” exclaimed Mr. Walters, as he entered; “have you been fighting with street-boys, or wrestling with chimney-sweeps? Look at yourself, what a figure you make with all the mud of the street on your face!” and pushing him before a small looking-glass that hung in the shop, bade him account for the “condition of this beautiful visage.”

The poor boy had dried his tears with the same corner of his blouse with which he had wiped the gutter-soiled shoes, and had thus transferred the black mud to his face; and as he surveyed his changed countenance in the glass, he recollected, and was at no loss to account for the little maiden’s burst of laughter. Forgetting that his stern master stood beside him, and the bitter tears he had so lately shed, with that buoyancy of spirit which is the peculiar property of childhood, and surmounts all rules, he laughed aloud until recalled to his usual gravity by some blows on his shoulders from his master’s heavy hand. “How dare you laugh so impertinently in my presence?” he asked, while administering the remedy of the strap, which he considered a specific for all misdemeanours; and now not only stopped the poor boy’s laughing, but caused him to tremble under the undeserved punishment.

“Where is the money for the shoes?” he thundered forth, when he found time to speak.

William handed it to him, and detailed the whole circumstance, not concealing that the gentleman had given him a shilling for himself.

“Give it here,” said Mr. Walters; “boys like you, who have everything found them, have no need of money; it only serves to lead them into mischief;” and taking up his hat, and bidding his wife have supper in half an hour, he left the shop.

“Bill Raymond, you are one of the grandest of donkey-headed fools I ever saw in my life,” said Jem Taylor, as soon as they were alone, after examining that the door leading to the kitchen was shut. “Why did you give him the shilling, which was your own? The price of the shoes, too, you might have kept, for your honesty did not save you from a beating. Why did you say anything about it! I would have taken the beating and kept the money.”

We have mentioned how Will met and triumphed over the first temptation; and when Taylor had repeatedly afterward assailed him with like arguments, he had never wavered; and the only consequence of his advice had been to create dislike and mistrust of one who could advocate a practice so entirely at variance with the law of God. But now he listened to the tempter, and without reproof of the sin which he could not fail to recognise.

“After all,” said he to himself, “Jem Taylor is right; I get beaten whether I am honest or not, and that money would have bought me many nice things. Yes, and I am so often hungry; and when I see the street boys spending pennies at the cake stalls and I have



nothing, it makes me so angry; and I cannot bear this old Walters. I know I will not be so foolish another time; but I will keep at least the money which is given to myself, and take good care he shall know nothing about it.”



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And why was his frame of mind so changed? Why did he view the deception as less repulsive than at first? The reason is easily told: he had relaxed his watchfulness in adhering to the path of duty, and although careful still to say the prayer taught him by those whose memory was as vividly dear as ever, it was more the form of words than the heart-prompted petition. Alas! the poisonous influence around him was beginning to tell, and he would soon throw off the only armour that could shield him from the temptations of the wicked, or guard against the more insidious attacks of his own deceiving and deceitful heart. He was not more happy, although in liking Jem Taylor better he had become more, reckless, and listened to his advice more patiently than at first; and although he still prayed, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil," he did not take in its spiritual meaning, and forgot the Saviour's injunction to "watch" as well as "pray."

But God, who knows all man's weakness, and whose mercy exceeds even man's sin, raised up at this time a friend for the desolate boy—it seemed as though to preserve him from the peril with which he was menaced. There were but one or two of the neighbours who ever visited the Walters, for the master was too surly and the mistress too penurious to exchange hospitality with any one. The tailor, next door, could come but seldom, as he was always busy; but the watchman of that district, who lived but a few doors distant, and whose wife sold Mrs. Walters milk, came more frequently than the tailor, and as he was a conversable man and understood politics, Walters was rather glad of his coming than otherwise. Will was generally sent for the milk, and his pale face and dejected look awakened the sympathies of this honest and God-fearing couple. They soon learned that he was an orphan, and Thomas Burton, the good watchman, having noticed the harsh treatment he received, and not at all ignorant of Jem Taylor's character, and the danger he was in of being led astray, determined to watch over him, and, if possible, prevent his being ruined. He therefore encouraged him in every way he could, and the gleams of sunlight his kindness and sympathy shed on the dark path of the orphan boy, showed that he was no stranger to that "charity" which, taught by the gospel, "never faileth," and is "kind."

After the first temptation to falsehood, William had avoided Jem Taylor as much as possible; but now, in consequence of his "consenting to be enticed to sin," he rather shunned the good Burtons, and took more pleasure in listening to the slang of the shop than in his own thoughts. He suffered his mind to dwell on the advice given him in relation to the price of the shoes and the shilling, and grieved over the loss of both, until he no longer considered that keeping the price of the shoes would have been a dishonest act. He began to be of Jem's opinion, that he had shown himself a blockhead, and

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resolved to act differently in future. "But, indeed, I would have liked to thank that good old gentleman," said he to himself; "although I was none the better for the money. It is a pity he does not know that Mr. Walters took it all; but I will try not to think any more about it. I know now what I will do," he cried, as a sudden thought struck him; "that little girl with the large doll must be his daughter, so I will make a pair of little shoes for the waxen lady."

William carried his purpose into execution. In the evening, when the working hours were over, he gathered up some scraps of red morocco which had been thrown aside as useless, and carried them up to the attic where he slept, so that as soon as daylight appeared he might begin his work. This he did, and had cut out and nearly half made a pair of doll's boots before the usual time of going to work. He could not, however, find any red ribbon with which to bind and tie them; some bits of blue were lying about, and as he had not a penny to purchase that which was suitable, he was obliged to use it. The next morning saw them finished, and wrapping them up in a small packet, he put it in his pocket, and went to his work quite happy that he had been able to accomplish his task without the knowledge of his master.

The new satin shoes, made in place of those which had fallen into the gutter, were finished and brought in by evening, and although it was almost sundown, and the walk a long one, William was only too happy to be charged with their delivery. He set forth cheerily, and as he approached the house from whence the money had been thrown him, his heart beat joyfully—yes, that was the very window where the kind old gentleman stood; and, a better sight than that, the outer door stood open. It was but the work of a moment to seat himself on the broad marble steps and write on his packet, with a bit of lead pencil, "The shoemaker's boy returns thanks for the kindness of the other day," and placed it in a corner of the vestibule, where it could not fail to be noticed.

This done, he set off at his usual rate of speed, and without once looking round to see if he had been observed, he hurried on to the dwelling of the lady for whom the shoes were made. She was much pleased with them, paid the price, sent a new order to Mr. Walters, and gave him a sixpence for himself. William, altogether rejoiced at receiving the gift, trifling as it was, resolved in this case to do as Jem Taylor advised; he would *not* give it to Mr. Walters; and if he asked anything about it, he would say he had received nothing. "No, I will spend it before I get home," he said half aloud, and took the direction which led to a baker's shop, where he would buy and feast upon rolls.

But something more attractive in the shape of a picture shop came before him; rolls and gingerbread were forgotten in the delight he experienced in feasting his eyes on some paintings in the window. "I really will try to draw that old man and his dog," said he to himself; "but then I have no paper; ah yes, the sixpence the lady gave me!" and with the

welcome recollection he turned away from the tempting sight, purchased some paper and ran home, which he reached in good time.



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CHAPTER VII.

The tempter triumphs.

“Did the lady give you nothing more?” inquired Mr. Walters, as William handed him the money for the shoes and mentioned the new order. He had been pleased with the boy’s ingenuous honesty shown a day or two before, and was now in a more sunny humour than usual. The old watchman, too, had come in for a half-hour’s chat, and was sitting in the back shop, from whence Mr. Walters had come. “What did she give you?” he repeated, as he saw the boy hesitate.

William blushed, stammered something inaudible, and looked at Jem Taylor, who, as master’s back was turned so that he could not see him, made signs to our hero to conceal the truth. “I am sure she gave you something,” cried the master, now growing angry; “tell me the truth this moment.”

The poor boy now recollected that he had spent part of it, and was more embarrassed than at first; the nods, winks, and smiles of the vicious journeyman were aiding in the struggle to conquer the boy’s virtue, and at last triumphed. The anger of Mr. Walters was now fully aroused. He seized his young apprentice by the shoulder, and in a voice of thunder repeated the question; to which, pale and trembling, more from the terrible conflict within than dread of the uplifted arm of his cruel master, he answered, “*I did not get any money!*”

Dear young reader, the first step on the downward road is the only one that costs, the rest are easy; and our poor hero, the child of Christian parents, the subject of many prayers, had listened to the voice of the charmer, and now he stood on the verge of the dangerous boundary line. Was he to fall, or would God, whom he had been taught to love and honour, shield him in his perilous situation? Ah yes; for is there not One who, loving the wretched and suffering children of the earth—One who, touched with the feeling of man’s infirmities, took on himself the likeness of sinful flesh, and dwelt among them, administering mercy to all? Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For being in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, he himself having suffered, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And there were purposes of mercy in store for the orphan boy, when the chastisements with which God sees good to inflict on the children of his love should have passed away. This trial of his power to resist temptation was *permitted*, in order to show him that a better strength than his own was necessary, and that it is only through the divine Helper that any can be delivered from the power of the great enemy “who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”



Mr. Walters at once recognised the falsehood our poor hero was tempted to tell; and although he was in the habit of beating him for almost every offence, the chastisement on this occasion exceeded any that had gone before. Severe indeed were the blows rained down on his back and shoulders; less, indeed, intended as a punishment for the falsehood, than a pouring out of his own wrathful spirit on the child, who for the first time had manifested a spirit of opposition to his will.



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Poor boy, every bone in his body ached; but what was that in comparison with the anguish of soul he endured? Conscience, that sure monitor, proclaimed with its still small voice, "Thou hast sinned against God;" and he longed for the hour when he could be alone, and, like erring Peter, "weep bitterly."

It was Saturday evening, and work was left off at an earlier hour than usual. And well was it for our hero that Jem Taylor was too much bent on the pursuance of his own low pleasures to remain a moment after the signal was given to cease work. Perhaps more poison would have been instilled into the soul which had been found vulnerable; perhaps such a line of proceeding prompted as would have proved, if not ultimately successful, at least productive of much suffering; for the blessed Scriptures tell us that "transgression shall be visited with the rod, and iniquity with stripes."

He was sitting alone in a corner of the shop when the shrill voice of Mrs. Walters was heard calling him to "go to Burton's for milk." He obeyed, and wiping his streaming eyes, with an attempt to look cheerful, he entered the neat little room, where he found his friend Thomas, who had left the scene of strife unobserved.

"Sit down, Will," said he, in a kindly tone, that, going straight to the boy's heart, once more unlocked the fountain of his tears; "the old woman is taking her bread out of the oven, but she will be here in a moment."

"I dare not stay," replied the boy; "I must go home and come back rather than wait. Mrs. Walters always scolds if I stay."

"I will go with you and carry your excuse," rejoined Thomas; "but there is one thing about which I have long wanted to ask you. I never see you dressed clean on Sunday, or going to church. Have you never been accustomed to hear the word of God preached on the Sabbath, or attended a Sunday school? It is no wonder that falsehood dwells in the hearts of those who do not honour the ordinances of God; or that lies are spoken by such as do not know that 'He who is the Truth abhors the lying lips.'"

The tears of the orphan boy now flowed freely, and a deep blush mounted to his temples. "O Mr. Burton," he sobbed, "how gladly would I go to church and Sabbath school, as I did when my parents were living; but I fear I am growing wicked, for at times I have bad feelings, and to-day I told"—he could not bring himself to say a lie—"what was not true."

"I know you did," said Thomas; "I was in the back shop and saw you punished. God grant you may never need another chastisement for the same cause. But here is the old woman, and although I would like to talk to you a little, I must not suffer you to do wrong by staying a moment longer than necessary. How would you like to go to church with me to-morrow afternoon?"



“If I only could,” replied William, “I would be glad; but I have a great deal to do on Sunday, and I am afraid Mrs. Walters will not like to spare me.”

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“I will ask her, and I am sure I shall not be refused,” said Thomas; “but here is your milk—come, I am going with you.”

Mrs. Walters, either being in a better humour than usual, or wishing to appear amiable to her respectable neighbour, not only took no notice of William’s rather long stay, but consented he should spend Sunday evening with the watchman.

Great lightness of heart would have been his in consequence of this consent, had not his spirit been weighed down with the burden of his sin. He felt how blunt are all the arrows of adversity in comparison with those of guilt; and how insignificant are all the trials imposed by cruel men, contrasted with the pain of soul caused by the sense of having displeased God.

Twilight came on, and with it he sought the quiet of his comfortless attic. Its rude walls and squalid furniture were, however, not now noticed; its privacy and seclusion were all that his soul desired. He threw himself on the pallet which served him for a bed, and wept bitterly as he thought of his parents, who had taken so much pains to teach him to abhor a lie, and recalled the words of his mother, who constantly admonished him how much better it was to suffer wrongfully than do wrong; and bitter was his self-reproach, that for the sake of a paltry sixpence he had told a lie, and in doing so sinned against the God of truth, whose word declares that “lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.”

Oh, how guilty he felt! how humbled in his own estimation! and with deep and bitter repentance he bewailed his error, and entreated pardon from Him who for Christ’s sake will always hear the penitent when they pray, and help them in their time of trial. “My heavenly Father,” was the language of his anguished heart, “I have sinned, and am most unhappy; save me from temptation, or give me strength to resist when it comes.”

It was long before the violence of his grief passed away, and when it did, feeling no inclination to sleep, he went to his trunk for his Bible, which latterly he had somewhat neglected. As he turned over the articles which lay within it, most of which he had brought from home, and which served most vividly to recall the happiness of his earlier years, his eyes rested upon the portfolio of his father’s drawings, which lay on the bottom, and on which he had not lately looked. As he opened it a folded paper fell from between the leaves. He took it up and opened it—it was the little drawing which he had made in the church-yard; and as he gazed on it he recollected the stranger who had coloured it, and with remembrance of him came that also of his spiritual conversation. He read the words written on the back: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;” “Watch that you may pray, and pray that you may be safe;” and the tide of tears once more burst forth.

“I was not watchful,” he said; “I did not pray as I ought; but I will try never to forget my duty again.”



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His tears could not soon be restrained; but as he read such passages from his Bible as his mother had taught him to understand, tranquillity gradually stole over his heart, and although he still wept, his tears were not so bitter as at first. Oh, blessed religion of Christ! that can bring a balm for every human grief; that tells the weary and heavy laden where to go for rest and solace; that tells the desolate of a home and inheritance in a land where there is no sorrow; and bids the sin-sick not despair, for there is mercy in Christ for all, and God hath no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but would rather that the wicked turn from the evil of his way and live: it tells of a love which does not willingly afflict, but when, in mysterious but unquestionable mercy, it lays the cross upon our shoulder, it also gives the support of its divine strength, “making the rough places plain to our feet, and the darkness to be light about our path.” He who bore a cross, “the heaviest cross,” can also lighten the burden of all our trials; and although he may not see good to remove them, he can remove their oppressive weight by the bestowment of the spirit of patience, which teaches implicit obedience to our heavenly Father’s will. And now, as the refreshing dew falls silently and unseen upon the sun-scorched earth, and all nature revives to renovated life, so did the gentle but powerful influence of the gospel precepts shed peace and hope upon the heart of this desolate boy. Trusting in the orphan’s God, who has declared “he will never leave nor forsake those who call upon him,” he grew calm as he recalled the abundant promises of God, and, comforted by the holy assurance they afforded, his agitation subsided into calmness, and at last he sunk into a calm and quiet sleep.

The Sabbath morning rose bright and beautiful, and the sacred silence, evident even in the crowded city—for the usual sounds of labour and of sport are hushed—was soothing to the sin-wounded spirit of the poor orphan boy. His first thought on awaking was the remembrance of his sin; his first work, to ask forgiveness and seek strength for present duty and future trial; and in the stillness of heavenly communion he found the peace promised to all who trust in the Lord. Pale and serious, but with a happiness to which he had long been a stranger, the influence of the Holy Spirit was operating upon his heart. He felt that he had been in danger of straying from the fold of the Good Shepherd, and that he had in mercy been saved by the trial which showed him that he dared not trust to his own strength. Nothing occurred to mar the quiet of the day. Mr. Walters was quiet, though somewhat moody; his wife did not scold as usual; and when, in the afternoon, Thomas Burton came in for our poor hero, there was no objection made to his going, but permission given for him to stay with the Burtons until bed-time.



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Walters could not well refuse Thomas any favour. Not only was he obliged to respect this humble Christian for his consistent walk, but he owed him a large debt of gratitude; for when he and his family all lay ill at one time of an epidemic fever, the Burtons, when no one else would go near the house, waited on them day and night. He was a little mortified that the good watchman had been witness of his violent behaviour on the day before,—he feared some expostulation on the part of his worthy neighbour; but Thomas wisely forbore to say anything at present in the boy's behalf, thinking he could serve him better by silent observation, and not interfering until a suitable time.

Very pleasantly did this Sabbath-day pass with William. How he enjoyed the service in the plain church where the Burtons worshipped! It reminded him of home days, and in the softened mood of his heart every word uttered by the preacher told. The beautiful words of the text, which the Saviour spoke to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me;" and its following words, in which the Comforter is promised,—came like healing balm upon his wounded spirit, and he bowed his soul in humble gratitude to the great Head of the Church, who, in suffering him once more to enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary, had also satisfied him with spiritual food.

The evening passed pleasantly away, although the conversation, turning on the events of the preceding day, brought a blush to William's pale cheeks and tears to his eyes. The old watchman, although rude and uneducated, was yet a true Christian, and as such, admonished the desolate child with all the tenderness of a father. When our hero told him how he had been tempted to run away on the day the shoes fell into the gutter, and how harshly he had been treated, not only on that occasion, but always; and how hard it was for him to observe the rule of duty, which he well knew, when Jem Taylor, the only one who ever showed him any kindness, was always advising him to pursue a course to which the human heart is naturally inclined, but which his conscience told him was wrong.

"That is all very true," said Thomas; "but you must remember that all set out on a race for one stopping-place, to which there are two roads. You have read in your Bible about the wide and the strait gate. 'Enter in,' it says, 'at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' Now, my boy, God has taken away your earthly joys, and made the way narrow to you; hedged your path with thorns, and caused you to weep bitter tears every day. We know, too, that no affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous: and as our light afflictions, which, in comparison with eternity, endure but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding



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and eternal weight of glory; so God has filled your way with trials, difficulties, and thorns, that, taught so early in life to deny self and fight against sin, you, as you progress, will find the narrow path grow easy and pleasant, and find at the end everlasting life. Now, the temptations of Jem Taylor are easily resisted, if you will read your Bible *prayerfully*. 'Thy word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path.' 'Through thy commandments I get understanding,' says David; 'therefore I hate every evil way.' And if, when tempted, you strive mightily, and call for help on Him who hath promised to aid in the hour of trial, he will bear you through the whole conflict safely, and at last give you a crown of life."

William drank in the old man's words, and could have listened longer, but it was growing late. The good watchman must be at his post; and even while speaking he was putting on his overcoat, and, taking up his lantern, was soon prepared to traverse his nightly round.

Having promised he would return William safely, he proposed that they should leave together; but not before Mrs. Burton had wrapped up half a dozen nice rolls, which she gave him; and William, looking up in the old man's face, said, "You will not forsake me?"

"No, boy, no, that I won't," was his reply; "but try to do all that conscience tells you is your duty, and then you will have a better Friend, worth more than a whole host of mortal men."

CHAPTER VIII.

GLEAMS OF SUNSHINE.

The night passed by, and although William had not slept during its early hours, he rose as soon as it was light, and after offering an earnest prayer that Heaven would shield him from temptation that day, he wrote a letter to his friend George. We will not detail what the epistle contained, but merely mention that, after stating many circumstances that had occurred, it ended by telling what a kind friend had been raised up for him in the old watchman. He did not conceal the fact of his being very unhappy; but while he told of his comfortless home, he also declared his resolution to try to be contented with his present lot and like his trade. Thomas Burton had told him that his heavenly Father had allotted to every one his proper place, and to murmur would be sinful. He concluded by saying that he would be diligent and faithful, trying in all things to please his master, until his term of apprenticeship should have expired. "Then, dear George, I will go back to M——. I never shall want to stay in a big city; for although there are many fine things here, finer than I ever saw in our little village, there is more wickedness, and it is harder to be good where there is so much bad example."

At this moment his mistress called him to come and make the fire, and hastily directing and sealing his letter, he thrust it into his pocket and proceeded to do her bidding.



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Notwithstanding considerable languor hung about his bodily frame, and his bones and muscles still ached from the effects of the boating, he felt a more peaceful frame of mind than he had known for weeks before. The knowledge of having done wrong is always the first step toward amendment. He not only felt that he had been guilty of more sins than lying, but, viewing those minor faults in a different light than formerly, he determined to watch over his heart carefully, and avoid giving any cause of complaint in future. "Watch that you may pray, and pray that you may be safe," were words that floated in his mind all the morning as he sat hammering shoe soles; and he would not laugh at any joke of Jem Taylor's against his master, although for some time past he had enjoyed hearing him ridiculed.

Late in the afternoon Mrs. Walters came in, and, giving him a pair of leather boots, told him to take them to Mrs. Bradley, the wife of a market gardener who lived outside the city. It was fully three hours after his scanty dinner had been eaten, and supper would be over ere he returned. Growing boys are always hungry, and he was about to venture to ask Mrs. Walters for a lunch to serve in place of the evening meal, when he remembered the rolls given him by Mrs. Burton, and which were still in his trunk. He hid the little packet in his bosom, intending to eat its contents on his way home; and after having put his letter in the post-office, he set off to accomplish his errand.

One might have thought the walk, and the variety always met with in the streets of a large city, would have exhilarated him; but, whether owing to the condition of his bodily health, this was not now the case. He passed the picture-shops without noticing the treasures in the windows; the silver-ware and fanciful ornaments of the jewellers' establishments served only to remind him of the vanities of earth, and his own poverty; and as he looked upon the gaily-dressed crowd that was thronging Broadway, among which there was not one whose face was known to him, that painful sense of desolation which comes over one when he feels alone in a crowd, saddened him almost to tears. He recalled the happy days of his early childhood, and even those when, after his father's death, he had been compelled to labour to assist his mother. Ah, how light it all seemed in comparison with the hardship of his present lot! Notwithstanding the comfort he had enjoyed on the previous day, and his renewed determination to do his duty and trust in God, his heart grew sick at the prospect of the long years of wretchedness and bondage yet to be endured before his apprenticeship should end; and he wished to die. "I am the most unhappy being on the face of the earth," he said, as he wiped away the tears with his ragged sleeve; "but still I will try to do right. Ah, if Nicholas Herman knew how unhappy I am, I am sure he would try to get me away!" He had by this time reached the city limits, and the gardener's cottage,



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with its high enclosing palisades and espaliers hanging with tempting fruit, was visible. The hedge which bordered on the roadside was green, and its verdure attractive to one accustomed to country life. Bounding over the ditch which separated it from the common path, he was about to continue his walk along its margin, when his step was arrested by a sound of distress. He looked round and saw a little boy, barefoot and thinly clad, sitting on the ground and weeping bitterly. A little basket, half filled with chips, told what his occupation had been, while his pale face and meagre form were such as to awaken pity in the heart of the most careless. William was not so absorbed in his own distress that he had no sympathy to bestow on another. He stooped over the boy, and, as he kindly took him by the hand, a tear, which his own circumstances had called forth, fell upon the boy's cheek, and caused him to look up in surprise.

"What are you crying for?" asked William; "are you afraid, or has any one hurt you?"

The little fellow only answered by questioning: "You are crying yourself," said he; "are you as hungry as I am?"

"Are you really crying for hunger! that is dreadful!" rejoined William. "I know what it is not to have enough to eat, but still I never have been so starved as to cry about it."

"Neither grandmother nor I have had anything to eat since morning, and I am very hungry."

"But what are you doing here?" inquired our hero.

"Just gathering some sticks, to make a fire for grandmother, who is sick, and cannot spin now," answered the boy, still weeping.

"Have you no parents to take care of you?" again asked William. "What is your name, and where do you live?"

The boy answered that his name was Ned Graham, and named a street at no great distance from the place where they were, and which was well known to William. He said that his parents were both dead; that while his father, who was a carpenter, lived, they had been very comfortable; but that now, as his grandmother was very old, and himself too young to do anything to help to make a livelihood, they were often hungry. "Grandmother spun and knit until she became sick, and the neighbours still sent us in something; but they are poor themselves, grandmother says; and this morning, when old Annie Michael, who supports herself and children by washing, sent us some of her breakfast, grandmother said she could not bear to take it."

William had no rejoinder to make, for self-reproach was busy at his heart. But a little while ago he had thought himself "the most unhappy being on the face of the earth,"



and now he could not help feeling that the condition of poor little Ned was far more wretched than his own. His food, indeed, was coarse and scanty enough; but then he had his regular meals, while this poor child and his infirm grandmother were obliged to subsist on the charity of the poor, which could not be very regularly or liberally administered.



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"I am surely very ungrateful to my heavenly Father," said he, half aloud. "Hereafter, when I am disposed to complain of my food, I will think of this poor boy. But stop; I had forgotten the rolls Mrs. Burton gave me. I am not very hungry now;" and taking the packet from his bosom pocket, he gave it to the little starveling.

"I am not to have them all?" said Ned, as he broke one off, and began to eat it. "Do you not want some yourself?"

"No," replied William; "I will get some supper when I go home; so carry half of them to your grandmother, for you are both hungry, and have no supper to expect."

And now, although hungry himself, with what pleasure did he give his rolls to one whose want was far greater than his own! He felt, in this denying of self, how great was the luxury of doing good; for mercy—

"Droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven.
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

Having finished his errand to the market-gardener's wife, and received a new order for some children's shoes, he took little Ned by the hand, and, having left him at his home, and looked in on the sick grandmother, he went back to his master's house, which now wore a more comfortable aspect than it had ever done before. So true is it that God accords to none unmitigated misery; and there are few, if any, who, like our hero, are tempted to believe themselves the most wretched beings in the world, who need anything but to look around among their fellow-men, to find that they are not the only or the greatest sufferers. Neither should any allow themselves to think that poverty and misfortune form the chief misery of man. None but the guilty are completely wretched; and trials are but necessary discipline to bring the soul from earth to heaven. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy law," are the words of David; and how many can be found ready to acknowledge that "it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth: for the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies."

And so from this time, although the treatment he received at his cheerless home was no better, the change which had come over his spirit since his late humiliation, had urged him to fly to the throne of grace for protection against the weakness of his own heart, and also made the hardships he endured seem less. He grew more mature by the severe discipline which, sanctified by the Spirit of grace, was purifying his soul; and he pursued the homely trade which at first he so disliked, and tried to conquer self by hurrying past the picture-shops, which were so great a source of attraction at first, and now regarded them as forbidden fruit. Not that they were less attractive, but his own heart told him, and so did his friend, Thomas Burton, that God appoints to every one such a sphere of action as is suited to his nature; and although to one has been



committed but one talent, while another has five, and another ten, the principle on which each is improved is the same. The great work each one has to do is within his own breast, and he that would gain the crown promised at the end of life's course must run the race in the spirit and temper of the gospel, which are humility and meekness.



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In consequence of this subdued spirit and a greater readiness to obey, his harsh guardians relaxed so far as to yield to the persuasions of the good watchman, and suffered him to go on Sunday afternoons to church and Sabbath school, as well as sometimes to spend the evening with himself.

And this, dear reader, proved like a fountain of sweet water in the wilderness; and, as an oasis in the desert, furnished rest and refreshing, which strengthened him to bear up against the hardships and trials of the week. And as, in hearing the Scriptures expounded and learning their soul-comforting lessons, the word, as the Psalmist says, became "hidden in his heart," it proved more precious to him than the "gold of Ophir." It taught him to guard against the deceitfulness of his own heart; to discern temptation, however speciously veiled; pointed out the way to escape when sorely beset; and showed him where, when "weary and heavy laden," to seek for rest. Duty was made plain; and, taught to understand his own errors, he also understood by what means to guard against them. He now walked according to the scriptural rule, and found his reward in the peace promised unto those "whose mind is stayed on God, and trust him."

CHAPTER IX.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

Mrs. Bradley, the wife of the market gardener, was a kind-hearted woman, and William having often been sent to her house with shoes, an acquaintanceship grew up between them, which, our hero found, turned out most unexpectedly to his advantage.

As she stood or sat in her place at the corner, surrounded by her fresh vegetables, for which she had always plenty of customers, she often found herself in want of some one whom she could trust to carry a bunch of asparagus or a basket of spinach to some purchaser's house. From what she had seen of William, she was assured he would do an errand faithfully; and although he could not come regularly, she often waited for his appearing rather than trust another. For these little services she always paid him liberally, and had he been less conscientious than he was, he might have turned this kindness to considerable advantage; but his conscience told him he must not neglect his master's business.

He mentioned this to the good woman, who, seeing its propriety, was careful only to give him such commissions as he could fulfil without wasting the time belonging to his employer; her good opinion being only increased by his scrupulous fear of doing wrong.

Very happy indeed he was to have some money of his own. Mr. Walters, being somewhat ashamed of his conduct as exhibited before Jem Taylor and the watchman, had never since asked him what he got from the customers; but Mrs. Walters often

borrowed our hero's change, as she said,—but which loans were never repaid. William, however, true to his resolution of adhering to the truth, never denied having money



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when she asked him; but, we must confess, he gave it with a pang, for he wanted his scanty means for a more important purpose, namely, to feed the hungry. The rule of life to which he was now adhering forbade him to do evil that good might follow, and knowing that if he received the money it would not be long in his possession, he would only take a portion of these earnings, and begged Mrs. Bradley to give the rest to little Ned Graham, whom he would send to her house.

She inquired who Ned Graham was, and having heard, declared that “nobody should starve in her neighbourhood; she would not only give the little boy the pennies, but see after the old woman.”

It was only when sent on some errand to the neighbourhood he could look in on old Mrs. Graham and her grandson; but when he did, his heart was filled with such joy as made him forget that he had ever suffered or been sad. The “cup of cold water,” given in the spirit of Him who went about doing good, insures its own reward; he had extended the sympathy and kindness due by the bond of human brotherhood to those more destitute than himself, and he found himself blessed. The cold looks and cheerless meal that awaited him on his return home, had now no power to dim the cheerful light of his soul; and when he lay down on his hard pallet, and slept as only childhood can sleep, dreams, born of the holy duty which had that day been performed, hovered around his pillow, shedding an influence not less bright than had been his waking joy.

Although, the prevailing temper of his mind was peace, its rule was by no means steady; many a cloud alternated with his sunshine, many a trial awoke the natural spirit, and many a temptation enticed him to sin. But in his Bible, now never neglected, he found not only a buckler that made him proof against every besetment, but experienced that each promise there will be found a staff to lean upon, able to bear our whole weight of sin, of sorrow, and of trial. By the glorious example of sinless purity, yet of lowly meekness and complete submission to a Father’s will, as exhibited by our blessed Saviour, he learned to practise the “charity” which “suffereth long,” and “beareth all things;” so that even Mrs. Walters was obliged to acknowledge that really “Bill was not a bad kind of a boy.”

None are, however, free from sin, and the boy had many struggles against the natural inclination to do evil; he was also often sorely tempted; but sufficient grace was given by Him who hath promised that none shall be tempted above what he is able to bear, to make a way of escape.

The summer of the second year had passed away, and the advance of autumn had somewhat shortened the days, not, however, yet so much so as to make it necessary to



light up the shop. Jem Taylor always went away at the close of working hours, and as William was the only one who boarded with the Walters, he was constantly left alone.

One evening Mr. and Mrs. Walters went out together to a place of public amusement, and having great confidence in "Bill," although they treated him most unkindly, they left him in charge of the house.

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Taking a seat in the unlighted shop, the lad looked through the open door on the passers-by, and his heart grew sad at the thought, that among them all there was no one who cared for him. Naturally of a gentle and loving spirit, he longed for suitable companionship on which he might lavish his wealth; but, except the Burtons, with whom he could spend but little time, there was no one from whose influence gleams of sunshine could steal in upon his heart and cheer its desolation. "I have always heard it said," was his musing thought, "that if one were kind and affectionate, he would be sure to receive love in return. I do all I can to please Mr. and Mrs. Walters, but I am certain I shall never be able to win their love, and I am so lonesome."

By this time the twilight had deepened almost into night, rendering objects nearly indistinct. The passing crowd had gradually grown less, but our hero neither noticed the increasing gloom nor the comparative quiet of the street, until aroused by the sound of music. Some German street musicians still abroad were playing the sweet and touching air, "Why, O why, my heart, this sadness?" and the sounds awoke a different train of meditation. How often had he heard that strain at home, and now, how vividly the happy scenes of the once happy times enjoyed there came up before him! The poverty, privation, toil, and sorrow borne there, lost half their magnitude; every joy was reflected back ten-fold. He felt as does some sailor on a stormy sea, and looked back to its shelter from the jealousies, trials, and turmoils of the world, as the storm-tossed mariner would have regarded the quiet haven he had left for ever; the recollection of all that had once been his within those humble walls was too much for his lately acquired heroism; the long-sealed fountain was opened, and he wept as he had not done for many months.

It was not until the music died faintly down the long street that he recovered his calmness. The tears, however, had proved salutary; and when he wiped them away he felt but the more resolute in his determination to do right, let the sacrifice cost what it might, than ever. "I will be contented," was his mental resolve, "I will endeavour to grow up good and useful, trying to fulfil worthily the duties required by my heavenly Father. I have murmured much; a good, faithful servant does his master's will *cheerfully*, but I have not done so."

Something rubbing against his feet disturbed his train of thought. What could it be? He looked down to discover, and in the dim and uncertain light saw a small object moving about on the floor. Again it came near: first a gentle mewing, then a low purring sound was heard; and next, something, which he knew at once was a kitten, jumped up into his lap, and, as if glad to have found a resting-place, nestled down to take a comfortable nap.



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This movement, however, was not at once permitted; for gently removing the little intruder, he lighted the gas in order to see what kind of feline specimen had thus come voluntarily to seek his acquaintance. The little animal's appearance was greatly in its favour; there were many cats in the neighbourhood, some of them frightened-looking and half-starved creatures, but this was a beautiful little grey and white kitten, which had evidently been some one's favourite, for it was very tame, and had a blue ribbon tied round its neck. But what was he to do with it? Mrs. Walters, he knew, was a sworn enemy to cats and dogs, and, had opportunity been allowed, would have waged a war of extermination against both races. He dared not keep it, and yet how could he resolve to drive it out into the street, where it would be sure to be killed? "The poor thing has strayed from home," said he to himself; "I wish I knew what I ought to do; stay—if I keep and feed it with the milk I get every day for Mrs. Walters, that will be no better than stealing; and if I tell her it is here, she will drown it. I wonder if Mrs. Burton would like to have it; but, indeed, I would like to keep it myself, I am often so lonesome. But I will get Thomas to try and find out who it belongs to, and tell them—"

He could not finish the sentence, for he was still hesitating as to what was the line of duty. The little creature, however, pleaded its own cause. As he took it up and petted it, it nestled up close to his cheek, and mewed gently, as if uttering a petition for mercy. William could not resist the appeal. Right or wrong he must keep it; so he carried it up to his garret, and covered it up in his bed, after which he returned to the shop to resume his watch, and think how his kitten was to be cared for—and, far more important, how he was to coax Mrs. Walters into a cessation of hostilities against the feline tribe, at least so far as to tolerate the little wanderer.

His uncle and aunt arrived in due time,—the lady in high good humour, which our hero thought it a pity to disturb by mentioning the presence of an unwelcome guest. He would tell her in the morning; but when the morning came, she was in such an angry mood that, as he was well aware, no benevolence was to be expected from her then. However, the kitten must be fed, and to do this he was prepared. He found an old bowl, which had been put in the garret with some cracked crockery. This he took along when sent on his daily errand for milk for the family, and, having a penny or two in his pocket, he told Mrs. Burton about his kitten, and asked if she would not sell him some every day. Pleased with the conscientiousness which prompted the boy to buy food for his favourite rather than take a crumb from his employers without their permission, she told him he might keep his pennies, for she would give him a little milk every day for his cat. "But, Billy dear," she added, "you had better tell Mrs. Walters all about it. Do everything open and above-board. Don't be ashamed or afraid of anything but sin. She must find it out at last, and will be more angry with you for hiding the matter. Always come straight out with the truth; you will find it the right way in the end."



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The old watchman promised to try to find the owner of the kitten, at the same time advising our hero either to tell Mrs. Walters the truth, or bring the little animal to his house, as his wife, he said, “had quite a fancy for four-footed pets.”

William, however, could not at once decide to part with his new acquaintance, since he felt certain that in either case parting must be the consequence. His indecision, however, was attended with a more speedy result than he anticipated, and not less painful than sudden. He had kept the kitten a few days, but in those few days he had learned to love the little thing dearly. Its graceful gambols amused him; and whatever might have been the kind of home from which it had strayed, it certainly showed itself as happy in the boy's rude garret-room as it could have been anywhere. As every day increased his attachment for the playful creature, so every day made the duty of telling Mrs. Walters of its presence or giving it to Mrs. Burton the harder. He had at length nearly resolved to do the latter, when an incident occurred which showed him how necessary it was always to be prompt in the discharge of duty.

One day Mrs. Walters had occasion to search for something in an old chest which stood in William's room; and the poor kitten, never dreaming what an enemy was near, crept forth from its hiding-place in the bed, and began fearlessly to gambol around one who had no kindly sympathies to awaken. As she looked round to see if she could discover from whence the intruder came, she espied, in a corner, the old bowl still half full of milk, and a few crumbs of bread beside it, and was at once assured that William had brought the cat from some place—thus outraging her authority and braving her prejudices.

There was but one course for a nature like hers to pursue. She saw no beauty in the graceful limbs, neither had she any respect for the mysterious principle of life—that gift which none but the great Creator can bestow, and cared not how recklessly she destroyed it. Burning with anger against our hero, she snatched up the unconscious kitten and descended to the shop, where, finding no one but Taylor and the object of her present wrath, she poured out a volley of reproaches with a rapidity which excluded all possibility of being answered.

Both were too much startled to attempt to speak; indeed there was but little time allowed, for, even during the first ebullition of fury, she advanced to the open door and flung the unhappy kitten as far as she could into the street. This seemed to satisfy her, for she at once left the shop, and very soon after was seen going down the street.



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William, by this sudden movement, was thrown completely off his guard, and anger, fierce and violent anger at such an outrage, took possession of his soul. Well was it for him that time was not allowed him to speak, for he would have uttered words afterwards greatly to be regretted. A few moments, however, were sufficient to quell the tempest. "Doest thou well to be angry?" were the words that arose first to his mind; and with them came also thoughts of One who taught, "Resist not evil," nor render railing for railing. But why should such cruelty have been shown to the poor kitten? and the thought that perhaps he had done wrong in keeping it without Mrs. Walters' permission gave him great pain. If so, he was content to bear any outpouring of her wrath without endeavouring to excuse himself; but still, he was determined to tell her how he had procured the milk for his kitten, lest she should think him a thief.

As he sat bending over his work, one tear after another fell upon the leather he was hammering, and his evident distress awoke the compassion of Jem Taylor, who, as we have already said, was not hard-hearted, and was always ready to pity the poor boy, who suffered daily under the iron rule of those who cared not for the happiness or misery which were in their keeping. We cannot follow the journeyman very far through life, but let us hope that the mercy which is extended unto all reached unto him, and taught him how evil were his ways. The time, however, was not now. The law of God had not been impressed on his heart in childhood; he looked upon lying as a venial offence, and had never learned that "no one who worketh abomination or maketh a lie shall dwell in the city of which God is the glory and the light." Happy was it for our poor hero that the good seed had been sown early and prayerfully by his humble but pious parents; but for this he must have fallen before the tempter.

Mr. Walters had gone out to purchase leather, and the time was favourable for the thoughtless journeyman to pour in the poison so well calculated to destroy the soul. "That's a terrible tempered woman, Bill," said he, "and if I was in your place I would run away. How she did pitch your poor cat into the street! If it had been mine, I tell you, I would teach her better in future: instead of sitting there and crying like a great baby, I would plan how I could help myself. Why could not you have told her you did not know anything about the cat? Cats run about everywhere; and where people are so hard as old Walters and his wife, a little lying is no harm. It is very silly in you always to tell the truth. The old man, indeed, does not ask you for your money now; but when she wants to borrow it, you never tell her you have none, although any one can see you do not like to give it. Now, quit being such a fool, and take care of number one. I can tell you of a variety of ways in which you can cheat her."



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William sat opposite to the tempter, but did not once raise his eyes to meet those he felt were resting upon him. He trembled. It was almost beyond the power of childish resolution to resist the dark power that was ready to impose a bond which would have sealed his ruin; but he had learned too much of the true wisdom taught in the Bible to surrender willingly to the influence of evil. He felt the weakness of his own heart, but knew also from whence only help could come. He continued to work in silence at the shoe he was making, but at the same time he lifted up his heart in prayer: "Heavenly Father, suffer me not to be led into temptation," was the fervent petition which issued from the secret chamber of the inner shrine; and He who seeth in secret heard and answered.

Jem Taylor, mistaking his silence for assent, went on: "You have it harder than any 'prentice boy I ever saw. Not a chap in all New York would put up with such victuals as you get; and then to be rated and called a thief because you stole a drop of milk for the poor kitten, was too outrageous! Such people as these deserve nothing better than to have lies told them every hour in the day; and, besides, I would help myself to whatever I could find in the cupboard,—pay yourself, boy, for the money the old woman borrows."

"O my dear mother!" thought William, "when you so often told me of the temptations I should meet with in the world, I could hardly believe it; but now I know what it is to be tempted, and that if left to myself I must fall."

Finding he still did not answer, Jem, nowise discouraged, went on: "A day or two since, when the old woman went to market, she forgot the key of the cupboard and left it in the lock, and the door swung most invitingly open. There was a cut pie and a plate of cakes. I told you to go quickly and help yourself, for no one would see you, and I would not tell. It was but fair you should take the worth of your money; but you were too great a blockhead. You looked at the good things there, and came away empty-handed. Strange, you would steal milk for the cat, and scruple to take a cake (which, I am sure, you earn hardly enough) for yourself."

William now raised his eyes, and as he looked straight into the face of Jem Taylor, the latter could not bear the bright and radiant holy expression lent them by the influence of truth, with which his soul was filled. It was now his turn to look down and work in silence, while the boy was speaking.

"Jem," said he, "I did not steal the milk; I told Mrs. Burton about the kitten, and she gave it to me. And when you wanted me to take the cakes, you did say that no one would see me, and that you would not tell. I steal, Jem! No, I could not steal if I were starving; for although assured that no man saw me, where could I go to escape the searching eye of God? I saw the closet open, and the way clear, but I felt no wish to take what was not my own; I was hungry, and the pie tempting, but my conscience, like a strong man, held me back. No, Jem, my mother told me that our heavenly Father numbers every hair of our heads, and I will never run away, lie, nor steal; and no distress shall

make me willingly wander from the right path; living or dying, I will try to keep all his commandments, and leave all my affairs to Him who cannot do wrong.”



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Oh, glorious and holy majesty of truth! who can resist its power? and now the journeyman, although ashamed to meet the glance of a child whose principles were based upon the law of Him who is the Truth, recognised its beauty and its force. He was addicted to low and base pursuits and pleasures, but the signature impressed originally on the heart of man, although half effaced, was not entirely obliterated, and he shrank back as from a superior power; for he felt as if a child had been commissioned to judge and condemn him.

A certain eloquent writer has said, "Every one is a missionary for good or evil, whether he designs it or not; he may be a blot, radiating a dark influence over the society to which he belongs; or he may be a blessing, spreading light and benediction over his own circle,—but a blank no one can be!" And the two we have been describing belonged to these classes; one was the leaven that sours or corrupts, the other the salt that silently operates; each was performing a mission for eternity. Which one, dear young reader, was to meet approval or endure judgment in that great day when all shall stand before the judgment-seat? How long the better emotion which had been created in the heart of Jem Taylor lasted, we cannot tell; he began to talk on other matters, and for a long time there was no more temptation from that quarter.

Mr. Walters came in soon afterward, and having heard of the affair, was ready to renew the strife with our poor hero; but as Thomas Burton, making a most opportune visit, bore testimony to the truth of our hero's story, no further punishment than the loss of the cat was deemed necessary.

CHAPTER X.

MAKING OTHERS HAPPY.

William had always been a delicate boy, although, while in the country, his health was good; but now the confined air of the shop, and the odour of the leather, and the stooping posture consequent on his trade, began to tell painfully upon him. He wondered what was the matter that he did not now ever feel bright and hopeful. He went about his work mechanically, was listless and silent. His features assumed a cast of anxiety unnatural in a child, and painful to notice. Still, no duty was neglected, nor did the Walters notice the change in his looks, since all allotted services were duly rendered. The young spirit was gradually yielding to the oppressive yoke, although patiently borne. But although cast down and perplexed, it was not in despair. The light commanded by "God to shine out of darkness" still illumined his heart and gave him comfort, and at the source ever open to the broken-hearted he could still appeal. Without the support of that "arm" which is never "shortened that it cannot save," he could not have borne up under the hardships of his present lot.



He was not sent quite so much into the street as at first; for he could now make shoes, and his work was valuable to his master. He did not often see little Ned Graham, as it was only on Saturday evenings that he carried home the week's work; but he always saw Mrs. Bradley at her place in the market, and through her sent the pennies he was able from time to time to gather.



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One day Mr. Walters came in from the upper shop with a pair of shoes in his hand, which he told our hero to carry to Professor Stewart's, No. 200 — street. He obeyed at once, for he was glad to breathe the open air; but the walk was not productive of the same pleasure as formerly. His mood was sad and his step feeble; although the air was only clear and bracing, it sent a chill through his weakened frame, turning what had once been his favourite recreation into positive pain. The variety met with in the streets had no power to attract his attention; the pictures in the windows had lost their charms; the flashing waters of the noble bay covered with vessels, from whose mast-heads floated the flags of many nations, failed to awaken his admiration; it requires lightness of heart to enjoy the beauty spread around us.

Thus, depressed in body and spirit, he wandered on, mechanically, noticing nothing until he had nearly reached No. 200. Some one called him. It was little Ned Graham, who, as usual, was getting pieces of boards and chips at a new building which was going up. Very thin indeed was his clothing, and far from healthy were his looks; but the natural buoyancy, which even the hard hand of poverty could not entirely crush, remained, and his whole countenance lighted up at the sight of his friend William.

“What now, Ned?” said the latter as a ray of cheerfulness shot over his sad heart, on seeing the happiness meeting with himself gave to the boy; “where are you going so far from home, bare-footed and half bare-legged, on such a cold day as this?”

“My feet are a little red,” said Ned, looking down at his red-hued supporters; “but I don't mind it much, when I can get such heaps of wood for the carrying. There was a fire up our way not long ago, and I got ever so much. We have a great pile now, and grandmother can keep the fire going. I want to carry all I can before the snow comes, for I don't expect to have any shoes. But why have you stayed away so long? Mrs. Bradley gave us the pennies you sent, but grandmother said she 'wanted to see yourself to thank you.'”

“I have done nothing worth thanks, Ned,” said William. “I only wish I could.”

“Grandmother said you had been a good friend to us, although you are but a boy, and only a shoemaker's 'prentice,’” rejoined Ned; “for you did not only send us the pennies, but Mrs. Bradley too. She has been so good to us; and when we thank her, she says we ought rather to thank you. She gave me these trousers; and although they are too short, I do not care for that, or that the street boys call me 'duck legs.’”

“It is our heavenly Father whom you ought to thank, rather than either of us,” added William, not noticing the last part of the speech; “but here is No. 200; stay; let me see. I do believe it is the very house in front of which I dropped the shoes; that is certainly the window where the old gentleman stood.”



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He rung the bell at the basement door as he spoke. A voice from within bade him enter. He did so, and found himself in a neat room, furnished with many books. A middle-aged gentleman sat at a table writing, but laid down his pen in order to see what the intruder wanted. William stated his errand.

“Ah, yes; shoes,” said the gentleman; “I do not know anything about them; my wife is not at home, but you can come again to-morrow, and see what she says. You look tired; there is a shilling for you.”

William took the money, but as he did so blushed deeply, and seemed about to return it.

“Why, what is the matter, boy?” asked the gentleman; “do not you think it enough?”

“O no, sir; indeed not that; indeed it is more than enough; but—”

“But what?” inquired the gentleman.

“I do not want to take it now, so I will send somebody—a little boy—for it to-morrow.”

The gentleman, who now began to suspect that all was not right, looked very grave, as he repeated the words, “You will send for it to-morrow. Boy, tell me what this means. It is certainly very strange behaviour. Nay, you cannot go until you tell me.”

William saw it was best to tell the truth, and he did so in as straightforward a way as possible; and stating at the close that as he believed he should be questioned whether or not he had received money, he preferred the gentleman should give it to a boy whom he would send, so that he might be able to say with truth he had not received any money.

“Your motive is a good one,” said the gentleman; “but you must be very careful, lest, while you are serving your fellow-creatures, you offend God. Truth in all things, my boy; let the truth always be spoken, and leave the issue to One who is himself the Truth. No matter under how amiable a pretext any one violates the divine law; it is no less a violation of that pure and holy law; and although there are many who consider that only the falsely spoken word which passes over the lips is a lie, there are many other ways of outraging the truth. The acted lie, perhaps more common than the spoken, is not less hateful in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold sin without abhorrence; and all deception, however skilfully veiled from human perception, is falsehood in his sight.”

“I am sorry, sir,” said William; “but I did not know how else to do; I did not know that would be lying.”

“It would be a shifting of the truth, an evasion,” said Mr. Stewart. “If you hope to run your earthly career with safety or success, let truth be the foundation on which you build



it. Falsehood *must* have an end, but truth will triumph. Then why distort, or seek to disguise it, since the Scriptures tell us that 'obeying the truth purifies the soul?' 'Who shall abide in God's holy hill? who shall dwell in his tabernacle? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.' Here is your money, to do with as you please: you can send the boy, however, to me; if he is as poor as you say, he must be looked after."



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“He was at the door just now,” said William, as he looked up and down the street; “but he must have gone home with his chips, as I do not see him.”

“Very well,” was the answer, “send him to-morrow.”

A person entering now interrupted the conversation, and our hero departed on his way. As he turned the corner he found little Ned, who, not yet tired of gathering sticks, was adding to the weight of his basket by some spoils from a lumber-yard. He delivered the message from Professor Stewart, and having given him the shilling just received, he bade him buy bread for his grandmother, and once more set off at a round pace for home.

His steps were, however, not so rapid as to banish thought, and although he dreaded the reproach he would meet, when, if questioned, he should tell how he had disposed of the money, he never for a moment swerved from his determination to tell *the whole truth*, let the consequences be what they might. He was not, however, so much taken up with his own affairs that he had no sympathy for others. The figure of little Ned Graham, in his thin clothing, thankful for the slight warmth afforded by the worn linen trousers which left his meager limbs bare more than half way from the knee, came still between him and the dark shadows which his own trials cast upon his naturally bright and hoping spirit. “I am wrong to be so depressed,” he said to himself; “we may see blessings in every lot, if we are willing to do so; and poor little Ned is as bright as a lark because he can get wood for the carrying, although he was shivering with cold, and his face looked pinched as if he were only half fed. Stay; let me see; I wonder if I cannot make some sort of shoes for him! There is a pile of old boots and shoes in the back shop, which Mr. Walters said were not worth mending, and he would have carted away. I will ask him about them, and if he has no use for the things, I will make a pair out of the best of them.”

There is no better cure for our selfish sorrow than to plan or execute something to alleviate the sufferings of others, and now the impulsive and naturally energetic spirit of our little shoemaker experienced a sudden rebound at the prospect of what he could do, which beguiled him back to at least comparative happiness, and lightened for a time his bondage of depression.

Smile not, dear young reader, that the task was so easily accomplished. It costs but little to bestow happiness or comfort on another; but small as is the outlay, nothing brings better interest, as our poor hero experienced in the sunshine poured in so suddenly on his lately clouded spirit.



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He returned to his home with a lighter heart and more buoyant step than had accompanied his going forth; and felt not only resolute, but fully armed to bear whatever reproach or violence he might meet, when he should be questioned about the money, and declare the truth. His fears on this occasion were without foundation. Mr. Walters was satisfied with his reasons for having left the shoes, and asked no further questions; and Mrs. Walters, not wanting "change," said nothing about borrowing; so William, truly thankful that all had passed over so quietly, retired to rest, wearied indeed in body, but happier in mind than he had been for many days, dreaming not only of the pleasure he should have in making the shoes, but in seeing little Ned's black eyes dance for joy in receiving them.

CHAPTER XI.

A LABOUR OF LOVE.

In the morning, William did not wait for Mrs. Walters' usual shrill call of "Bill, get up and make the fire;" for, filled with the project of pursuing a labour of love, he was up with the dawn, and having performed all his allotted tasks, he had time to turn over the whole heap of worn-out shoes, which lay piled up in readiness for the scavengers. Was it not a little surprising that one who so cordially disliked shoemaking should voluntarily undertake a task so repugnant as this! Was it not a proof that he was achieving that moral heroism so beautifully lauded in the Scripture? "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," does not only apply to the restraining of the temper; other discipline is included in its meaning. Does the "charity which, seeking not her own," but denying self, and sacrificing inclination at the shrine of duty, or in the endeavour to bestow comfort upon the needy, require no effort in its practice? It does indeed; perhaps stronger than to rule the tongue and temper; and although we must admire the moral hero who sets himself firm as a rock to bear reproach in silence, there is more calm grandeur in steady sacrifice of self when performing a repugnant task from a true spirit of benevolence.

It was not, indeed, without some effort, or many temptations to turn away and leave his project unaccomplished, that William persisted in his search. Sad to tell, he could not find what he sought, and he was turning away discouraged, when Jem Taylor came in.

He inquired what Bill had in hand now; and our little shoemaker having told him, he burst into a loud laugh, and declared he could do better for him than that. "I have a pair of shoes," said he, "of which the upper leather is pretty good, but the soles are all gone; you may have them to cut up for your bare-legged friend. But what are you to do for soles?"

"I never once thought of that!" replied William, and his countenance expressed how great was his disappointment.



“Don’t look so down in the mouth, Bill,” said Jem, good-naturedly. “I suppose. I need not tell you to slice a piece off from old Walters’ leather, for you would consider it stealing, which I don’t; but your cake shall not be all dough, for all that. I’ll buy you a piece of sole, and bring all together to-morrow.”



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William thanked the journeyman again and again, and was more than ever grieved that one who knew so well how to be kind should be so resolute in his practice of evil, and pursue a path which he had often confessed he knew to be a wrong one.

There was an unusual press of work, so that for several days he could not go for the shoes left at Professor Stewart's. No message concerning them having been sent, William was a second time despatched to No. 200 — street.

Once more he rang the bell at the basement door; the same voice bade him enter; and, seated behind a pile of books, with a pair of gold spectacles on his nose, was the same gentleman who had given him the shilling and the lecture on falsehood. He was writing so busily that our hero was obliged to stand for a moment or two unquestioned; but at last he looked up, and in seeming amazement at the presence of a stranger. "How long have you been here, and what do you want?" was the abrupt salutation.

"I brought a pair of shoes here some days ago," was the reply; "Mr. Walters sent me to-day to see if they would suit, as he did not receive any message from the lady."

"Shoes, shoes," said the gentleman, musingly; "I have some recollection about them; yes, and your face too; you told me about the little boy to whom you gave the shilling. Well, the little ragamuffin came, and I believe he is not unworthy. But whether he is or not, he is very poor; and if we try to serve none but the worthy, I am afraid a great many would suffer. He is too young to do much, so I told him to come here once every week, and we will give him something."

"The shoes, sir," asked William; "what answer am I to take about the shoes?"

"They were for a lady, I have some indistinct recollection," rejoined the gentleman smiling. "They are lying just where you put them down; only see what a memory I have; I have not once thought of them since. Pull that bell, if you please; somebody will come and tell you all about it."

Our little shoemaker did as he was desired, and an elderly serving-woman almost immediately answered the summons.

"Is Mrs. Stewart at home, Katie?" asked the gentleman, dipping his pen in the ink in order to resume his writing.

"No, sir; she has gone up to your son's. One of the children is sick, and she said it was likely she would have to stay all night," was the reply.

"I think, boy, your best plan will be to go there with the shoes," said the professor; "it is not far: just keep on up this street until you find yourself almost to the country; you will there see a house built in cottage style, standing back from the street in an enclosure:



my son, Mr. Stewart, lives there; ask for Mrs. Stewart and tell her of the shoes; she will decide whether or not to keep them.”

He turned once more to his writing and William was obliged to depart. Although the day was dark and gloomy, he was too glad to have an excuse for extending his walk; and caring neither for the cold wind that rushed by at intervals, and sent the few leaves that until now had clung to the lindens whirling in the air, nor that the short day was approaching to its close, he walked on rapidly, and was soon at the point of destination.



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The description of the house had been too accurately given for its features to be mistaken; plain but elegant, its exterior bespoke the pure taste of its possessors.

There were several steps leading up to the entrance door, which, retreating into a kind of recess, occupied the middle of the building, and opened into a hall with parlours on each side.

William ascended the steps and rung the bell. More than one summons was necessary, and while he waited for somebody to come he had time to look round; and he did gaze into one of the basement rooms, in which were several children. It seemed to be used partly for school purposes, and partly for play; it was not certainly the regular study hours, for there was too much inattention, although a governess was present and giving directions. A girl of twelve years old was practising a music lesson; and a younger one, seated at a table, was writing—all three of the inmates too much occupied to observe the young intruder, who was now so near the window that he could hear part of what was said.

“You play too fast, Clara,” said the teacher; “if you do not count your time, you will never excel in music.”

“Agnes, do not sit so crooked at your writing; it is ruinous to your health. Be careful to spell every word properly; for those who do not learn to spell well while they are young, can never acquire a correct knowledge of it.”

Our little shoemaker stood looking through the window with a pleasure nearly allied to that which had once enchained him before the picture-shops. What was it that so fettered his attention that he did not remark the presence of the servant, who had at last answered the summons of the door-bell? Was it the quiet and beautiful specimen of home instruction he was witnessing? Was it the neat and tasteful furnishing of the apartment,—the handsome but now unoccupied writing-desk, which was provided with every thing necessary, from a pen-knife down to a pen-wiper? Or did something in the shape of an old-fashioned sofa in the corner, on which sat three large dolls, claim the observation which was so intense as to amount to absolute rudeness? Yes, it was one of the leathern ladies that awakened such an extraordinary interest in the boy; for on its feet were the red morocco boots, bound and tied with light blue ribbon—very untasteful was the contrast—which he had made out of gratitude for the kindness shown him on the day in which he dropped the shoes in the gutter.

“What are you staring in there for, boy?” said a broad-faced Irish girl, giving him a pull. “Sure don’t you know it’s not civil to do the likes of that? tell us what it is ye want, and then take yourself off.”



William stated his errand, and the ruddy damsel, satisfied that he meant no harm, said she “did not know whether ould Mistress Stewart was in the place, but she would go and see.”

Thus left, there was time to renew his observations; and just then the door of the basement room opened, and a delicate but bright-looking boy of fourteen, with a gun in his hand and a game-bag over his shoulder, entered. “O Clara! such a pleasant day Harry Clinton and I have had! I have shot a round dozen of birds, and he has more! But tell me, is little Frank any better?”



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“O yes, a great deal better,” answered Clara, “so that grandmother—”

Biddy now interrupted the speech by her presence, and telling our hero that she had been “hunting the ould lady up stairs and down stairs, in my lady’s chamber, and everywhere, without finding her, she went till young Mistress Stewart, and she told her she was not in it, but was away an hour ago.”

It was now growing late, and our little shoemaker thought his wisest plan was to carry the shoes home for the present; he felt that he had already wasted too much time, and that he would most probably find the Walters displeased at the delay. He turned most reluctantly away from the window, unwilling to depart from a place where such a new and strong interest had been created, but there was no help for it; and he pursued his way with a feeling of regret, as he contrasted the circumstances of those happy children with his own. This mood could not continue long; he felt that it was wrong; he would not murmur, but submit.

With his usual openness he explained to Mr. Walters the cause of his delay; for which he received the usual amount of grumbling, with a threat for the future he should be made to stick to his last, and learn how to use time—a threat which was at once put into execution, for the next day he carried the shoes to Professor Stewart’s himself, and the affair was ended to his satisfaction. He was, as he had been threatened, kept closely to work; but although his work was even more joyless than ever, he was not without a gleam of sunshine in his heart, lent him by the prospect of being able to prepare happiness for others.

Time passes on rapidly, but with equal pace, unheeding whether, as a “swift-winged and beautiful angel,” he opens flowers on the way for some, or, as a “relentless, unsparing destroyer,” he nips the budding hopes and scatters the blight of disappointment on others; but still bearing the record of each minute to eternity, the gliding hours are silently working for all. Their passage had seemingly, as yet, brought no change in the circumstances of our little shoemaker; unloved and unloving, as at first, the days had rolled away with dull and leaden weight, until they approached the second winter since he had left his home at M——.

The shortened days and lengthening nights brought with them anticipations of Christmas festivals; and when the snow began to fall the winter pleasures began, and preparations were made for the amusements always got up for the holidays. What kind of enjoyment had William to expect, further than to stroll through the streets and survey the treasures in shop windows, none of which would find their way to him? and yet, strange to tell, he too looked forward to the coming festival with hopeful anticipation.

No preparation was made at Mr. Walters’; for no child of the house or young relative of the family gladdened the dull atmosphere of that sombre home; but William had been

silently at work, getting ready that which was to give happiness to others, and the pleasure arising from such labour always brings its own reward.



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As the time of rejoicing drew near, his memory carried him back to his once happy home in M——; and as it is natural for childhood to love to dwell only on life's brightest spots, so he recalled mostly the period before his father's death, when all had to him as yet been sunshine. The mysterious preparation—the Christmas-tree hung with glancing lights and fairy gifts so bewitching to children—the trembling joy with which each packet or article was examined,—all this, although the child of poor parents, had been his to enjoy; but on this Christmas-day he had nothing to expect.

As he was going along the street one day, when sent on an errand, he passed by a church which was being adorned with evergreens, as is the custom with many of the Episcopalians. The work had been finished, and the sexton was sweeping the refuse branches into the street. An idea struck him; he would have a Christmas-tree—a very small one, indeed, but then even a green branch of spruce would make things look more Christmas-like. He picked one up, and carrying it home, concealed it in his attic; for he feared if he showed it to Mrs. Walters, she would serve it as she had done his cat.

The twenty-fourth of December came, and our hero's heart beat high, half with joy, half with apprehension. He had his plan, but there was another will than his own to determine its being effected. Jem Taylor had gone up the river a few days before, to spend the holidays with his mother, and the other journeymen had given up work early on the day already mentioned.

Jem, however, who really liked our hero, had given him a shilling as a Christmas gift; this, with some pennies from his friend the market-woman, made him feel rich, and he resolved to spend it in Christmas gifts. Yes, Christmas gifts, dear reader; but there are different kinds of such. He would not spend his little store in bonbons and cakes, which do no good; tea, sugar, and other like necessary articles, could be put up in horn-shaped papers, and be hung on his branch of evergreen; and then, if he only dared go out on Christmas day, how nice it would be to set it up in old Mrs. Graham's room!

Most children, in giving Christmas presents, expect to receive in return. Not so our little shoemaker. But he, too, had his equivalent; yes, more—the approbation of his own heart, which is always the reward of a disinterested action. Mrs. Burton, too, gave him a small mince-pie, when he went in the morning for the milk; this, too, was saved for the great occasion.

The afternoon came, and with it two pairs of children's shoes, which one of the journeymen had tarried to finish, were brought in. William's heart beat almost audibly; they were for his friend, Mrs. Bradley. Should he be the errand-boy on this occasion? A petition to be permitted to spend Christmas eve from home had been trembling on his lips all day, but each time, when about to speak, his resolution failed. But now the words. "Bill, run off with these shoes to Mrs. Bradley, the market-woman," filled him with delight, and emboldened him to beg for the remainder of the evening. Seeing there was

no one left to work, Mr. Walters assented, and with great joy of heart the little shoemaker prepared to enjoy his long-anticipated festival.



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He had ornamented his little tree to the best of his ability, by tying to the branches bits of coloured leather which he had cut into stars and other shapes, with some ends of ribbon picked from the odds and ends of binding used in the upper shop. He had also bought a candle or two, which he cut in pieces, and fastened them on by bits of wire. The other articles, together with some matches, he placed in a little basket of his own, and then putting his green branch under his coat, thrusting the shoes he had made for little Ned in his pocket, and carrying those intended for Mrs. Bradley in his hand, he set forth up Broadway, not envying one individual of the splendidly dressed crowd that was thronging the great thoroughfare.

He found Mrs. Bradley in the kitchen, fully occupied in all the mysteries of boiling, baking, and stewing, preliminary to the setting down of a country Christmas supper. A large plate of mince-pies, flanked by smaller ones filled with cakes of various shapes and sizes, stood temptingly conspicuous on the table. Sausages were frying in a pan on the store, and a large coffee-pot sent forth its steam, at once savoury and inviting. "I am glad you have brought the shoes, Bill," said the good woman, continuing to bustle about; "your master is certainly very punctual, and his shoes last as long again as those you buy. I suppose you do not have much Christmas doings at your house—I am so busy just now; a whole tribe of country cousins have come down the river to spend the holidays, and I am bustling to get the supper over. But what have you there under your coat?"

"Well, now, Bill," said she, when William told her, "if you ain't a good boy there is no such thing in the world. Open your basket, and I will give you something for the old woman and your young ones too."

A sausage or two, a pie, some tarts, and sundry other good things, were speedily transferred to William's basket, and with such unsparing hand, that it was filled to overflowing—in that respect resembling the heart of our little shoemaker, which was now filled with delight. He forgot that he was suffering from bodily ailment, that the past had been dark and comfortless, that on the morrow no new cheering was to be expected, but his sole enjoyment would be the remembrance of the transient gleam of sunshine now falling on his gloomy path. He tried to speak his thanks, but she would not listen. "It is nothing," she said; "we have to work hard, but still we have plenty, and why should we not give to others who have so little, and are not able to earn? Now do go along about your business, Bill, and let me take up the supper, for the chicken is stewing to rags;" and, quite as happy herself as she had made the orphan boy, she proceeded to finish her culinary work.

A few minutes' walk brought William to the room occupied by old Mrs. Graham. It was a poor place, in a basement half under ground. Cold and damp, it was altogether unsuitable for an invalid; but she said she liked it, for the other dwellers in the house, mostly washer-women, were decently-behaved people, and as kind to her as their means would allow them to be. Suffering so much from rheumatism that she was

confined to her bed, she was, however, not idle, but propped up and busy knitting, when William entered.

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“Ah, ah! William Raymond, is that you?” said she; “come in and tell us why you have stayed away so long.”

This was soon explained, and the treasures exhibited. The miniature Christmas tree was lighted up, and made to stand, by some process of childish ingenuity, on the table; the shoes which William had made out of Jem Taylor’s “upper leather” were displayed, and, on being tried on, were found to fit; and, last of all, the treasures of the basket were spread forth. It was long since such a meal had been eaten in that lowly room, or since its inmates had been so cheerful; and, dear reader, what was the cost of the whole? Happiness can be bestowed at small expense, and there are none so poor that they cannot give it. True charity, which some call “the first-born of religion,” makes others’ wants their own, and—

“Amid life’s quests

There seems that worthiest one, to do men good.”

The old grandmother looked with great interest on the sports of the children, and joined in the praises Ned bestowed on his *semi*-new shoes. It seemed surprising to the latter that his friend Bill could accomplish a task so wonderful as to make a pair of shoes; and while he danced round the room in perfect delight, he begged his grandmother to put him at once to a shoemaker, so that he, too, might do men’s work.

William stood by the bedside of the aged invalid, and watched her faded lips as they moved in grateful prayer. His whole soul, filled with the secret pleasure of a generous act, was yet more moved by the blessings invoked on him by one so old, and, there was no doubt, truly sincere. It seemed as if nothing could increase his present happiness.

“Where did you get all these nice things?” asked the old woman; “this is an unexpected feast for me.”

William, taking no more credit than truth demanded, explained how he had proceeded, —some, the smallest portion, was purchased, the other was from the kindness of others.

“Say rather the kindness of Providence,” replied the old woman. “The One who provides for the sparrow put it into their hearts, so let us thank him first of all; and for you, my good boy, may the blessing of God, which alone maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, rest upon you for ever.”

There is a world of meaning in that simple petition; and if the prayer of the righteous will from the lowliest hovel climb to heaven’s height and bring a blessing down, he was certain to receive in answer a greater and more precious treasure than the gold of Ophir.



Greatly did our little shoemaker enjoy his childish liberty on this evening, which passed away too rapidly for him. All enjoyment must have an end, and although by no means wearied of it, he was at once ready to go home when Mrs. Graham reminded him of the hour. He ran off at full speed, trusting to be at home before the usual time for shutting up the house, and had proceeded more than half way, when the city clocks striking ten changed his late happy mood to one of apprehension. Mr. Walters, he knew, would not wait a moment, even on Christmas eve, for anybody, and he trembled at the thought of what the morning might bring.



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His fears were not groundless, for he found the front door locked, and he feared to be obliged to pass the night in the open air. Great was his embarrassment; what was he to do? who would aid him? He thought of his friend Thomas Burton, the watchman; he might have a key which would open the dead latch, but he was already on his round, which, although in the same district, was at a distant point.

The moon was shining brightly, making objects appear almost as distinct as by daylight. The crowd had gradually fallen away, until the streets were almost empty; and as he sat in lonely self-communion on the door-step, the increasing cold warned him that he could not remain there until morning. Exercise was better than inaction; he thought he would walk up the street, and meet, perhaps, Thomas, or else some other guardian of the night, who would advise him what to do. But the watchmen seemed all to have left this part of the city, for none appeared. As he was still turning over plan after plan for effecting an entrance, it occurred to him that from a shed in the rear of the building, which could be gained from a narrow street or alley running parallel with it, he could enter by an unshuttered window, provided the sash was not fastened down. He resolved upon trying, and turning into one of the public streets, which would bring him sooner to the place desired than that by which he had come, he walked swiftly onward. He had not gone far before some object glancing brightly in the moonlight attracted his observation.

He took it up, and found it to be a small steel-clasped purse; and from some indications about it, he concluded it had been dropped by a child. The next movement was to open it. Two little gold dollars first glittered before his eyes, then some small silver coin, and last of all a five-dollar gold piece carefully wrapped in paper.

His first feeling was rapture: if what he had done for the Grahams had brought so much happiness, both to them and himself, would it not be increased ten-fold now when owner of such wealth? But then the thought occurred, "It is not mine; somebody must have lost it; somebody maybe that was poor; yes, I will give it back again; to-morrow I will ask Thomas Burton to inquire in the neighbourhood and find out the owner." This seemed the only proper course, and putting the purse in his pocket, he went on the way proposed to himself, and succeeded in gaining entrance to his room without disturbing the family. Notwithstanding the severe exertions and excitement of the day, he found himself unable to sleep; racking pains shot through his limbs, and feverish oppression prevented rest until near morning, when he fell into the unrefreshing stupor, rather than sleep, produced by exhaustion.

From this he was aroused by the usual call to get up and make the fire. He obeyed, although his aching head and prostrated strength scarcely permitted a movement. Serious sickness, long threatening, had at length seized him; and having with the utmost effort dragged himself down to the kitchen, he was barely able to kindle the fire, before he fell fainting on the floor, where Mrs. Walters found him.



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Virago and shrew as she was, she could not look at him as he lay there so death-like, without a feeling of compassion. She had him carried to his room in the attic, where she attended him with perhaps as much sympathy as was compatible with her rude nature. For many days he lay in a dreaming kind of stupor; yet the images which forced themselves on his mind, although vague and fitful, were by no means painful; sickness had overtaken him in the midst of right doing, and the impression left by the high and holy duty in which he had last been engaged remained, to shed an influence stronger than the pressure caused by bodily pain. "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; I will help and uphold thee," were words which floated continually in his mind, although seemingly insensible to all outward objects.

For many days little hope of recovery was given by the physician, called in at the pressing instance of Thomas Burton, who declared he would pay the expense himself; and Mr. Walters, dreading the consequences to his own reputation should the boy die without medical aid, had consented. Skilful treatment, youth, and a good constitution, effected a change which, with good nursing, would have rapidly restored him to health; the latter, however, was entirely wanting, Mrs. Walters believing that if she kept from scolding, and brought him warm drinks, she laid "Bill" under life-long obligation to her for good nursing.

On the day before New-Year's he was altogether better; he could think of previous occurrences, and spoke with Thomas Burton of many things, but not until the evening of that day, when Jem Taylor got up to see him, had he thought of the purse, which was still in the pocket of his vest.

The presence of Jem, as if associated with money, somehow recalled the recollection of his finding the treasure; and he could not, weak and unable to consider consequences as he was, refrain from telling him all about it, and begged him to inquire in the neighbourhood who had lost it.

"You are green as ever, Bill," said Jem, who, nevertheless, was full of his own kind of sympathy for our hero; "you might as well look for a needle in a hay-stack as for the owner of a purse in New York. The only way is to advertise it, and make whoever answers describe it. But if I were in your place I would keep it. Finders are keepers; but if you don't like to spend it all yourself or change it, just give it to me. The one who has lost it may be rich, and by this time has forgotten it. You are now recovering from sickness, and will want oranges and such things; I can get all that you ought to have, and nobody be any the wiser."

Poor William, weak and sick; the tempter was again there—a messenger of Satan ready to overthrow the faith which until now had sustained him. "Finding is not stealing," was the specious whisper; "and many keep what they find."



For a moment only he swerved. He spoke no word; and while Jem watched his pale countenance, as it changed with the varied emotions which were struggling in his heart, he could scarcely understand the feelings which swayed his own. The conflict was severe, but short, as it always is where strict integrity has been the ruling principle, and truth the bulwark. The flush faded from the brow; leaving it deadly pale, as he firmly said,—



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“No, Jem, no; I will not do it. Let me die, but I will not sin against God.”

Exhausted by the effort he had made, he burst into a violent fit of weeping, alarming Jem greatly, who feared for the results. But tears were soothing to the sick boy; for tears are said to make the depth of grief seem less, and prove a balm to the soul. None are wholly evil, and some touch of nature now smote the heart of the reckless journeyman for a moment, as he once more recognised the holy majesty of virtue exhibited in a child. But how many thoughts can flash upon the soul in an instant! In that short space a picture of his own life was placed before his mental vision; and as he contrasted his own course with that of the sufferer before him, he felt, for the moment, willing to change places with him. He waited until the strong burst of feeling had passed over, and his intended victim once more lay still and death-like before him. He dared venture no further, and his eyes were something moist, and his voice assumed a softer tone, as he rose to take leave for the night.

“Billy,” said he, “you are a good boy; I wish I was half as good, but I know I need not try. But I still am of the mind that if I had found that money I would have a right to spend it; but I won’t say any more, for I see you are very weak. Can I do anything for you before I go?”

“You can,” replied William; “ask Thomas—no, he is not at home—tell Mrs. Burton to send him in the morning.”

“I believe the old man is your spiritual adviser,” returned Jem; “but I will do as you wish, and come again in the morning; so good-night.”

Left to himself, the sick boy almost immediately fell asleep, or rather into the heavy stupor produced by exhaustion, and which does not shut out the sense of painful realities which surround. Feverish startings and tossings proved that the soul was not sharing the body’s rest, and dreams, which are said to be of real events the forms and shadows, disturbed him with dark and monstrous images, the fitful phases of which, as they changed, grew yet more fearful and torturing. His mother, pale and anxious as she looked before her death,—purses, money, prisons, and judgment-halls,—all came up in disjointed medley together. Beads of sweat standing upon his brow showed how great was the suffering, which still increased until, with a start, he awoke.

Oh, what a relief it was to find all only a dream! The piece of candle left by Mrs. Walters had long since burned out; but the room was not dark, for the bright moon poured in her soft rays, and through the little window he saw the stars, looking calm, as though they were the eyes of angels keeping watch over the slumbering earth. He knew not the hour, but, dreading to fall asleep again, endeavoured to keep himself awake by recalling those events which his sickness had made him partially forget. The purse, the temptation to keep the money, the resolution to do right, and the dread of being obliged to yield to Jem Taylor’s persuasions, were the agitating subjects that occupied him.



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The city clock chimed twelve, the watchman called out the last hour of the year 1830, and the interruption was grateful and salutary. With that mysterious quickness of which mind only is capable, he was dwelling on some long-closed pages of the past, painfully but profitably associated with the close of the old year and beginning of the new. Their pleasant cottage at M——; the sad event which, on the last New-Year spent there, had impressed his soul too vividly ever to be forgotten; all that his mother had told him of that pious father, of whom he would have remembered but little, but that his lifeless image was so strongly associated with New-Year's day; her impressive admonition on the last anniversary of his death, before her own, when she had entreated him to depart not from the God of his father, but to walk so as to be able to claim the promise vouchsafed to the children of the righteous,—now came up before him, and the memory brought both comfort and strength, admonishing, too, where help, in such weakness as he felt his to be, was only surely to be found.

Our little shoemaker well knew where to apply for such strength as he needed. He knew that the Saviour said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full;" and he prayed that he might be able to resist the power of the tempter; and, in the assurance that the prayer would be heard, his soul grew calm, and he at length sunk into a quiet slumber, from which he did not awake until the morning was somewhat advanced.

It was with a feeling of terror that he beheld Jem Taylor standing by his bed. The temptation to retain the spoils of the purse for his own use was again urged; but, spiritually resolute, this time William did not waver. He was not only altogether determinate in declining to use the money for himself, or share it with Jem, in order to secure his silence, but refused to show him the purse, although he offered to advertise it. Finding him strong in his purpose, Jem left him; and as Thomas Burton came in in the course of the day, he gave the purse to him, to do as he thought best with it. Having done this, his heart felt much lightened.

CHAPTER XII.

RAYS OF HOPE.

From this time our poor hero began to recover; and, although hope is said to be the best physician in the world, and he had nothing now to hope for, it was surprising how rapidly he improved. The return from a sick-bed to the active duties of life, the change from the close and darkened chamber to the pure air of heaven and the glorious sunlight, has a wonderful effect in restoring health. He was soon able to make his appearance in the shop; and, to aid his entire recovery, he was permitted to be much at Thomas Burton's, where he was really happy. It was not long before he was able to go to church and to Sabbath school. Greater than



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ever seemed the privileges; none are truly valued until deprived of them. His heart was full of joyful praise on the day when he first was able to serve the Lord by worshipping in his holy temple. More contented than he had been since leaving his home at M——, he found himself at times almost happy. And why, dear reader, was it so? His outward circumstances were the same; the sun, which shines in equal brightness upon the just and unjust, had received no additional lustre since he had wandered, sad and desponding, unheeding its glory and uncheered by its beams. But now what made the difference? The sunshine within, the sure possession of a heart at peace with God, which warms and cheers with its own light, even when the creature's way is rugged and dark. That made the poor boy's spirit so peaceful.

And, now the poor child, whose path had indeed been through the deep waters, was soon to be lifted up above the lowly and distasteful station, so repugnant at first to his feelings and taste, with which it had been his trial to struggle, and his triumph to conquer; and "according to the days in which he had been afflicted was he now to be made glad." Comparative prosperity was soon to be enjoyed; but would he endure the trial of its deceitful ray as well as he had that of the obscuring cloud? We shall see.

Months passed away with little change. Mrs. Walters resumed her scolding and commanding, while Mr. Walters grumbled and found fault to his heart's content. But Jem Taylor, kinder than ever to our hero, no longer assailed him with temptation to do wrong, for he felt that "Bill's" integrity was not to be moved.

Thomas Burton had found, from a newspaper, the owner of the purse, who was a boy and the son of a distinguished artist living in the suburbs. As he described the low-storeyed house, with its wealth of natural beauty without and tasteful embellishment within, William's heart beat loudly; surely that boy was one of the happy children whom he had seen on the day he peeped into the school-room; and a feeling of disappointment stole over him that he had not been able to deliver the purse himself. This, however, soon subsided, when Thomas told him that the family were all from home, and that he had left it with an old gentleman, who was the only person he saw.

The gloomy days of winter had long passed by, and spring, with its green grass and many-hued blossoms, had cheered the country with its beauty; but now its task was ended, and the glowing summer was at hand. The weary dwellers of the pent-up city were leaving in search of pure air and variety; the dust-covered marble steps in front of many a shut-up house proclaimed it deserted for the season, and business, much to Mr. Walters' dissatisfaction, was very dull. Shoes, however, had to be worn, and as he still continued to furnish the needed article, he was often called upon, although not quite so frequently as in the winter.



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One day he came in with a pair of prunella boots in his hand, which he told Bill to carry to the house of Mr. Stewart, a painter who lived in the outskirts of the city. "They are for Mrs. Stewart, to whom you took a pair of shoes last autumn," said he. "Go straight to Number 200 — Street, and then keep on to the end of the street. The family, it seems, have gone there for fresh air, as if they could not breathe that of the city as well as others."

Never had he received a more welcome commission. He even felt as if he could have embraced his stern master for such an indulgence. The day was so fine, he had longed to get out into the sunshine, and now the prospect of a long walk to the beautiful cottage of Mr. Stewart filled him with the liveliest joy.

He was quite busy putting strings into a pair of boots for a lady, but joy lent him speed, and in a few moments his task was finished, and, stringing up the shoes and putting on his cap, he was soon on the road to — Street.

His steps were light, and so was his heart. He wondered if he should again be able to look into the school-room and see those happy children; and so great was his haste to be at the end of his journey, that the gay pictures in the shop-windows had not power to tempt him to linger a moment. He passed Number 200, where all was closed, and keeping on to the end of the street, soon came in sight of the cottage, which looked far more lovely now, robed in the rich garniture of summer, than when he last had seen it. The branches of the climbing plants, then bare and leafless from the breath of frost, were now hiding the walls with a more beautiful tapestry than that woven by the hand of man; twining their flexile vines together, they mounted even to the roof, or, covered with many-hued flowers, hung loosely down in long reaches, giving out sweet odours as they waved in the summer breeze. It was a fitting abode for one who was a lover of the beautiful, as all painters are supposed to be.

He opened the gate, walked up the gravelled path, and ascended the high steps. He did not, however, at once ring the bell; he thought he would first take a look at the school-room. The windows were closed, as if the room were unoccupied, and a feeling of disappointment crept over his heart, which was again exchanged for a more hopeful mood, when, continuing to survey the other parts of the building, he found the door of a room on the opposite side open, and filled with objects more attractive to his eye than even those he had seen in the school-room.

It was evidently a painter's studio, for it was fitted up with everything requisite for the study of the glorious art. The walls were hung with pictures, several busts and statues were ranged round on brackets, detached models of portions of the human frame cast in plaster were on the table; but the easel, standing near the door with a picture more than half finished, interested him more than all the rest. Several tubes of colour lay on a chair, and a prepared pallet-board, with some brushes beside it, seeming to have been just now in use, gave reason to conjecture that the occupant of the room was not far off.



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William, forgetting that he had not rung the bell, wondered why no one came to the door, and half attracted by the view of a painter's room, and half urged by the wish to find some one to whom he could deliver his message, he cleared the steps at a bound, and stood before the open door. He looked within; no one was there; and as he stood he could plainly see the picture, which was a Scripture subject. Was it wrong that he ventured, the shoemaker's boy with a painter's heart, step by step quite within the precincts of that chamber? So lost in pleasant observation was he, so perfectly guileless, he never once thought that, however innocent, his motive for intruding might be mistaken. He stood rapt and immovable before the picture, forgetful of everything but his present enjoyment, so that he did not hear the opening of a door behind him, nor that a footstep was approaching.

It was Mr. Stewart himself, who, having left his studio but a few minutes before, was now returning to his work; and as his eyes fell upon this unexpected guest, he at first was disposed to believe him some young vagabond who had come in to pilfer. But the statue-like attitude of the boy, the fixed look with which he surveyed the picture, and the gaiter boots which dangled by their connecting string from his arm, his whole appearance making him a fit subject for study, soon banished suspicion, and with all the sympathies of a most benevolent nature aroused, he stood silent for a moment, for he hesitated to disturb so visible an enjoyment.

But as there was no knowing how long the survey might last, he at length advanced, and touching our little shoemaker on the shoulder, said, in a playful tone, "Why, boy, you must love pictures as well as does a painter; have you not been dreaming long enough? Tell me, now, what brought you here?"

Fully aroused, William turned to answer and apologize; but when he looked into the face of the gentleman before him the words died on his lips. Mr. Stewart himself was not without astonishment, as, when William pulled off his cap, he recognised the features of the orphan boy in whose grief he had long ago sympathized so deeply, and he once more spoke.

"I believe we have seen each other before," said he; "are you not the boy I met in the grave-yard at M——?"

"Yes, sir," answered William; "and I have got the little picture which you coloured for me still."

"You are, then, really the same boy?" said Mr. Stewart; "but tell me, how did you get here? and what are you doing in this room?"

"Oh, sir," he replied, as he blushed deeply, "please forgive me; my master sent me with the shoes, and when I saw the door open and the picture, I could not help it. Indeed I did not mean any harm."



“I believe you,” rejoined Mr. Stewart; “and now tell me how you got to New York, and what you are doing.”

Our little shoemaker did so with his usual openness and candour; and, accustomed never to swerve from, the straightforward and direct line of truth, the stamp of that virtue was so apparent in all he said, that the kindly sympathies of Mr. Stewart were once more awakened in his behalf. He was, however, too prudent to excite any hope which he might afterward be obliged to crush; so telling our hero where to go in order to deliver his errand, he took up his pallet and began to paint.



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“Stop one minute,” he called, as William was leaving the room. “Have you any friends in the city? and where do you live?”

William replied that he had no real friends but old Thomas Burton the watchman, and his wife. Mrs. Bradley, the market-woman, had been very kind to him too, but it was the old watchman who took him to church, and when he was troubled about the purse, had taken it to the right owner. The sounds of swift footsteps were now heard, and a bright-looking boy of fourteen came bustling in at the door. “Father,” he said, “grandfather wants me to take a drive with him; can I go?”

“Stay a moment first, George,” answered Mr. Stewart. “I believe you lost your purse on Christmas eve, at least I heard you lamenting something of the kind. You recovered it, and you said you wished to reward the finder; did you ever do so?”

“No, father,” replied George, “I did not. An old watchman who brought it told grandfather that a shoemaker’s boy had found it, but was then so ill that it was most likely he would never recover, and so—”

“And so, George, you never inquired whether he lived or died,” said Mr. Stewart. “That is the true spirit of the world, to care only for self. George, I believe this is the boy who found it; thank him, at least, if you do not reward him.”

“I do not want any reward for giving to another that which was his own,” said the little shoemaker; “but if Master George chooses, he can give something to little Ned Graham, who needs it very much.”

“And who is little Ned Graham?” inquired Mr. Stewart, smiling.

Our hero explained in as few words as possible; at the close of which narration Mr. Stewart, making no remark, turned once more to his easel, and George conducted the little shoemaker to the room where he was to leave the shoes. The old lady was pleased, and William, having received the money for them, ran swiftly homeward, never once dreaming of the good that was in store for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DAWN OF BETTER DAYS.

Mr. Stewart, kind and benevolent as he was, never suffered himself to be carried away by any impulse, however generous it might be. On the day which we have named as the second time of meeting with our hero, when he resumed his pallet-board and began to work on his picture, he did so with an attention which seemed to rest only on the creation before him, as if he were forgetful of all lower subjects, or that there was such a being as a shoemaker’s boy in the world.



But the beautiful images that rose from under his hand did not shut out the figure of the orphan boy as he had twice seen him,—once beside the grave of his parents, and again in his study. He was not so absorbed by the love of his art that there was no room in his mind for the reception of those higher subjects which relate to man's ultimate destiny. He felt that every one is sent into the



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world for a great purpose,—that no man must live wholly for himself, but, partaking of the spirit of the Saviour, labour for the good of others. The counsel given long before to the shoemaker's boy, when he met him in the church-yard at M——, has already proved that he was one who had admitted the truth into his heart, and the root it had taken there had only been deepened by the passage of time. And now, as he sat bringing form after form into beauty from the lifeless canvas, his mind was no less busy than his hand. How could he serve the interests of true religion by interesting himself in the fortunes of the orphan boy? And little Ned Graham,—he, too, was a desolate child. Would William always remain firm in his integrity, when, growing to manhood and left unrestrained, he should have full liberty to do as he pleased? He had acknowledged how easy it was to become used to sin; that, but for the influence exerted by the pious old watchman, he might at this time have been far advanced in the road to ruin. Thomas Burton was old; many things might occur to separate William from that Christian companionship, and then, could he continue pure in such an atmosphere as he should be exposed to? And little Ned, was he not rapidly learning the manners and habits of a street boy? Such were his thoughts; and with that charity which is expansive in its exercise, and never faileth in the heart in which it hath taken root, but always delights in doing good, he resolved to be the helper of these two orphan boys. But, with the prudence which ought ever to characterize every Christian effort, he began his task with caution, lest the endeavour to do good might only be productive of harm.

Little Ned and his good old grandmother were at once cared for; a commodious dwelling was provided, a physician called in, and the suffering invalid restored to comfortable health. Mrs. Stewart gave her suitable employment; and honest Mrs. Bradley, now that she was within a more convenient distance, did also a Christian's part, ministering to her constantly in some good deed. Ned was no longer suffered to run in the streets gathering chips, or asking pennies from strangers, but placed at school, where, we are happy to say, he made such progress as to give great satisfaction to his generous guardian.

It was not quite so easy for the Stewarts to dispose of William; and many were the consultations between Professor Stewart and his son as to how he could best be served. Believing that Mr. Walters was a most unsuitable person to have the rule of a boy like William, and pitying the ignorance in which he was being brought up, he yet hesitated whether it was his duty to interfere, as he had been given into Walters' care by his mother. He feared, too, that in exciting wishes toward other pursuits, he might create a new disgust toward the humble but respectable trade, the "gentle craft," as shoemaking has been termed, and which has furnished so many remarkable men; for our readers are not ignorant that many distinguished as patriots, men of letters, and useful members of society, have come from the shoemaker's bench.



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While William, therefore, continued more contentedly than ever to hammer the soles of the new shoes and patch up the old, Mr. Stewart was taking silent but effective measures for bettering his condition. He first went to the old watchman, from whom he heard much in behalf of our hero, and which served to strengthen him in his benevolent project. He found out from the old man, too, that Mr. Walters might be induced to give up the boy; the physician who had attended him in his severe sickness had declared the stooping posture and confinement of the shop very injurious to him,—that his constitution was by no means strong, and that he would never be of robust health. Thomas, delighted that our hero had found a friend like Mr. Stewart, spoke fully on the merits of his character, and the discomforts of his situation, and the great danger he was in from evil companionship. This last feature of the case had more weight with Mr. Stewart than all the rest. He knew that perseverance under untoward difficulties often accomplished great things in bringing out strong points of character; that no position in life, however humble, is an actual bar to intellectual and moral improvement; and that where there is a *will*, there is always a *way*. And he knew, too, that the “eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, that his ears are open to their cry, and that he is able to succour them, being tempted;” and, therefore, he pondered the matter well in his own heart, and consulted often with his father on the expediency of removing William from the guardianship of Mr. Walters.

A conversation with that worthy at last decided the matter. “Bill will never make much of a shoemaker,” said he; “the doctor is of opinion that stooping will bring on consumption, and I see he gets very pale if he works steadily. He’ll never be of much use to me, now that he is getting too old to be an errand boy; and as just at this time I have a chance of getting a stouter boy for a ‘prentice,’ you can make what you please of him, if you pay me something for his time.”

The bargain was soon concluded; and William, who, kept in happy ignorance of what was going forward, had suffered no anxiety, was amazed beyond the power of language to describe when he was told that he must give up shoemaking for the present, and be the protege of Mr. Stewart, and take time to recruit his health.

Mr. Stewart said not a word about his becoming a painter; he knew too well how often taste is mistaken for genius, and how many fail of reaching the high standard proposed by themselves at first setting out. Nor, much interested as he was, that interest increasing every day, in our hero, did he at once take him into his own family, as, if we were writing a romance, we might imagine him to have done; no, he resolved to try and test his capacities for some time before he would decide for what post to fit him.



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He boarded him with old Mrs. Graham, and sent him to school, where the orphan boy soon became a favourite, maintaining the same pious humility which marked the little shoemaker. Great was the satisfaction of Mr. Stewart as he looked in on the little circle which clustered round old Mrs. Graham's now cheerful hearth. How much is promised to him who giveth only a cup of cold water in the spirit of Him who went about doing good! And the benevolent painter felt the reward of his good deed fall, like the dew from heaven, refreshingly on his own spirit. True, his proteges were very lowly; but God is no respecter of persons, and in radiating this light around the humble dwelling from which sincere petitions for blessings upon him were daily invoked, Mr. Stewart proved himself possessed of the true spirit of Christ.

As time rolled on, he became more satisfied that he had done a good work in removing William from Mr. Walters. He was often invited to join the family circle; and as he remained not only unspoiled, but showed that the intercourse was profitable for the growth of his true character, a closer intimacy at last took place between the little shoemaker and George Stewart, which merged into a friendship that lasted through life. George possessed much of his father's talent, but weak health prevented his making any great advance in the art, and his early death was the first cloud which overshadowed the brightness of the family circle.

While the prospects of our little shoemaker were thus improved, he was by no means so dazzled by his comparative prosperity as to forget his old friends. Thomas Burton and his good old wife were visited as regularly and loved as well as ever; and, too happy and full of gratitude to Heaven for the changed circumstances so kindly vouchsafed, he sometimes went to see his old master; and, far from hating the lowly trade as he had once done, he would on such occasions occupy his old bench and sew a shoe. Jem Taylor was truly glad at witnessing his improved appearance, and, finding that prosperity, instead of puffing up his vanity, had only made him more humble, began really to believe that virtue is its own reward. May we not hope, since none are beyond the reach of mercy, and since, although the crimes of the sinner may be as scarlet, we are told that, washed in the blood of the atoning sacrifice, they can all be cleansed away, that the influence shed by William's resolution to suffer wrong rather than sin, brought him at last to recognise the beauty of holiness, and induced him to seek for pardon where it may be found?

But William's old friends in M——, were they forgotten? No; he had written constantly to George Herman, telling of his troubles, and now he wrote to assure him how happy he was. Would our readers like to know the contents of his letter. We can give them an extract from it. Here it is:—

Dear George,



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I know you will be glad to hear how happy I am, and I know you will wonder when I tell you of all that has happened. You know I told you of a gentleman whom I met in the grave-yard the day before I left M——, and who coloured the little picture I had drawn. Well, he is a great painter, and as my health was bad, he persuaded Mr. Walters to give me up to him, for a while at least, or until I get strong. He gives me drawing lessons with his own son, who is a very good boy, and very kind to me; but he does not encourage my giving up my trade altogether, for he says that many shoemakers have become great men, and that it is the trade which, of all others, has produced most remarkable men. He told us about Crispin, who lived long ago, and about Holcroft, and Gifford, and Sherman, and John Pounds—the last named being only a cobbler, and yet he spent most of his life in teaching the poor. He says that I must draw every day, and by the time the hot weather is over, he will be able to tell whether or not I have any real talent, and whether it will be worth while to continue my drawing lessons. Ah, George, if he says I will make a painter, then I shall give up shoemaking; but if the contrary, I will “*stick to my last,*” and continue a shoemaker contentedly so the end of my life, because I shall believe it my proper place. I go to school now, and for the present board with old Mrs. Graham, and feel more like being at home than I have done since I left M——. I would like so to see you and your good father; and as soon as I have money enough of my own, I will go to M—— and see you all. Good-bye, dear George, and do not forget your friend,

William

CHAPTER XIV.

WILLIAM'S SUCCESS.

About ten years after the date of William Raymond's letter to George Herman, a young man with a knapsack on his back and a stout staff in his hand, was seen approaching the village of M——, on that side on which lay the church-yard we have already described as the resting-place of the little shoemaker's parents. The young man was robust, and seemingly a mechanic, for his hands were rough, as though accustomed to labour, and his face gave plain evidence of acquaintance with the summer sun. He could not have been altogether a stranger to the place, for after he passed the few houses in the suburbs of the village, he turned towards the church-yard, the gate of which stood open, and entered the “silent city” where the dead were reposing.

The day was bright and clear, and, being the early part of June, the trees and flowers were in their freshest and fairest bloom; but they attracted no particular attention from the stranger. The grave-yard lay upon a hill which overlooked the town, and the traveller, passing by one flower-adorned grave after another, walked hastily on until he reached the highest point, from whence he looked down earnestly, as if



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his eyes sought to single out some particular object among the wilderness of roofs. At first his countenance was sad, but at last the melancholy look changed to an expression of cheerful surprise, for his eye had found what it was seeking among those once familiar objects. He knew the old house, for memory keeps the record of early days most faithfully, although its appearance was much changed. The old black roof of oak shingles was now replaced by a new one of slate; and instead of the dull yellow colour which had for many years distinguished it, it was now painted and modernized, to harmonize with the rest. He did not linger long to conjecture the cause of the change, but with hasty steps prepared to ascertain in person the reason. As he retraced the path trodden only a moment before, he bestowed rather more attention on the surrounding objects; and as his eye glanced over the graves once so familiar to it, he saw that change had been busy there too.

The slate roof had not less surprised him than what he now saw: the spot where two lowly graves, adorned only by flowers, had appeared for years without any monumental record, was now adorned with all that can be rendered by the living to the dead. A very high and handsome iron railing, on which climbing plants were trained, enclosed the little mounds, and a simple white marble pillar bore the names of George and Margaret Raymond. The flowers planted before William had left M—— had long ago vanished, and the spot, left to neglect, was overgrown with weeds; but now some kind hand had rescued it from wildness and planted it anew with rare flowers, which were beginning now to bloom in place of those dead. The sexton's wife with her watering-pot now came near. Many graves adorned in a similar way required the care of some one, and she received a regular salary for her attention to the flowers. The young man waited until she came quite close to where he stood, and then inquired, "Who has had these graves so carefully done up?"

"Who do you think would do so but the son of the good couple that are buried here?" answered the sexton's wife. "Little Bill Raymond, that went to New York to be a shoemaker, came back last spring and had this all done. Folks say he is well to do in the world, and better than all, he is as good a man as his father was."

A deep blush passing over the young man's face rendered its sun-burned hue yet deeper, but his eyes lightened with a joyful expression as he inquired with some anxiety, "Is he still in M——?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the woman; "he is staying with our old baker, Nicholas Herman; there, that is the house with the slate roof. Old Nicholas was very kind to his mother in her sickness and poverty, and when she died he took the poor child home. He used always to say if he lived to be a man he would remember him for it; and he has done so. There was a dreadful fire in the village last year, and old Nicholas Herman's house was nearly burned down.

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The roof was clear gone, but that was little in comparison to the damage done inside. Besides this, the old man had met with many losses; his son was away nobody knew where, and the baker lost heart, so that he could not get up spirit enough to set things to rights; and when he did he could not sell his bread as he used to, for other bakers had set up, and people always like to run to new places. Will Raymond, it seems, is a painter; and when he came here last summer, and found the old man in such trouble, he set to and painted him such a sign that there ain't the like of it far nor near. Why, the people stand in front of the house to admire it; and folks sometimes say that signs are of no use, but I know the sign brought the customers back. About two weeks ago the young painter returned, for old Nicholas expects his son George, who went west four or five years ago, and he and Bill Raymond were great friends, and he came on purpose to meet him. George knew nothing of his father's troubles, and old Nicholas said he could not do him any good, and it was of no use to make him unhappy. But won't he be happy when he comes home and finds all right?"

The sun-burned youth had listened attentively, not interrupting the speaker by word or motion; but tears, in spite of his efforts to restrain them, forced themselves from his eyes. Not daring to trust his voice, he shook hands with his kind informant, and leaving the place of graves, once more took the path leading toward the open gate at the foot of the hill. He had nearly reached it when, turning from the dusty street road, a young man entered the enclosure, and advanced up the narrow path until he came quite close to the traveller. They knew each other at once.

"William!"—"George!" issued at one moment from the lips of each; and with an embrace of sincere affection, the friendship of their boyish days was renewed, and now, in their budding manhood, to be more closely cemented.

William was indeed an artist. Mr. Stewart had found him possessed of genuine talent, and it was the delight of his generous heart to aid in the unfolding of his genius by every means within his power. Through his instruction, as well as recommendation, William had received better prices for his early efforts than are usually paid to young artists; but the first sum of any importance that he could call his own was applied to ornament the graves where his parents lay.

George Herman's return was a source of great comfort to his father, although he could not assist him in his business. He had chosen the carpenter's trade as a means of livelihood, and from at first working diligently with his own hands, he rose at length to the rank of an architect, and became a wealthy man.

One year after this William went to Italy with George Stewart, whose health required change of climate. There, in that beautiful country, so rich in treasures of art, he had full opportunity for improvement; and, indeed, he used his time to great purpose. It was,



however, some drawback to his happiness that his young friend did not materially benefit by his sojourn in that land of genial sunshine. He rallied at first; but at the end of two years they were obliged to return, and George only reached his native land to breathe his last.

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William's attention to his sick friend, and the ample testimony borne by that dying friend to his merits, rivetted the chain of affection, ever borne him by Mr. Stewart, more closely; and most truly did that good man often declare, that the "bread" he had "cast upon the waters" had been gathered, "after many days," most abundantly.

Dear reader, would you wish to know what has become of the "Little Shoemaker?" Ours is, substantially, a true story; and now that we have brought him to blooming manhood, and the attainment of his early wishes, we will follow him through his successful career. He is still living, and industrious, careful, and pious. He has never relaxed that watchfulness enjoined by the blessed Saviour, and alike so necessary to the consistent walk of a professor of religion and the perfection of the Christian character. Finding it harder to endure the glare of great prosperity than to dwell within the shadow of the cloud of poverty and sore affliction, he has ever cherished the same talisman which brought him through the deep waters. Girded with the armour of truth, praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, he has preserved a consistent course, maintaining his integrity in all things, and extending a helping hand to all who need his aid. His motto is still, "Watch that you may pray, and pray that you may be safe;" and practising upon this teaching, he feels that dependence upon God alone is mighty to conquer.

And now, dear reader, has not his history fully proved, and his experience shown, that they that trust in the Lord "shall not be ashamed in the evil time;" for "the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble?" He who raised the shepherd boy to the throne of Israel, and fed his faithful servant Elijah by the brook Cherith, will never leave nor forsake those who trust in him, and serve him truly. He is the hearer of prayer, and will feed and care for all that call upon him aright. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "Watch and pray," is the injunction of our blessed Lord to all who would be his followers. To each one he has given his proper work; and those who would be approved as true believers must honour the Lord in whatever duty they are called to perform; and this can only be done through assisting grace, which is found sufficient for all. Wait, then, dear young reader, upon God; commit all thy ways to him, and thou shalt delight in the abundance of peace.

"In patience ever wait and weep,
Though mercy long delay;
Firm hold upon His footstool keep,
And *trust* him, though he slay.

In these thy words, Thy will be done;
So strengthen'd by his might,
Thou, by his Spirit, through his Son,
Shalt pray, and pray aright."