# Try and Trust

Horatio Alger

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TRY AND TRUST
Or, Abner Holden's Bound Boy

TO MY YOUNG FRIEND,
A. FLORIAN HENRIQUES
(BOISIE),
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

# CHAPTER I. AROUND THE BREAKFAST TABLE

"Well, wife," said Mr. Benjamin Stanton, as he sat down to a late breakfast, "I had a letter from Ohio yesterday."

"From Ohio? Who should write you from Ohio? Anyone I know?"

"My sister, Margaret, you remember, moved out there with her husband ten years ago."

"Oh, it's from her, is it?" said Mrs. Stanton, indifferently.

"No," said her husband with momentary gravity. "It's from a Dr. Kent, who attended her in her last illness. Margaret is dead!"

"Dear me!" returned Mrs. Stanton, uncomfortably; "and I am just out of mourning for my aunt. Do you think it will be necessary for us to go into mourning for your sister?"

"No, I think not," said her husband. "Margaret has lived away from us so long, and people won't know that we have had a death in the family unless we mention it."

"Was that all the letter said—about the death, I mean?"

"Why, no," said Mr. Stanton, with a little frown. "It seems Margaret left a child—a boy of fourteen; and, as she left no property, the doctor suggests that I should send for the boy and assume the care of him."

"Upon my word!" said Mrs. Stanton; "you will find yourself in business if you undertake to provide for all the beggars' brats that apply to you for assistance."

"You must remember that you are speaking of my sister's child," said Mr. Stanton, who, cold and selfish and worldly as he was, had some touch of decency about him, and did not relish the term "beggars' brats," as applied to one so nearly related to him.

"Well, call him what you like," said his wife; "only don't be so foolish as to go spending your money on him when our children need all we have. There's Maria needs a new dress immediately. She says all the girls at Signor Madalini's dancing academy dress elegantly, and she's positively ashamed to appear in any of her present dresses."

"How much will it cost?" asked Mr. Stanton, opening his pocketbook.

"You may hand me seventy−five dollars. I think I can make that do."

Without a word of remonstrance, the money was placed in her hand.

"I want some money, too," said Tom Stanton, who had just disposed of a very hearty meal.

"What do you want it for, Tom?"

"Oh, some of the fellows are getting up a club. It's going to be a select affair, and of course each of us has got to contribute some money. You see, we are going to hire a room, furnish it nicely with a carpet, black walnut furniture, and so on, and that'll cost something."

"Whose idea is it?"

"Well, Sam Paget was the first boy that mentioned it."

"Whose son is he?"

"His father belongs to the firm of Paget, Norwood Co. He's awful rich."

"Yes, it is one of our first families," said Mr. Stanton, with satisfaction. "Is he a friend of yours, Tom?"

"Oh, yes, we are quit intimate."

"That's right!" said his father, approvingly. "I am glad you choose your friends so well. That's one of the principal reasons I have for sending you to an expensive school, to get you well launched into good society."

"Yes, father, I understand," said Tom. "You won't find me associating with common boys. I hold my head a little too high for that, I can tell you."

"That's right, my boy," said Mr. Stanton, with satisfaction. "And now how much money do you want for this club of yours?"

"Well," said Tom, hesitatingly, "thirty or forty dollars."

"Isn't that considerable?" said his father, surprised at the amount.

"Well, you see, father, I want to contribute as much as any of the boys. It would seem mean if I didn't. There's only a few of us to stand the expense, and we don't want to let in any out of our own set."

"That's true," said Mr. Stanton; "I approve of that. It's all very well to talk about democracy, but I believe in those of the higher orders keeping by themselves."

"Then you'll give the money, father?" said Tom, eagerly.

"Yes, Tom, there's forty dollars. It's more than I ought to spare, but I am determined you shall stand as good a chance as any of your school− fellows. They shan't be able to say that your father stints you in anything that your position requires."

"Thank you, father," said Tom, pocketing the two twenty−dollar bills with great satisfaction.

The fact was that Tom's assessment amounted to only twenty dollars, but he thought it would be a good excuse for getting more out of his father. As to the extra money, Tom felt confident that he could find uses enough for it. He had latterly, though but fourteen years of age, contracted the habit of smoking cigars; a habit which he found rather expensive, especially as he felt bound occasionally to treat his companions. Then he liked, now and then, to drop in and get an ice−cream or some confectionery, and these little expenses counted up.

Mr. Stanton was a vain, worldly man. He was anxious to obtain an entrance into the best society. For this reason, he made it a point to send his children to the most expensive schools; trusting to their forming fashionable acquaintances, through whom his whole family might obtain recognition into those select circles for which he cherished a most undemocratic respect. For this reason it was that, though not naturally liberal, he had opened his purse willingly at the demands of Mrs. Stanton and Tom.

"Well," said Mrs. Stanton, after Tom's little financial affair had been adjusted, "what are you going to write to this doctor? Of course you won't think of sending for your nephew?"

"By no means. He is much better off where he is. I shall write Dr. Kent that he is old enough to earn his own living, and I shall recommend that he be bound out to some farmer or mechanic in the neighborhood. It is an imposition to expect, because I am tolerably well off, that it is my duty to support other people's children. My own are entitled to all I can do for them."

"That's so, father," said Tom, who was ready enough to give his consent to any proposition of a selfish nature. "Charity begins at home."

With Tom, by the way, it not only began at home, but it ended there, and the same may be said of his father. From time to time Mr. Stanton's name was found in the list of donors to some charitable object, provided his benevolence was likely to obtain sufficient publicity, Mr. Stanton did not believe in giving in secret. What was the use of giving away money unless you could get credit for it? That was the principle upon which he always acted.

"I suppose," continued Tom, "this country cousin of mine wears cowhide boots and overalls, and has got rough, red hands like a common laborer. I wonder what Sam Paget would say if I should introduce such a fellow to him as my cousin. I rather guess he would not want to be quite so intimate with me as he is now."

If anything had been needed, this consideration would have been sufficient to deter Mr. Stanton from sending for his nephew. He could not permit the social standing of his family to be compromised by the presence of a poor relation from the country, rough and unpolished as he doubtless was.

Maria, too, who had been for some time silent, here contributed to strengthen the effect of Tom's words.

"Yes," said she, "and Laura Brooks, my most intimate friend, who is shocked at anything vulgar or countrified—I wouldn't have her know that I have such a cousin—oh, not for the world!"

"There will be no occasion for it," said her father, decidedly. "I shall write at once to this Dr. Kent, explaining to him my views and wishes, and how impossible it is for me to do as he so inconsiderately suggests."

"It's the wisest thing you can do, Mr. Stanton," said his wife, who was to the full as selfish as her husband.

"What is his name, father?" asked Maria.

"Whose name?"

"The boy's."

"Herbert Mason."

"Herbert? I thought it might be Jonathan, or Zeke, or some such name. Herbert isn't at all countrified."

"No," said Tom, slyly; "of course not. We all know why you like that name."

"Oh, you're mighty wise, Mr. Tom!" retorted his sister.

"It's because you like Herbert Dartmouth; but it isn't any use. He's in love with Lizzie Graves."

"You seem to know all about it," said Maria, with vexation; for Tom was not far from right in speaking of her preference for Herbert Dartmouth.

"Of course I do," said Tom; "I ought to, for he told me so himself."

"I don't believe it!" said Maria, who looked ready to cry.

"Well, you needn't; but it's so."

"Be quiet, children," said Mrs. Stanton. "Thomas, you mustn't plague your sister."

"Don't take it so hard, Maria," said Tom, in rather an aggravating tone. "There's other boys you could get. I guess you could get Jim Gorham for a beau, if you tried hard enough."

"I wouldn't have him," said Maria. "His face is all over freckles."

"Enough of this quarreling, children," said Mrs. Stanton. "I hope," she continued, addressing her husband, "you won't fail to write at once. They might be sending on the boy, and then we should be in a pretty predicament."

"I will write at once. I don't know but I ought to inclose some money."

"I don't see why you need to."

"Perhaps I had better, as this is the last I intend to do for him."

"At any rate, it won't be necessary to send much," said Mrs. Stanton.

"How much?"

"Five dollars will do, I should think. Because he happens to be your nephew, there is no good reason why he should be thrown upon you for support."

"Perhaps it will be best to send ten dollars," said Mr. Stanton. "People are unreasonable, you know, and they might charge me with meanness, if I sent less."

"Then make it ten. It's only for once. I hope that will be the last we shall hear of him."

The room in which this conversation took place was a handsomely furnished breakfast room, all the appointments of which spoke not only of comfort, but of luxury. Mr. Stanton had been made rich by a series of lucky speculations, and he was at present carrying on a large wholesale store downtown. He had commenced with small means twenty years before, and for some years had advanced slowly, until the tide of fortune set in and made him rich. His present handsome residence he had only occupied three years, having moved to it from one of much smaller pretensions on Bleecker Street. Tom and Maria were forbidden to speak of their former home to their present fashionable acquaintances, and this prohibition they were likely to observe, having inherited to the full the worldly spirit which actuated their parents. It will be seen that Herbert Mason was little likely to be benefited by having such prosperous relations.

## CHAPTER II. INTRODUCING THE HERO

If my young readers do not find the town of Waverley on the map of Ohio, they may conclude that it was too small to attract the notice of the map−makers. The village is small, consisting of about a dozen houses, a church, a schoolhouse, and, as a matter of course, one of that well− known class of stores in which everything required for the family is sold, from a dress−pattern to a pound of sugar. Outside of the village there are farmhouses, surrounded by broad acres, which keep them at respectable distances from each other, like the feudal castles of the Middle Ages. The land is good, and the farmers are thrifty and well−to− do; but probably the whole town contains less than a thousand inhabitants.

In one of the houses, near the church, lived Dr. Kent, whose letter has already been referred to. He was a skillful physician, and a very worthy man, who would have been very glad to be benevolent if his limited practice had supplied him with the requisite means. But chance had directed him to a healthy and sparsely−settled neighborhood, where he was able only to earn a respectable livelihood, and indeed found himself compelled to economize at times where he would have liked to indulge himself in expense.

When Mrs. Mason died it was found that the sale of her furniture barely realized enough to defray the expenses of her funeral. Herbert, her only son, was left wholly unprovided for. Dr. Kent, knowing that he had a rich uncle in New York, undertook to communicate to him the position in which his nephew had been left, never doubting that he would cheerfully extend a helping hand to him. Meanwhile he invited Herbert to come to his house and make it his home till his uncle should send for him.

Herbert was a handsome, well−grown boy of fourteen, and a general favorite in the village. While his mother lived he had done all he could to lighten her tasks, and he grieved deeply for her loss now that she was gone. His father had ten years before failed in business in the city of New York, and, in a fit of depression, had emigrated to this obscure country village, where he had invested the few hundred dollars remaining to him in a farm, from which he was able to draw a scanty income. Being a man of liberal education, he had personally superintended the education of his son till his death, two years before, so that Herbert's attainments were considerably in advance of those of other boys of his age in the neighborhood. He knew something of Latin and French, which made him looked upon as quite a model of learning by his playmates. After his father's death he had continued the daily study of the languages, so that he was able to read ordinary French with nearly as much ease as if it were English. Though studious, he was not a bookworm, but was distinguished in athletic sports popular with boys of his age.

Enough has been said of our hero by way of introduction. Herbert's faults and virtues will appear as the record of his adventures is continued. It may be hinted only that, while he was frank, manly, and generous in his disposition, he was proud and high−spirited also, and perhaps these qualities were sometimes carried to excess. He would not allow himself to be imposed upon if he could help it. Being strong for his age, he was always able to maintain his rights, but never abused his strength by making it the instrument of tyrannizing over weaker boys.

Of course Herbert felt somewhat anxious as to his future prospects. He knew that the doctor had written to his Uncle Benjamin about him, and he hoped that he might be sent for to New York, having a great curiosity to see the city, of which he had heard so much.

"Have you heard from my uncle, Dr. Kent?" he inquired, a few days after the scene recorded in our first chapter.

His question was prompted by seeing the doctor coming into the yard with an open letter in his hand.

"Yes," said Dr. Kent, with troubled expression and perplexed took.

"What does Uncle Benjamin say?" asked our young hero, eagerly.

"Nothing very encouraging, Herbert, I am sorry to say," returned the doctor. "However, here is the letter; you may read it for yourself."

Herbert received the letter from the doctor's hands and read it through with feelings of mortification and anger.

Here it is:

"DEAR SIR: I have to acknowledge yours of the 10th inst. I regret to hear of my sister's decease. I regret, also, to hear that her son, Herbert, is left without a provision for his support. My brother−in−law I cannot but

consider culpable in neglecting to lay up something during his life upon which his widow and son might depend. I suspect that he must have lived with inconsiderate extravagance.

"As for myself, I have a family of my own to provide for, and the expense of living in a city like this is very great. In justice to them, I do not feel that it would be right for me to incur extra expense. You tell me that he is now fourteen and a stout boy. He is able, I should think, to earn his own living. I should recommend that he be bound out to a farmer or mechanic. To defray any little expenses that may arise, I enclose ten dollars, which I hope he may find serviceable. Yours etc.,

"BENJAMIN STANTON."

This cold and selfish letter Herbert read with rising color, and a feeling of bitterness found a place in his young heart, which was quite foreign to him.

"Well, Herbert, what do you think of it?" asked the doctor.

"I think," said Herbert, hotly, "that I don't want to have anything to do with an uncle who could write such a letter as that."

"He doesn't seem to write with much feeling." acknowledged the doctor.

"Feeling!" repeated Herbert; "he writes as if I were a beggar, and asked charity. Where is the money he inclosed, Dr. Kent?"

"I have it here in my vest pocket. I was afraid it would slip out of the letter, and so took care of it."

"Will you let me send it back to my uncle?" asked Herbert.

"Send it back?"

"Yes, Dr. Kent; I don't want any of his charity, and I'll tell him so."

"I am afraid, Herbert, that you are giving way to your pride."

"But isn't it a proper pride, doctor?"

"I hardly know what to say, Herbert. You must remember, however, that, as you are left quite unprovided for, even this small sum may be of use to you."

"It isn't the smallness of the sum that I mind," said Herbert. "If Uncle Benjamin had written a kind letter, or showed the least feeling in it for me, or for—for mother [his voice faltered a moment], I would have accepted it thankfully. But I couldn't accept money thrown at me in that way. He didn't want to give it to me, I am sure, and wouldn't if he hadn't felt obliged to."

Dr. Kent paced the room thoughtfully. He respected Herbert's feelings, but he saw that it was not wise for him to indulge them. He was in a dependent situation, and it was to be feared that he would have much to suffer in time to come from the coldness and selfishness of the world.

"I will tell you what to do, Herbert," he said, after a while. "You can accept this money as a loan, and repay it when you are able."

"With interest?"

"Yes, with interest, if you prefer it."

"I shall be willing to accept it on those terms," said Herbert; "but I want my uncle to understand it."

"You may write to your uncle to that effect, if you like."

"Very well, Dr. Kent. Then I will write to him at once."

"You will find some paper in my desk, Herbert. I suppose you will not object to my seeing your letter."

"No, doctor, I intended to show it to you. You won't expect me to show much gratitude, I hope?"

"I won't insist upon it, Herbert," said the doctor, smiling.

Herbert in about half an hour submitted the following note to the doctor's inspection. It had cost him considerable thought to determine how to express himself, but he succeeded at last to his tolerable satisfaction.

"UNCLE BENJAMIN [so the letter commenced]: Dr. Kent has just shown me your reply to his letter about me. You seem to think I wish you to support me, which is not the case. All I should have asked was your influence to help me in obtaining a situation in the city, where I might support myself. I am willing to work, and shall probably find some opportunity here. The ten dollars, which you inclose, I will accept AS A LOAN, and will repay you as soon as I am able, WITH INTEREST. HERBERT MASON."

"Will that do?" asked Herbert.

Dr. Kent smiled.

"You were careful not to express any gratitude, Herbert," he said.

"Because I don't feel any," returned Herbert, promptly. "I feel grateful to you, Dr. Kent, for your great kindness. I wish I could pay you for that. I shall never forget how you attended my mother in her sickness, when there was small prospect of your being paid."

"My dear boy," said the doctor, resting his hand affectionately on Herbert's shoulder, "I have been able to do but very little. I wish I could do more. If you wish to repay me, you can do it a hundred times over by growing up a good and honorable man; one upon whom your mother in heaven can look down with grateful joy, if it is permitted her to watch your progress here."

"I will do my best, doctor," said Herbert.

"The world is all before you," proceeded Dr. Kent. "You may not achieve a brilliant destiny. It is permitted to few to do that. But whether your sphere is wide or narrow, you may exert an influence for good, AND LEAVE THE WORLD BETTER FOR YOUR HAVING LIVED IN IT."

"I hope it may be so," said Herbert, thoughtfully. "When I am tempted to do wrong, I will think of my mother."

"It is the very best thing you can do, Herbert. And now for your plans. I wish I were in a situation to have you remain with me. But as that cannot be, I will do my best to get you a place."

"I ought to be at work," said Herbert, "as I have my living to get. I want you to take that ten dollars, doctor, as part payment of the debt I owe you."

The doctor shook his head.

"I can't do that, Herbert, not even to oblige you. You were too proud to accept a favor from your uncle. You will not be too proud, I hope, to accept one from me?"

"No, doctor; I am not too proud for that. You are my friend, and my uncle cares nothing for me."

When Herbert's letter reached New York, his uncle felt a momentary shame, for he saw that his nephew had rightfully interpreted his own selfishness and lack of feeling, and he could not help involuntarily admiring the independent spirit which would not allow him to accept the proffered money, except as a loan. But mingled with his shame was a feeling of relief, as he foresaw that Herbert's pride would not suffer him to become a burden upon him in the future. He hardly expected ever to see the ten dollars returned with interest; but even if he lost it, he felt that he should be getting off cheap.

## CHAPTER III. A COLLISION

It was a week later when an incident befell Herbert which is worthy of mention, since it brought him into collision with a man who was destined to have some influence over his future life.

A neighboring farmer, for whom, during his mother's life, he had occasionally gone on errands, drove up in front of the doctor's house, and asked Herbert if he could take his horse and wagon and drive over to the mill village to get some corn ground. Herbert was rather glad to accept this proposal, not only because he was to receive twenty−five cents for so doing, but also because he was fond of driving a horse.

He was only about a mile from the mill village, when he saw approaching him a man in a light open buggy. Herbert knew every horse in Waverley, and every man, woman, and child, for that matter, and he perceived at once that the driver was a stranger. To tell the truth, he was not very favorably impressed by his appearance. The man was very dark, with black hair and an unshaven beard of three days' growth, which did not set off his irregular and repulsive features. His mouth, partly open, revealed several yellow tusks, stained with tobacco juice. On his head he wore a broad−brimmed straw hat, rather the worse for wear.

It so happened that just at this point the middle of the road was much better than the sides, which sloped considerably, terminating in gullies which were partly full from the recent rains. The road was narrow, being wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other, if each veered to the side, but not otherwise.

Herbert observed that the buggy, which was now rapidly approaching, was kept in the center of the road, and that the driver appeared to have no intention of turning out.

"What does he mean?" thought our hero. "He cannot expect me to do the whole of the turning out. I will turn out my half, and if he wants to get by, he must do the same."

Accordingly, he turned partially to one side, as much as could be reasonably expected, and quietly awaited the approach of the man in the buggy. The latter still kept the center of the road, and did not turn out his carriage at all. As soon as it was close at hand, the driver leaned forward and exclaimed angrily:

"Turn out, boy!"

If he expected that Herbert would be intimidated by his tone he was much mistaken. Our hero was bold, and not easily frightened. He looked quietly in the man's face, and said composedly, "I have turned out."

"Then turn out more, you young vagabond! Do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir, I hear you, and should if you didn't speak half so loud."

"Curse your impudence! I tell you, turn out more!" exclaimed the stranger, becoming more and more angry. He had expected to get his own way without trouble. If Herbert had been a man, he would not have been so unreasonable; but he supposed he could browbeat a boy into doing whatever he chose to dictate. But he had met his match, as it turned out.

"I have already given you half the road," said Herbert, firmly, "and I don't intend to give you any more."

"You don't, eh? Young man, how old are you?"

"I am fourteen."

"I should think you were forty by the airs you put on."

"Is it putting on airs to insist on my rights?" asked our hero.

"Your rights!" retorted the other, laughing contemptuously.

"Yes, my rights," returned Herbert, quietly. "I have a right to half of the road, and I have taken it. If I turn out any more, I shall go into the gully."

"That makes no difference. A wetting won't do you any harm. Your impudence needs cooling."

"That may be," said Herbert, who did not choose to get angry, but was resolved to maintain his rights; "but I object to the wetting, for all that, and as this wagon is not mine, I do not choose to upset it."

"You are the most insolent young scamp I ever came across!" exclaimed the other, furiously. "I've a good mind to give you something much worse than a wetting."

"Such as what?" asked our hero, coolly. In reply the man flourished his whip significantly. "Do you see that?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Oh, very well," said the other, ironically; "I'm glad you do. Perhaps you wouldn't like to feel it?"

"No, I don't think I should," said Herbert, not exhibiting the least apprehension.

The stranger handled his whip, eyeing our hero viciously at the same time, as if it would have afforded him uncommon pleasure to lay it over his back. But there was something in the look of our hero which unconsciously cowed him, and, much as he wished to strike him, he held back.

"Well, you're a cool hand," he said, after a moment's hesitation.

To this our hero did not see fit to make any reply. But he grasped his own whip a little tighter. So brutal had been the tone assumed by the stranger, that he was not sure but he might proceed to carry out his threat, and lay the whip over his back. He determined, in that case, to give him as good as he sent. I will not express any opinion as to the propriety of this determination, but I am certain, from what I know of our hero's fearless spirit, that he would not have hesitated to do it, be the consequences what they might. But he did not have the opportunity.

"Once more," demanded the stranger, furiously; "are you going to turn out?"

"No," said the boy, decidedly.

"Then—I'll run you down."

So saying, he brought the whip violently on the horse's back. The latter gave a convulsive spring forward. But his driver had not taken into consideration that the farm−wagon was the stronger of the two vehicles, and that in any collision the buggy must come off second best. So it happened that a wheel of the buggy was broken, and the driver, in the shock, thrown sprawling into a puddle on the other side of the road. The wagon suffered no damage, but the old horse, terrified, set off at a rapid pace. Herbert looked back to see if the stranger was injured, but seeing that he had already picked himself up unwounded, but decidedly dirty, he concluded to keep on his way to the mill.

The driver of the overturned vehicle was considerably more angry than hurt at this catastrophe.

It chafed his pride not a little to think that, after all his vaunts, the boy had maintained his ground, and got the better of him. For a man of forty−five to be worsted by a boy of fourteen was, it must be confessed, a little mortifying. It was something like a great ship of the line being compelled to surrender to a little monitor.

No one feels particularly dignified or good−natured when he is picking himself out of a mud puddle. Our black−haired acquaintance proved no exception to this remark. He shook his fist at the receding wagon and its occupant—a demonstration of defiance which our hero did not witness, his back being now turned to his late opponent.

Mr. Abner Holden—for this was the stranger's name—next turned his attention to the buggy, which had been damaged to some extent, and so was likely to involve him in expense. This was another uncomfortable reflection. Meanwhile, as it was no longer in a fit state for travel, he must contrive some way to have it carried back to the stable, and, unless he could procure another vehicle, perform the rest of the journey on foot.

Luckily, some men in a neighboring field had witnessed the collision, and, supposing their services might be required, were now present to lend their aid.

"Pretty bad accident," remarked one of them. "That 'ere wheel'll need considerable tinkering afore it's fit for use. How came you to get it broke so, squire?"

"A little rascal had the impudence to dispute the road with me, and would not turn out at my bidding," said Mr. Holden, in a tone of exasperation, which showed that his temper had been considerably soured by the accident.

"Wouldn't turn out? Seems to me from the marks of the wheels, you must have been drivin' along in the middle of the road. I guess you didn't take the trouble to turn out, yourself."

"Well, there was room enough for the boy to turn out one side," said Holden, doggedly.

"You are slightly mistaken, stranger," said the other, who was disgusted at the traveler's unreasonableness. "There wasn't room; as anyone can see that's got eyes in his head. Didn't the youngster turn out at all?"

"Yes," snapped Holden, not relishing the other's free speech.

"Then it seems you were the one that would not turn out. If you had been a leetle more accommodating, this accident couldn't have happened. Fair play's my motto. If a feller meets you halfway, it's all you have a right to expect. I reckon it'll cost you a matter of ten dollars to get that 'ere buggy fixed."

Holden looked savagely at the broken wheel, but that didn't mend matters. He would have answered the countryman angrily, but, as he stood in need of assistance, this was not good policy.

"What would you advise me to do about it?" he inquired.

"You will have to leave the buggy where it is just now. Where did you get it?"

"Over at the mill village."

"Well, you'd better lead the horse back—'tain't more'n a mile or so— get another wagon, and tell 'em to send for this."

"Well, perhaps that is the best way."

"Where was you goin'?"

"Over to Waverley."

"That's where the boy came from."

"What boy?"

"The boy that upset you."

"What is his name?" asked Abner Holden, scowling.

"His name is Herbert Mason, son of the Widder Mason that died two or three weeks since. Poor boy, he's left alone in the world."

"Where's he stopping?" asked Holden, hardly knowing why he asked the question.

"Dr. Kent took him in after the funeral, so I heard; but the selectmen of Waverley are trying to find him a place somewheres, where he can earn his own livin'. He's a smart, capable boy, and I guess he can do 'most a man's work."

Abner Holden looked thoughtful. Some plan had suggested itself to him which appeared to yield him satisfaction, for he began to look decidedly more comfortable, and he muttered to himself: "I'll be even with him YET. See if I don't."

"How far am I from Waverley?" he asked, after a slight pause.

"Well, risin' three miles," drawled the other.

"If I could get somebody to go back with this horse, I don't know but what I'd walk to Waverley. Are you very busy?"

"Well, I don't know but I could leave off for a short time," said the other, cautiously. "Work's pretty drivin', to be sure. What do you cal'late to pay?"

"How much would it be worth?"

"Well, there's the walk there and back, and then again there's the time."

"You can mount the horse going."

"I guess fifty cents'll about pay me."

Mr. Holden took out his pocketbook and paid the required sum.

"By the way," he said, as if incidentally, "who is the chairman of the selectmen in the village of Waverley?" "You ain't thinkin' of takin' that boy, be you?" said the other, curiously.

"I've had enough to do with him; I don't want ever to lay eyes on him again."

"Well, I dunno as I should, if I was you," said the countryman, rather slyly.

"You haven't answered my question yet," said Holden, impatiently.

"Oh, about the cheerman of the selectmen. It's Captain Joseph Ross."

"Where does he live?"

"A leetle this side of the village. You'll know the house, well enough. It's a large, square house painted white, with a well−sweep in front."

Without a word of thanks for the information, Abner Holden turned, and began to walk toward Waverley. Perhaps his object in making these inquiries has been guessed. It happened that he needed a boy, and, for more reasons than one, he thought he should like to have Herbert bound to him. Herbert, as he had noticed, was a stout boy, and he probably could get a good deal of work out of him. Then, again, it would be gratifying to him to have our hero in subjection to him. He could pay him off then, ten times over, for his insolence, as he chose to term it.

"I'll break his proud spirit," thought Abner Holden. "He'll find he's got a master, if I get hold of him. He don't know me yet, but he will some time."

Mr. Holden resolved to wait on Captain Ross at once, and conclude arrangements with him to take Herbert before our hero had returned from the mill village. He pictured, with a grim smile, Herbert's dismay when he learned who was to be his future master.

With the help of a handkerchief dipped into a crystal stream at the roadside, Abner Holden succeeded in effacing some of the muddy stains upon his coat and pantaloons, and at length got himself into presentable trim for calling upon a "selectman."

At length he came in sight of the house which had been described to him as that of Captain Ross. There was a woman at the well−sweep engaged in drawing water.

"Does Captain Ross live here?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir."

"Is he at home?"

"He's over in the three−acre lot. Was you wantin' to see him?"

"I should like to. Is the field far away?"

"No, it's just behind the house."

"Then I guess I'll go and find him. I want to see him on a little matter of business."

Mr. Holden crossed a mowing−field, and then, climbing over a stone wall, found himself at the edge of the three−acre lot. The captain was superintending one or two hired men, and, as he had his coat off, had probably been assisting them.

"Captain Ross?" said Abner Holden, interrogatively.

"That's my name."

"You are chairman of the selectmen, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I understand that you have a boy that you want to bind out."

"I reckon you mean Herbert Mason."

"Yes, I believe that's the name I heard."

"Are you in want of a boy?"

"Yes, I am looking out for one."

"What is your business?"

"I keep a store, but I should want him to work on land part of the time."

"Do you live hereabouts?"

"Over at Cranston."

"If you'll come to the house, we'll talk the matter over. The boy's a good boy, and we want to get a good place for him. His mother was a widder, and he's her only son. He's a smart, capable lad, and good to work."

"I've no doubt he'll suit me. I'll take him on your recommendation."

"We should want him to go to school winters. He's a pretty good scholar already. His father was a larned man, and used to teach him before he died. If he had lived, I reckon Herbert would certainly have gone to college."

"I'll agree to send him to school in the winter for the next two years," said Holden, "and will give him board and clothes, and when he's twenty− one a freedom suit, and a hundred dollars. Will that do?"

"I don't know but that's reasonable," said Captain Ross, slowly. "The boy's a bit high−spirited, but if you manage him right, I guess you'll like him."

"I'll manage him!" thought Abner Holden. "Can I take him with me to− morrow?" he asked. "I don't come this way very often."

"Well, I guess that can be arranged. We'll go over to Dr. Kent's after dinner, and see if they can get him ready."

"In the meantime," said Holden, afraid that the prize might slip through his fingers, "suppose we make out the papers. I suppose you have full authority in the matter."

Captain Ross had no objection, and thus poor Herbert was unconsciously delivered over to the tender mercies of a man who had very little love for him.

## CHAPTER IV. A DISAGREEABLE SURPRISE

After his collision with the traveler, Herbert hurried on to the mill, intent upon making up for lost time. He was satisfied with having successfully maintained his rights; and, as he had no reason to suppose he should ever again see his unreasonable opponent, dismissed him from his thoughts.

On reaching the mill, he found he should have to remain an hour or two before he could have his grain ground. He was not sorry for this, as it would give him an opportunity to walk around the village.

"I wish," he thought, "I could get a place in one of the stores here. There's more going on than there is in Waverley, and I could go over Sundays to see Dr. Kent's family."

On the spur of the moment, he resolved to inquire if some of the storekeepers did not require help. There was a large dry−goods store— the largest in the village—kept by Beckford Keyes. He entered and inquired for the senior partner.

"Mr. Beckford is not in," said the clerk. "Mr. Keyes is standing at that desk."

Herbert went up to the desk, and said inquiringly, "Mr. Keyes?"

"That is my name," said that gentleman, pleasantly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I am in search of a place," said our hero, "and I thought you might have a vacancy here."

"We have none just at present," said Mr. Keyes, who was favorably impressed by Herbert's appearance; "but it is possible we may have in a few weeks. Where do you live? Not in the village, I suppose?"

"No, sir," said Herbert, and a shadow passed over his face, "My mother died three weeks since, and I am now stopping at the house of Dr. Kent."

"Dr. Kent—ah, yes, I know the doctor. He is an excellent man."

"He is," said Herbert, warmly. "He has been very kind to me."

"What is your name?"

"Herbert Mason."

"Then, Herbert, I will promise to bear you in mind. I will note down your name and address, and as soon as we have a vacancy I will write to you. Come into the store whenever you come this way."

"Thank you," said Herbert.

He left the store feeling quite encouraged. Even if the chance never amounted to anything, the kind words and manner of the storekeeper gave him courage to hope that he would meet with equal kindness from others. Kind words cost nothing, but they have a marvelous power in lightening the burdens of the sorrowful and cheering the desponding.

Herbert left the store, feeling that he should consider himself truly fortunate if he could obtain a place in such an establishment. But there was a rough experience before him, of which at present he guessed nothing.

After sauntering about the village a little longer, and buying a stick of candy for little Mary Kent, the doctor's only daughter, who was quite attached to Herbert, our hero got back to the mill in time to receive his bags of meal, with which he was soon on his way homeward.

About the place where he met Mr. Holden he was hailed by a man at work in the field—the same who had taken back that gentleman's horse to the stable.

"Well, boy, you had a kind of scrimmage, didn't you, coming over?"

"Did you see it?" asked Herbert.

"Yes," said the other, grinning. "I seed the other feller in the mud puddle. He was considerably riled about it."

"It was his own fault. I gave him half the road."

"I know it; but there's some folks that want more than their share."

"Was his buggy broken? I don't know but I ought to have stopped to help him, but he had been so unreasonable that I didn't feel much like it."

"His wheel got broken. I drawed the buggy into the bushes. There 'tis now. It'll cost him a matter of ten dollars to fix it."

"I'm sorry for that," said Herbert; "but I can't see that I was to blame in the matter. If I had turned out as he wanted me to, I should have tipped over, and, as the wagon didn't belong to me, I didn't think it right to risk it."

"Of course not. You wasn't called on to give in to such unreasonableness."

"Where did the man go?"

"He concluded to walk on to Waverley, and hired me to take the horse back to the stable. He wanted to know who you were."

"Did he?"

"Maybe he's goin' to sue you for damages."

"I don't believe he'll get much if he does," laughed our hero. "My property is where he can't get hold of it."

"Ho! ho!" laughed the other, understanding the joke.

After this conversation Herbert continued on his way, and, after delivering the grain, took his way across the fields to his temporary home. He entered by the back yard. Little Mary came running out to meet him.

"Have oo come back, Herbert?" she said. "Where have oo been?"

"Been to buy Mary some candy," he said, lifting her up and kissing her.

"Whose horse is that at the gate?" asked Herbert, as the doctor's wife entered the room.

"It belongs to Captain Ross," she said. "He has come on business connected with you."

"Connected with me!" repeated Herbert, in surprise.

"Yes, my dear boy, I am afraid we must make up our minds to lose you."

"Has he found a place for me?" asked Herbert, in a tone of disappointment.

"Yes, I believe he has bound you out to a man in Cranston."

"I am sorry," said Herbert.

"I shall be sorry to have you go, Herbert, but I thought you wanted to go."

"So I do; but by waiting a few weeks I could probably get a place in Beckford Keyes' store, at the mill village."

"What makes you think so?"

Herbert detailed his interview of the morning with the junior partner. Just at this moment the doctor entered the kitchen.

"Have you told him?" he inquired, looking at his wife.

"Yes, and he says that but for this he might probably have got a chance to go into Beckford's store at the mill village."

"I am sorry for this. They are good men, and he would have been near us, while Cranston is forty miles away."

"Who is the man that wants me?" asked Herbert.

"A Mr. Holden. He is in the other room with Captain Ross. It was all arranged before they came. He wants you to go with him to−morrow morning."

"So soon?" said Herbert, in dismay.

"Yes. At first he wished you to set off with him this afternoon; but I told him decidedly you could not be ready."

"Quite impossible," said Mrs. Kent. "Some of Herbert's clothes are in the wash, and I can't have them ready till evening."

"You had better come into the other room, Herbert," said the doctor. "I will introduce you to your new employer."

Herbert followed the doctor into the sitting−room. His first glance rested on Captain Ross, whom he knew. He went up and shook hands with him. Next he turned to Mr. Holden, and to his inexpressible astonishment, recognized his opponent of the morning.

"Mr. Holden, Herbert," introduced the doctor. "Mr. Holden, this is the boy we have been speaking of."

"I have seen Mr. Holden before," said Herbert, coldly.

"Yes," said Mr. Holden, writhing his disagreeable features into an unpleasant smile. "We have met before."

Dr. Kent looked from one to the other in surprise, as if seeking an explanation.

"Our acquaintance doesn't date very far back," said Mr. Holden. "We met this morning between here and the mill village."

"Indeed," said the doctor; "you passed each other, I suppose."

"Well, no; I can't say we did exactly," said Mr. Holden, with the same unpleasant smile, "We tried to, but the road being narrow, there was a collision, and I came off second−best."

"I hope there was no accident."

"Oh, nothing to speak of. I got tipped out, and my clothes, as you may observe, suffered some. As for my young friend here, he rode on uninjured."

"You must excuse my not stopping to inquire if I could help you," said Herbert; "but my horse was frightened by the collision, and I could not easily stop him."

"Oh, it's of no consequence," said Mr. Holden, in an off−hand manner. He was determined not to show himself out in his true colors until he had got Herbert absolutely under his control.

"But where is your horse, Mr. Holden?" asked Captain Ross. "I think you were walking when you came to my house."

"I sent it back to the village by a man I met on the road, my buggy being disabled."

"Your carriage wasn't much injured, I hope."

"Oh, no, not much."

"I don't see exactly how it could happen," said Captain Ross. "I thought the road from here to the mill village was broad enough at any point for carriages to pass each other."

"I didn't dream," said Mr. Holden, not noticing this remark, "that the young man I had engaged was my young acquaintance of the morning."

Herbert looked at him, puzzled by his entire change of manner—a change so sudden that he suspected its genuineness.

The more he thought of it, the more unwilling he felt to live with Mr. Holden. But could it be avoided? He resolved to try. He accordingly told the doctor and Captain Ross of the promise that Mr. Keyes had made him.

"It would be a good place," said the captain; "but it ain't certain. Now, here's Mr. Holden, ready to take you at once."

"If I was in the mill village I could come over and see my friends here now and then. Besides, I think I should like being in a store."

"Oh, I've got a store, too," said Mr. Holden, "and I should expect you to tend there part of the time. I don't think I can let you off, my young friend," he added, with a disagreeable smile. "I think we shall get along very well together."

Herbert did not feel at all sure of this, but he saw that it would do no good to remonstrate farther, and kept silence. Soon after, Mr. Holden and Captain Ross rose to go.

"I'll call round for my young friend about nine to−morrow morning," said Abner Holden, with an ingratiating smile.

"We will endeavor to have him ready," said the doctor.

After they went away Herbert wandered about in not the best of spirits. He was convinced that he should not be happy with Mr. Holden, against whom he had conceived an aversion, founded partly upon the occurrences of the morning, and partly on the disagreeable impression made upon him by Abner Holden's personal appearance.

## CHAPTER V. THE ENVELOPE

Herbert woke up early the next morning, and a feeling of sadness came over him as he reflected that it was his last morning in Waverley. He was going out into the world, and, as he could not help thinking, under very unfavorable auspices. New scenes and new experiences usually have a charm for a boy, but Mr. Holden's disagreeable face and unpleasant smile rose before him, and the prospect seemed far from tempting.

When he came downstairs, he found Mrs. Kent in the kitchen.

"You are up early, Mrs. Kent," said Herbert.

"Yes, Herbert; I want you to have a good breakfast before you go."

It certainly was a nice breakfast. Tender beefsteak, warm biscuit, golden butter, potatoes fried crisp and brown, and excellent coffee, might have tempted any appetite. Herbert, in spite of his sadness, did full justice to the bountiful meal.

The family had hardly risen from breakfast when the sound of wheels was heard outside, and directly there was a knock at the door.

"It's Mr. Holden," said the doctor, looking from the front window.

"Must we part from you so soon, Herbert?" said Mrs. Kent, affectionately.

"Where oo goin', Herbert?" asked little Mary, clinging to his knee,

"Herbert's going away, Mary," said he, stooping and kissing his little friend.

"Herbert mustn't go 'way," said the little girl, in discontent.

"Herbert come back soon, and bring candy for Mary," he said, wishing that his words might come true.

By that time Mr. Holden had entered, and was surveying the scene with his disagreeable smile.

"Little Mary is quite attached to Herbert," said the doctor.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Holden, "that I have no little girls, as Herbert seems fond of them."

Herbert doubted if he could become attached to anyone related to Mr. Holden.

"I'm a bachelor," said Mr. Holden, "though perhaps I ought to be ashamed to say so. If I had had the good fortune early in life to encounter a lady like your good wife here, it might have been different."

"It isn't too late yet, Mr. Holden," said the doctor.

"Well, perhaps not. If Mrs. Kent is ever a widow, I may try my luck."

"What a disagreeable man," thought the doctor's wife, not propitiated by the compliment. "Herbert," she said, "here are a couple of handkerchiefs I bought in the village yesterday. I hope you will find them useful."

"Yes; no doubt he will," said Mr. Holden, laughing. "He will think of you whenever he has a bad cold."

Nobody even smiled at this witty sally, and, Mr. Holden, a little disappointed, remarked: "Well, time's getting on. I guess we must be going, as we have a long journey before us."

The whole family accompanied Herbert to the road. After kissing Mary and Mrs. Kent, and shaking the doctor cordially by the hand, Herbert jumped into the wagon. Just before the horse started the doctor handed our hero a sealed envelope, saying, "You can open it after a while."

Though, like most boys of his age, Herbert had a great horror of making a baby of himself, he could hardly help crying as he rode up the street, and felt that he had parted from his best friends. His eyes filled with tears, which he quietly wiped away with the corner of his handkerchief.

"Come, come, don't blubber, boy," said Mr. Holden, coarsely.

Herbert was not weak enough to melt into tears at an unkind word. It roused his indignation, and he answered, shortly, "When you see me blubbering, it'll be time enough to speak, Mr. Holden."

"It looked a good deal like it, at any rate," said Abner. "However, I'm glad if I'm mistaken. There's nothing to cry about that I can see."

"No, perhaps not," said Herbert; "but there's something to be sorry for."

"Something to be sorry for, is there?" said Abner Holden.

"Yes."

"Well, what is it?"

"I've left my best friends, and I don't know when I shall see them again."

"Nor I," said Mr. Holden. "But I think it's high time you left them."

"Why?" asked Herbert, indignantly.

"Because they were petting you and making too much of you. You won't get such treatment as that from me."

"I don't expect it," said our hero.

"That's lucky," said Abner Holden, dryly. "It's well that people shouldn't expect what they are not likely to get."

Here a sense of the ludicrous came over Herbert as he thought of being Mr. Holden's pet, and he laughed heartily. Not understanding the reason of his sudden mirth, that gentleman demanded, in a tone of irritation, "What are you making a fool of yourself about?"

"What am I laughing at?" said Herbert, not liking the form of the question.

"Yes," snarled Abner.

"The idea of being your pet," explained Herbert, frankly.

Mr. Holden did not appreciate the joke, and said roughly, "You better shut up, if you know what's best for yourself."

They rode along in silence for a few minutes. Then Abner Holden, thinking suddenly of the envelope which Dr. Kent had placed in Herbert's hand at parting, and feeling curious as to its contents, asked:

"What did the doctor give you just as you were starting?"

"It was an envelope."

"I know that; but what was there in it?"

"I haven't looked," said our hero.

He felt a little satisfaction in snubbing Mr. Holden, whom he saw he would never like.

"Why don't you open it?"

"I didn't think of it before."

"I suppose there is some present inside."

Herbert decided to open the envelope, out of respect for Dr. Kent. On opening it, he drew out a five−dollar bill, and a few penciled words, which were as follows:

"DEAR HERBERT: I would gladly give you more if I had the means. I hope you will use the inclosed money in any way that may be most serviceable to you. You must write to me often. Be a good boy, as you always have been; let your aims be noble; try to do right at all hazards, and may God bless your efforts, and make you a good and true man. Such is the prayer of your affectionate friend, GEORGE KENT."

Herbert read these lines with emotion, and inwardly resolved that he would try to carry out the recommendations laid down. His thoughts were broken in upon by Mr. Holden, whose sharp eyes detected the bank−note.

"There's money in the letter, isn't there?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Five dollars."

"Five dollars, hey?" he said. "You'd better give it to me to keep for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Holden; I can take care of it, myself."

"It isn't a good plan for boys to have so large a sum of money in their possession," said Abner Holden, who was anxious to secure it himself.

"Why not?" asked Herbert.

"Because they are likely to spend it improperly."

"Dr. Kent didn't seem to think I was likely to do that."

"No; he trusted you too much."

"I hope it won't prove so."

"You'd better keep out of the way of temptation. You might lose it, besides."

"I don't often lose things."

"Come, boy," said Mr. Holden, getting impatient; "Dr. Kent, no doubt, intended that I should take care of the money for you. You'd better give it up without further trouble."

"Why didn't he give it to you, then?" demanded Herbert.

"He supposed you would give it to me."

Mr. Holden's motive for getting the money into his own hands was twofold. First, he knew that without money Herbert would be more helpless and more in his power. Secondly, as he had agreed to supply Herbert with clothing, he thought he might appropriate the money towards this purpose, and it would be so much of a saving to his own pocket. Perhaps Herbert suspected some such design. At any rate, he had no intention of gratifying Mr. Holden by giving up the money.

"Well, are you going to give me the money?" blustered Abner Holden, taking out his pocketbook, ready to receive it.

"No," said Herbert.

"You'll repent this conduct, young man," said Holden, scowling.

"I don't think I shall," said our hero. "I don't understand why you are so anxious to get hold of the money."

"It is for your good," said Abner.

"I'd rather keep it," said Herbert.

Abner Holden hardly knew what to do. The money was by this time safely stowed away in Herbert's pocket, where he could not very well get at it. However, he had a plan for getting it which he resolved to put into practice when they stopped for dinner.

## CHAPTER VI. ON THE WAY

By the time they had ridden twenty miles both Herbert and Mr. Holden felt hungry. The fresh air had produced a similar effect upon both. They approached a broad, low building with a swinging sign and a long piazza in front, which it was easy to see was a country tavern.

"Do you feel hungry, boy?" inquired Abner Holden.

"Yes, sir," returned our hero.

"So do I. I think I shall get some dinner here. You can get some, too, if you like."

"Thank you, sir."

"Oh, there's no occasion to thank me," said Mr. Holden, dryly. "I shall pay for my dinner, and if you want any, you can pay for yours."

Herbert looked surprised. As he had entered Mr. Holden's employ, he supposed of course that the latter would feel bound to provide for him, and it certainly seemed mean that he should be compelled to pay for his own dinner. However, he was beginning to suspect that his new employer was essentially a mean man.

"How much will it cost?" asked Herbert, at length.

"Thirty−seven cents," was the reply.

It must be remembered that this was in the day of low prices, when gold was at par, and board could be obtained at first−class city hotels for two dollars and a half a day, and in country villages at that amount by the week.

"Thirty−seven cents!" Herbert hardly liked to break in upon his scanty hoard, but the morning air had sharpened his appetite, and he felt that he must have something to eat. Besides, he remembered one thing which fortunately Mr. Holden did not know, that in addition to the five dollars which Dr. Kent had given him he had the ten dollars sent him by his uncle, and not only that, but a little loose change which he had earned.

"Well, are you going to get out?" asked Abner Holden. "It's nothing to me whether you take dinner or not."

"Yes, I guess I will."

"Very well," said Holden, who had a reason for being pleased with his decision.

Both went into the tavern. There were two or three loungers on a settle, who gazed at them curiously. One of them at once appeared to recognize Abner Holden.

"How dy do, Holden?" he said. "Who've you got with you?"

"A boy I've taken," said Holden, shortly.

"A pretty smart−looking boy. Where'd you pick him up?"

"Over in Waverley. He's got some pretty high notions, but I guess I'll take 'em out of him in time."

"Yes," chuckled the other; "I warrant you will."

While this conversation was going on Herbert had entered the tavern, but he could not avoid hearing what was said, including Mr. Holden's reply. He was not frightened, but inwardly determined that he would do his duty, and then if Mr. Holden saw fit to impose upon him, he would make what resistance he was able.

"I wonder what high notions he means," thought our hero. "If he expects to make a slave of me, he will be mistaken, that's all."

"Sit down there, and I'll go and order dinner," said Mr. Holden, entering.

Just then, however, the landlord came in and greeted Abner Holden, whom he appeared to know.

"I want dinner for two, Mr. Robinson," he said.

"For two! You haven't brought your wife along with you, Holden?" he said, jocosely.

"No, I haven't come across any such lady yet. I've got a boy here who is bound to me. And hark you, landlord," he added, in a lower voice, that Herbert might not hear, "he will pay you for his dinner out of a five−dollar bill which he has with him. YOU NEEDN'T GIVE BACK THE CHANGE TO HIM, BUT TO ME."

"Yes, I understand," said the landlord, winking.

"I prefer to keep the money for him. He has refused to give it up and this will give me a chance to get hold of it without any fuss."

"All right."

"If he kept it himself he'd spend it in some improper way."

"Just so. I'll attend to it."

Now our hero was gifted with pretty sharp ears, and he caught enough of this conversation to understand Mr. Holden's plot, which he straightway determined should not succeed.

"You shan't take me in this time, Mr. Holden," he thought.

He opened his pocketbook to see if he had enough small change to pay for his dinner without intrenching upon his bill. There proved to be a quarter and two half−dimes, amounting, of course, to thirty−five cents. This would not be quite sufficient.

"I must change the bill somewhere," he said to himself.

Looking out of the tavern window, he saw the village store nearly opposite. He took his cap and ran over. There was a clerk leaning with his elbows upon the counter, appearing unoccupied.

It occurred to Herbert that he might want some paper and envelopes. He inquired the price.

"We sell the paper at a penny a sheet, and the envelopes will cost you eight cents a package."

"Then you may give me twelve sheets of paper and a package of envelopes," said Herbert.

The package was done up for him and in payment he tendered the bill.

The clerk gave him back four dollars and eighty cents in change. He put the money in his pocketbook, and the paper and envelopes in his jacket− pocket, and returned to the tavern well pleased with his success. Mr. Holden was in the barroom, taking a glass of "bitters," and had not noticed the absence of our hero.

Dinner was soon ready.

There was some beefsteak and coffee and a whole apple pie. Herbert surveyed the viands with satisfaction, having a decidedly good appetite. He soon found, however, that hungry as he was, he stood a poor chance with Abner Holden; that gentleman, being a very rapid eater, managed to appropriate two−thirds of the beefsteak and three−quarters of the pie. However, the supply being abundant, Herbert succeeded in making a satisfactory repast, and did not grudge the amount which he knew he should have to pay for it before leaving.

"Now," said Abner Holden, his eyes twinkling at the thought of our hero's coming discomfiture, "we'll go and settle our bill."

"Very well," said Herbert, quietly.

They entered the public room and advanced to the bar.

"This boy wants to pay for his dinner, Mr. Robinson," said Abner, significantly.

"How much will it be?" asked Herbert.

"Thirty−seven cents."

Herbert took out of his vest pocket a quarter, a dime and two cents, and handed them over.

To say that Abner Holden looked amazed is not sufficient. He looked disgusted and wronged, and glared at Herbert as if to inquire how he could have the face to outrage his feelings in that way.

"Ho! ho!" laughed the landlord, who, having no interest in the matter, was amused at the course affairs had taken.

Herbert suppressed his desire to laugh, and looked as if he had no knowledge of Mr. Holden's plans.

"Where did you get that money?" growled Abner, with a scowl.

"Out of my vest pocket," said Herbert, innocently.

"I know that, of course, but I thought you had only a bill."

"Oh, I got that changed at the store."

"How dared you go over there without my permission?" roared Abner.

"I didn't think it necessary to ask your permission to go across the street."

"Well, you know it now. Don't you go there again without my knowledge."

"Very well, sir."

"Did you buy anything at the store?" continued Mr. Holden.

"Yes, sir."

"What was it?"

"Some paper and envelopes."

"Humph!" muttered Abner, discontentedly.

He proceeded to pay his own bill and in a few minutes got into the wagon and drove off rather sulkily. Herbert

saw that Mr. Holden was disturbed by the failure of his little plan, and felt amused rather than otherwise. But when he reflected that he was going to live with this man, and be, to a considerable extent under his control, he felt inclined to be sad. One thing he resolved that he would not submit to tyranny. The world was wide, and he felt able to earn his own living. He would give Mr. Holden a trial, and if he treated him with reasonable fairness he would remain with him. But he was not going to be any man's slave.

Meanwhile they were getting over the road, and a few more hours brought them to their journey's end.

Abner Holden's house stood in considerable need of paint. It had no great pretensions to architectural beauty, being about as handsome for a house as Abner Holden was for a man. There was a dilapidated barn, a little to one side, and the yard was littered up with a broken wagon, a woodpile and various odds and ends, giving the whole a very untidy look.

"Is this where you live, Mr. Holden?" asked Herbert, looking about him.

"Yes, and I'm glad to get home. Do you know how to unharness a horse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then jump out and unharness this horse. A man will come for it to− morrow."

Herbert did as directed. Then he took his little trunk from the wagon, and went with it to the back door and knocked.

## CHAPTER VII. A NEW HOME

The door was opened by an elderly woman, rather stout, who acted as Abner Holden's housekeeper. Though decidedly homely, she had a pleasant look, which impressed Herbert favorably. He had feared she might turn out another edition of Mr. Holden, and with two such persons he felt that it would be difficult to get along.

"Come right in," said Mrs. Bickford, for that was her name. "Let me help you with your trunk. You can set it down here for the present."

"Thank you," said Herbert.

"You must be tired," said the housekeeper.

"No, not very," said our hero. "We rode all the way."

"Well, it's tiresome riding, at any rate, when it's such a long distance. You came from Waverley, Mr. Holden tells me."

"Yes."

"And that is more than thirty miles away, isn't it?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"So you've come to help Mr. Holden?" she added, after a pause.

"Yes, I suppose so," said Herbert, rather seriously.

"What is your name?"

"Herbert Mason."

"I hope, Herbert, we shall be able to make you comfortable."

"Thank you," said Herbert, a little more cheerful, as he perceived that he was to have one friend in Mr. Holden's household.

"Has Mr. Holden generally kept a boy?" he asked.

"Yes, he calculates to keep one most of the time."

"Who was the last one?"

"His name was Frank Miles."

"Was he here long?" asked Herbert, in some curiosity.

"Well, no," said the housekeeper, "he did not stay very long."

"How long?"

"He was here 'most a month."

"'Most a month? Didn't he like it?"

"Well, no; he didn't seem to like Mr. Holden much."

Herbert was not much surprised to hear this. He would have thought Frank Miles a singular sort of a boy if he had liked Abner Holden.

"Have any of the boys that have been here liked Mr. Holden?" he asked.

"I can't say as they have," said Mrs. Bickford, frankly; "and somehow they don't seem to stay long."

"Why didn't they like him?"

"Sh!" said the housekeeper, warningly.

Herbert looked round and saw his employer entering the room.

"Well, boy, have you put up the horse?" he asked, abruptly.

"Yes sir."

"Did you give him some hay?"

"Yes, sir."

"And some grain?"

"No, I didn't know where it was kept. If you'll tell me, I'll do it now."

"No, you needn't. He isn't to have any. He's only a hired horse."

Considering that the hired horse had traveled over thirty miles, Herbert thought he was entitled to some oats; but Mr. Holden was a mean man, and decided otherwise.

"Where is Herbert to sleep, Mr. Holden?" asked the housekeeper.

"Up garret."

"There's a small corner bedroom in the second story," suggested Mrs. Bickford, who knew that the garret was not very desirable.

"I guess he won't be too proud to sleep in the garret," said Mr. Holden. "Shall you?" he continued, turning to Herbert.

"Put me where you please," said Herbert, coldly.

"Then it shall be the garret. You can take your trunk up now. Mrs. Bickford will show you the way."

"It's too heavy for you, Herbert," said the housekeeper; "I will help you."

"Oh, he can carry it alone," said Abner Holden. "He isn't a baby."

"I'd rather help him," said the housekeeper, taking one handle of the trunk. "You go first, Herbert, You're young and spry, and can go faster than I."

On the second landing Herbert saw the little bedroom in which the housekeeper wanted to put him. It was plainly furnished, but it was light and cheerful, and he was sorry he was not to have it.

"You could have had that bedroom just as well as not," said Mrs. Bickford. "It's never used. But Mr. Holden's rather contrary, and as hard to turn as a—"

"A mule?" suggested Herbert, laughing.

"It's pretty much so," said the housekeeper, joining in the laugh.

They went up a narrow staircase and emerged into a dark garret, running the whole length of the house without a partition. The beams and rafters were visible, for the sloping sides were not plastered. Herbert felt that he might as well have been in the barn, except that there was a small cot bedstead in the center of the floor.

"It isn't very pleasant," said the housekeeper.

"No," said Herbert, "I don't think it is."

"I declare, it's too bad you should have to sleep here. Mr. Holden isn't very considerate."

"I guess I can stand it," said our hero, "though I should rather be downstairs."

"I'll bring up the trap and set it before you go to bed," said Mrs. Bickford.

"The trap!" repeated Herbert, in surprise.

"Yes, there's rats about, and I suppose you'd rather have a trap than a cat."

"Yes; the cat would be about as bad as the rats."

At this moment Abner Holden's voice was heard at the bottom of the stairs, and Mrs. Bickford hurried down, followed by our hero.

"I thought you were going to stay up there all day," said Mr. Holden. "What were you about up there?"

"That is my business," said Mrs. Bickford, shortly.

The housekeeper was independent in her feelings, and, knowing that she could readily obtain another situation, did not choose to be browbeaten by Mr. Holden. He was quite aware of her value, and the difficulty he would experience in supplying her place, and he put some constraint over himself in the effort not to be rude to her. With Herbert, however, it was different. HE was BOUND to him, and therefore in his power. Abner Holden exulted in this knowledge, and with the instinct of a petty tyrant determined to let Herbert realize his dependence.

"You may go out and saw some wood," he said. "You'll find the saw in the woodshed."

"What wood shall I saw?"

"The wood in the woodpile, stupid."

"Very well, sir," said our hero, quietly.

Herbert thought Mr. Holden was losing no time in setting him to work. However, he had resolved to do his duty, unpleasant as it might be, as long as Abner Holden only exacted what was reasonable, and Herbert was aware that he had a right to require him to go to work at once. Mrs. Bickford, however, said a word in his favor.

"I've got wood enough to last till to−morrow, Mr. Holden," she said.

"Well, what of it?"

"It's likely the boy is tired."

"What's he done to make him tired, I should like to know? Ridden thirty miles, and eaten a good dinner!"

"Which I paid for myself," said Herbert.

"What if you did?" said Abner Holden, turning to him. "I suppose you'll eat supper at my expense, and you'd better do something, first, to earn it."

"That I am willing to do."

"Then go out to the woodpile without any more palavering."

"Mr. Holden," said the housekeeper, seriously, after Herbert had gone out, "if you want to keep that boy, I think you had better be careful how you treat him."

"Why do you say that?" demanded Abner, eying her sharply. "Has he been saying anything to you about me?"

"No."

"Then why did you say that?"

"Because I can see what kind of a boy he is."

"Well, what kind of a boy is he?" asked Abner, with a sneer.

"He is high−spirited, and will work faithfully if he's treated well, but he won't allow himself to be imposed upon."

"How do you know that?"

"I can read it in his face. I have had some experience with boys, and you may depend upon it that I am not mistaken."

"He had better do his duty," blustered Abner, "if he knows what's best for himself."

"He will do his duty," said the housekeeper, firmly, "but there is a duty which you owe to him, as well as he to you."

"Don't I always do my duty by boys, Mrs. Bickford?"

"No, Mr. Holden, I don't think you do. You know very well you can never get a boy to stay with you."

"This boy is bound to me, Mrs. Bickford—legally bound."

"That may be; but if you don't treat him as he ought to be treated, he will run away, take my word for it."

"If he does, he'll be brought back, take my word for that, Mrs. Bickford. I shall treat him as I think he deserves, but as to petting and pampering the young rascal I shall do nothing of the kind."

"I don't think you will," said the housekeeper. "However, I've warned you."

"You seem to take a good deal of interest in the boy," said Abner, sneeringly.

"Yes, I do."

"After half an hour's acquaintance."

"I've known him long enough to see that he's better than the common run of boys, and I hope that he'll stay."

"There's no doubt about that," said Abner Holden, significantly. "He'll have to stay, whether he wants to or not."

## CHAPTER VIII. THE GHOST IN THE ATTIC

After working two hours at the woodpile, Herbert was called in to tea. There was no great variety, Abner Holden not being a bountiful provider. But the bread was sweet and good, and the gingerbread fresh. Herbert's two hours of labor had given him a hearty appetite, and he made a good meal. Mrs. Bickford looked on approvingly. She was glad to see that our hero enjoyed his supper.

There was tea on the table, and, after pouring out a cup for Mr. Holden, the housekeeper was about to pour out one for Herbert.

"He don't want any tea," said Abner, noticing the action. "Keep the cup for yourself, Mrs. Bickford."

"What do you mean, Mr. Holden?" asked the housekeeper, in surprise.

"Tea isn't good for a growing boy. A glass of cold water will be best for him."

"I don't agree with you, Mr. Holden," said the housekeeper, decidedly. "Herbert has been hard at work, and needs his tea as much as you or I do."

Therefore, without waiting for his permission, she handed the cup to Herbert, who proceeded to taste it.

Abner Holden frowned, but neither Herbert nor the housekeeper took much notice of it. The latter was somewhat surprised at this new freak on the part of Abner, as he had never tried to deprive any of Herbert's predecessors of tea or coffee. But the fact was, Mr. Holden disliked Herbert, and was disposed to act the petty tyrant over him. He had neither forgotten nor forgiven the boy's spirited defiance when they first met, nor his refusal to surrender into his hands the five dollars which the doctor had given him.

Feeling tired by eight o'clock, Herbert went up to his garret room and undressed himself. An instinct of caution led him to take out the money in his porte−monnaie, and put it in his trunk, which he then locked, and put the key under the sheet, so that no one could get hold of it without awakening him. This precaution proved to be well taken.

Herbert lay down upon the bed, but did not immediately go to sleep. He could not help thinking of his new home, and the new circumstances in which he was placed. He did not feel very well contented, and felt convinced from what he had already seen of Mr. Holden, that he should never like him. Then thoughts of his mother, and of her constant and tender love, and the kind face he would never more see on earth, swept over him, and almost unmanned him. To have had her still alive he would have been content to live on dry bread and water.

He thought, too, of the doctor's family and their kindness. How different it would have been if he might have continued to find a home with them! But when he was tempted to repine, the thought of his mother's Christian instructions came to him, and he was comforted by the reflection, that whatever happened to him was with the knowledge of his Father in heaven, who would not try him above his strength.

Try and trust! That was almost the last advice his mother had given him, as the surest way of winning the best success.

"Yes," he thought, "I will try and trust, and leave the rest with God."

Meanwhile Mr. Holden had not been able to keep out of his head the five dollars which he knew Herbert possessed. He was a mean man, and wished to appropriate it to his own use. Besides this, he was a stubborn man, and our hero's resistance only made him the more determined to triumph over his opposition by fair means or foul. It struck him that it would be a good idea to take advantage of our hero's slumber, and take the money quietly from his pocketbook while he was unconscious.

Accordingly, about eleven o'clock, he went softly up the attic stairs with a candle in his hand, and, with noiseless steps, approached the bed. Herbert's regular breathing assured him that he was asleep. Abner Holden took up his pants and felt for his pocketbook. He found it, and drew it out with exultation.

"Aha!" he thought; "I've got it."

But this brief exultation was succeeded by quick disappointment. The pocketbook proved to be quite empty.

"Curse it!" muttered Abner, "what has the boy done with his money?"

It was at this moment that Herbert, his eyes possibly affected by the light, awoke, and he discovered his employer examining his pocketbook.

His first feeling was indignation, but the sight of Abner Holden's disappointed face amused him, and he

determined not to reveal his wakefulness, but to watch, him quietly.

"Perhaps he's got two pocketbooks," thought Abner. But in this he was mistaken.

Next he went to Herbert's trunk, and tried it, but found it locked.

"I wonder where he keeps the key," was his next thought.

He searched Herbert's pockets, but the search was in vain.

"Plague take the young rascal!" he muttered, loud enough for Herbert to hear.

Herbert turned in bed, and Abner Holden, fearing that he might wake up, and being on the whole, rather ashamed of his errand, and unwilling to be caught in it, went downstairs.

"Well, he didn't make much," thought our hero. "It's lucky I thought to put the money in my trunk. If he only knew I had fifteen dollars, instead of five, he would be all the more anxious to get hold of it."

"How did you sleep last night, Herbert?" inquired the housekeeper at breakfast.

"Very well, thank you, Mrs. Bickford."

He was resolved not to drop a hint of what had happened, being curious to see if Mr. Holden would make any further attempts to obtain his money. As his employer might possibly find a key that would unlock the trunk, he thought it prudent, during the day, to carry the money about with him.

He hardly knew whether to expect a visit from Abner the next night, but formed a little plan for frightening him if such a visit should take place.

It so happened that he had in his trunk a fish horn which had been given him by someone in Waverley. This he took out of the trunk before retiring and hid it under his pillow. It was about nine o'clock when he went to bed, but by considerable effort he succeeded in keeping awake for an hour or two.

About eleven o'clock, Abner Holden, before going to bed himself, decided to make one more attempt to obtain possession of Herbert's money. He reflected that possibly our hero had only put away his money by chance on the previous evening, and might have neglected to do so on the present occasion. He desired to get possession of it before any part of it was spent, as, judging from what he knew of boys, it would not remain long unexpended.

Once more, therefore, he took his candle, and removing his thick−soled shoes, which might betray him by their sound, crept softly up the steep and narrow staircase.

But Herbert heard him, and moreover was warned of his visit by the light of the candle which he carried. He closed his eyes, and awaited his coming in silent expectation.

Abner Holden looked towards the bed. Herbert's eyes were closed, and his breathing was deep and regular.

"He's sound asleep," thought Abner, with satisfaction.

He set down the candle on a chair beside the bed, and began to examine our hero's pocketbook once more. But it proved to be empty as before. In the pocketbook, however, he found a key, the key, as he supposed, to Herbert's trunk. It was not, however, being only a key which Herbert had picked up one day in the street, and kept. He had put it in his pocket with a view to mislead his employer.

That gentleman uttered a low exclamation of satisfaction when his fingers closed upon the key, never doubting for a moment that it would open the trunk.

Leaving the candle in its place, he rose from his recumbent position, threw the pants on the bed, and went round on the other side, to try the key.

He got down on his knees before the trunk, and had inserted the key in the lock, or rather had made an ineffectual attempt to do so, when suddenly the candle was extinguished, and a horrible blast on the fish horn resounded through the garret.

Now, Abner Holden was not a very courageous man. In fact, he was inclined to superstition. He knew that he was engaged in a dishonorable attempt to rob a boy who was placed in his charge, and there is an old proverb that says "conscience makes cowards of us all." It must be admitted that it was rather calculated to affect the nerves to find one's self suddenly in the dark, and at the same time to hear such a fearful noise proceeding from an unknown quarter.

Abner Holden jumped to his feet in dire dismay, and, without stopping to reflect on the probable cause of this startling interruption, "struck a bee line" for the staircase, and descended quicker, probably, than he had ever done before, narrowly escaping tumbling the entire distance, in his headlong haste.

Herbert had to stuff the bedclothes into his mouth to keep from bursting into a shout of laughter, which would have revealed his agency in producing the mysterious noise.

"I thought I heard a frightful noise last night soon after I went to bed," said Mrs. Bickford, at the breakfast table. "Didn't you hear anything, Mr. Holden?"

"No," said Abner, "I heard nothing. You were probably dreaming."

"Perhaps I was. Didn't you hear anything, Herbert?"

"I sleep pretty sound," said Herbert, quietly.

Abner Holden watched him as he said this, and was evidently more perplexed than ever. But that was the last visit he paid to the garret at night.

# CHAPTER IX. EXPOSING A FRAUD

It would be hard to tell what Abner Holden's precise occupation was. He had thirty or forty acres of land, but only cultivated enough to produce supplies of vegetables for his own table, and grain for his horses. He kept four cows, and he had, at this time, three horses. He had the Yankee propensity for "swapping," and from time to time traded horses, generally managing to get the best of the bargain, for he was tolerably sharp and not much troubled by conscientious scruples about misstating the merits of his horses.

But, about two months before Herbert came into his employ, he had himself been overreached, and found himself the possessor of a horse of excellent outward appearance, but blind of one eye, and with a very vicious temper. He accepted the situation with a bad grace, and determined, as soon as possible, to "trade" the horse to another party.

One day, about a fortnight after Herbert's arrival, a gentlemanly− looking stranger knocked at Abner Holden's door.

The call was answered by the housekeeper.

"Is Mr. Holden at home?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"I should like to see him."

Abner Holden soon made his appearance.

"Mr. Holden." said the stranger "I am in search of a good family horse. I am told that you have some animals for sale, and called on you, thinking I might get suited through you."

"You've come to the right place," said Abner, glibly. "I've got just the animal that will suit you."

"I should like to see it."

"He's in the pasture now. If you don't object to walking a short distance, I will show him to you. I feel sure he will suit you."

"Very well, I will go with you."

"This way, then."

The two walked down a green lane at the back of the house to the entrance of the pasture, where the three horses, at present comprising Abner Holden's entire stock, were grazing leisurely.

Now, it happened that, of the three, the blind and vicious horse was much the best looking. He held his head erect, had a graceful form, and was likely to attract favorable notice at first sight.

Abner Holden paused at a little distance, and pointed him out.

"What do you think of that horse, Mr. Richmond?" he said.

"A very good−looking animal," said the stranger, with an approving glance; "but I must explain that I want such an animal as my wife can drive. It is absolutely necessary that he should be good−tempered and gentle. If, with this, he is handsome, and of good speed, all the better. Now you know what I am in search of. Can you recommend this horse of yours?"

"Yes," said Abner, confidently, "he will just suit you. I did calculate to keep him for my own use, but I'm rather short of money, and I shall have to let him go."

"You say he is gentle?"

"Oh, yes, as gentle as need be."

"Could a woman drive him?"

"Oh, no trouble about that," said Abner.

"And he has no serious defect?"

"No."

"Well, that seems satisfactory. I like his appearance. He would look well in harness. What is your price?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars, cash down," said Abner. "That's too cheap. He's worth a cool hundred more, but I got him cheap, and can afford to sell him cheap."

The horse had cost Mr. Holden just a hundred and ten dollars, and at this price he considered himself decidedly taken in; but this he did not particularly care to mention.

"Two hundred and fifty dollars!" mused the stranger. "It is a little more than I intended to pay. Still, if the animal is what you describe, I don't know that I shall object on that score."

"You had better take him," said Abner. "It'll be the best bargain you ever made, I'll warrant. You'll pay cash down, I suppose?"

"Of course."

"Then shall we say it's a bargain?"

"Not quite yet. I'll take till the afternoon to think about it."

"Better decide now. The fact is, Mr. Richmond, I ought not to let the horse go at that figure, and I may change my mind."

"I think I shall take your horse, but I have agreed to look at another, and must see that first."

"Whose?"

"It belongs to a man named Nichols."

"Sam Nichols?"

"I believe so."

"I wouldn't advise you to have anything to do with him."

"Why not?"

"He's a regular sharper. You can't depend on anything he says."

"Thank you for the caution. I will be on my guard. But I promised to take a look at his horse before deciding. If I don't come to terms with him, and I don't think I shall, I will come round some time this afternoon and make a bargain with you."

Mr. Holden thought it was hardly politic to urge him farther. With a renewed caution as to dealing with Sam Nichols, he let him go.

"Well," thought Abner, after he was gone, "it will be a pretty good thing if I get rid of Spitfire"—he had named him thus—"for two hundred and fifty dollars. He's a bad−tempered brute, and blind into the bargain. But I'm not bound to tell Mr. Richmond that, and so spoil my trade. I've put a flea in his ear about Nichols, and I guess he will be back again."

The prospect of making a good bargain caused Abner to be unusually pleasant and good−humored, so much so that Mrs. Bickford regarded him with surprise. He voluntarily asked her if she did not wish something at the store, volunteering to bring home whatever was needed.

"What's come over the man?" thought the housekeeper. "It's too good to last."

She was quite correct there. Mr. Holden was naturally crabbed, and fair weather with him was the exception rather than the rule. On the present occasion it did not last many hours.

Abner Holden went to the store, but made other calls on the way, so that he was three hours absent, and did not return till twelve o'clock, the usual dinner hour in his household.

Meanwhile, Mr. Richmond, his caller of the morning, had been to see Sam Nichols, and inspected the horse he had for sale. He did not altogether like its appearance, and, moreover, he was prejudiced against him by what he had heard from Abner Holden, and came away without effecting a purchase.

"I don't think I can do better," he reflected, "than to take that horse of Holden's. Let me see, it is only half−past ten. I shall have time to go up there this morning. I suppose I might as well settle matters at once."

Accordingly, eleven o'clock found him again in Abner Holden's yard.

Herbert was out in the yard, engaged in splitting wood.

"Is Mr. Holden at home?" inquired the stranger, pausing.

"No, sir."

"Will he be at home soon?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. He only went out to the store. He ought to be home now."

"Then I think I will wait. I was here once before this morning. I was talking with him about buying one of his horses. If you can spare the time, I would like to have you go with me to the pasture, and I will take another look at the one I saw this morning."

"Certainly, sir," said Herbert, driving the ax into the block upon which he had been splitting, prepared to accompany Mr. Richmond to the pasture.

They reached the bars dividing the pasture from the next field. Spitfire was cropping the grass just on the

other side.

"There," said the stranger, pointing him out, "that is the horse I was looking at."

"THAT ONE!" repeated Herbert, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, he is a fine−looking animal."

"Ye−es," said Herbert, hesitatingly.

"However, I don't so much care about that, as for his being gentle. I want him for a family horse, such as my wife may drive, without fear, while I am away."

"Did Mr. Holden say he's gentle?" asked Herbert.

"Yes. He recommended him highly for that, and told me he had no serious defect."

"Are you sure this is the horse?" asked Herbert.

"Certainly. I am not likely to be mistaken in it. I suppose it is all as he says?"

Herbert was in a perplexing position. He knew that if he told the truth he should incur Abner Holden's anger, but his conscience revolted at suffering the stranger to be taken in, and thus, perhaps, exposing his wife to serious danger.

"I am afraid I cannot confirm what Mr. Holden says," he answered, reluctantly. "The horse is very ill−tempered, and is blind of one eye."

"Is it possible? Then I have had a narrow escape. You have done me a good service, my boy, in telling me the truth, for I am, myself, unused to horses, and should have taken the animal on your employer's recommendation. Accept this acknowledgment of my indebtedness."

He would have placed a five−dollar bill in Herbert's hand, but our hero firmly refused to receive it.

"I have only done my duty, sir. I cannot accept money for doing that. Thank you all the same."

"Perhaps you are right, my lad. If I ever have a chance to serve you, don't hesitate to let me know it."

"There'll be a storm if Mr. Holden hears of this," thought Herbert. "But I could not do otherwise."

## CHAPTER X. THE CLOUDS GATHER

At twelve o'clock Abner Holden returned home, still in good humor. As he did not anticipate another call from his expected customer until the afternoon, he made no inquiries.

"Perhaps he won't hear about it," thought Herbert, and as he did not wish to have any trouble with Mr. Holden, he hoped it might prove so.

Abner was so elated at the thought of his good bargain in prospect, that he could not keep it to himself.

"I've about sold Spitfire, Mrs. Bickford," he said to the housekeeper.

"Sold Spitfire! Who wants to buy him?"

"A man that called here this morning. What do you think he wants him for?"

"To break his neck," suggested the housekeeper.

"He wants him for a good family horse for his wife to drive," and Abner Holden burst into a laugh.

"Perhaps he's anxious to become a widower," said Mrs. Bickford.

"No; the fact is he thinks the horse is gentle."

"You told him so, I suppose?"

"Of course, I did."

"Knowing it to be false?"

"Shut up, Mrs. Bickford. You know all is fair in trade."

"No, I don't, Mr. Holden. To my mind, a lie's just as much a lie in trade as in anything else. I suppose the man trusted to your recommendation."

"Suppose he did. I got cheated on the horse, and I've got to get rid of it, somehow. As it is, I shall make a handsome profit."

"Well, Mr. Holden, all I've got to say is, I am glad I haven't got as tough a conscience as you have."

"You don't know anything about business, Mrs. Bickford."

"Well, manage things your own way. I ain't responsible, but I pity the poor man if he buys Spitfire."

"So do I," chuckled Abner. "That's where you and I agree, Mrs. Bickford."

Herbert listened in silence. He was disgusted with the utter disregard of fair dealing exhibited by Abner Holden, though he was not surprised at it. He felt glad that he had been the means of saving Mr. Richmond from being overreached, though he know very well that Mr. Holden's rage would be furious when he learned what had interfered with the trade. He did not feel under any obligations to reveal his own agency in the matter, unless direct inquiry was made of him. In that case, he would manfully stand by his acts.

"I'm expecting the man this afternoon, Mrs. Bickford," said Mr. Holden, "and shall stay around home to see him. When he comes, call me at once; and mind, not a word about Spitfire."

"Just as you say. I wash my hands of the whole affair."

"Washing your hands won't do you any harm," said Abner, with a laugh at what he supposed to be a witticism.

Mrs. Bickford took no notice of this remark. It was not quite easy to say why she remained in charge of Mr. Holden's household, for certainly, she had no respect for her employer. However, he did not meddle with her, or, if he did, he got the worst of it, and it was perhaps the independence that she enjoyed which led her to remain in the house. Knowing Abner's character, she was not particularly shocked at this last evidence of it, but went about her work as usual, with scarcely a thought of what had passed.

Abner Holden sat at the window, and looked up the road, awaiting anxiously the appearance of the customer.

"I hope he'll bring the money with him," he thought. "I'd like to have matters all arranged to−day, before he smells a rat. If I get the money once in my hands, he may scold all he pleases about the horse. It won't disturb my rest."

But the old clock in the corner kept ticking—minute after minute passed—and still the stranger did not appear.

"He can't have struck a bargain with Sam Nichols," muttered Abner, apprehensively. "If he has, it'll be sort of a swindle on me. Maybe Nichols has been telling him lies about me."

Abner waxed so angry over this supposition, that although it was merely conjecture, he already began to

consider in what way he could "come up with Sam Nichols."

"That money would come very handy," thought Abner. "There's a horse worth two of Spitfire, I can get for a hundred and fifty, and that would leave me a hundred. I wish he would come."

He looked out of the window, and, not content with that, went out of the front door, and, shading his eyes with his hands, looked up the road. But he could see nothing of Mr. Richmond. Abner began to fear that he had lost his bargain.

"I guess I'll put on my hat and go round to the tavern," he said to Mrs. Bickford. "If the gentleman I spoke of should call while I am away, just send the boy around after me as quick as possible."

"Very well."

Abner Holden walked hurriedly to the tavern, determined to bring about a bargain, which would be so desirable for him, if it were a possible thing. He must and would get rid of Spitfire, however many falsehoods he might have to tell. What was truth in comparison to two hundred and fifty dollars! Suppose Spitfire should run away with the stranger's wife and break her limbs, or even her neck, it was everybody's duty to look out for himself in this world.

Thus reasoned Abner Holden. There is no particular need of my commenting upon the fallacy of this reasoning, since it is not likely that any of my young readers will sufficiently admire his character to be in any danger of being led into imitation of it.

At the end of a very few minutes, Abner stood on the piazza, of the tavern, a little out of breath with rapid walking.

"Is Mr. Richmond still here?" he inquired of the landlord, anxiously.

"Yes, but he means to leave in five minutes."

"Where is he?"

"In his room."

"I want to see him on particular business—I wish you would send up and ask him to come down."

"Very well."

"William," said the landlord, summoning his son, "go up and tell Mr. Richmond that Mr. Holden wishes to see him."

"You don't know of his having bought a horse of Sam Nichols, do you?" asked Abner, nervously, of the landlord.

"No, I am sure he has not."

Abner felt somewhat relieved by this. As long as he was still unprovided with a horse, there was still a chance of Spitfire. He resolved, if necessary, to abate something from the rather high price he had demanded in the morning.

Mr. Richmond followed William downstairs.

"You wish to see me?" he asked, glancing toward Mr. Holden.

"Yes, about the horse you were looking at this morning."

"I have concluded not to take him," said the other, coldly.

"You didn't buy of Sam Nichols, did you?"

"No; his horse did not suit me."

"You haven't any other in your eye, have you?" asked Mr. Holden.

"No."

"Then, hadn't you better look at mine again?" he said, persuasively.

"It would be of no use."

"If the price is any objection," said Abner, insinuatingly, "I don't know but I might say a LEETLE less, though the animal's wuth more'n I ask for it."

"It isn't the price that stands in the way, Mr. Holden."

"What is it, then? Sam Nichols hain't been slandering me, I hope. If he has, I'll be even with him."

"Spare your anger against Sam Nichols. He said nothing against you; though I believe you warned me against him."

"Yes, I did. I felt it my duty to caution you, so you might not be overreached by him."

"You prefer to overreach me yourself," said the other, quietly.

Abner started, and changed color.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Who told you I wanted to overreach you?"

"Why, this is the way the matter stands. I asked you for a good family horse, such as my wife might drive with safety. Didn't you understand me so?"

"Of course."

"And you tried to sell me an ill−tempered brute, blind of one eye, for an extortionate price. Can you deny it?"

"Somebody's been telling you a pack of lies," said Abner, hoarsely.

"I don't think they are lies. I have every reason to think they are true. By the way, what is the animal's name?"

"Spitfire," said Abner, rather reluctantly.

"A good name for a family horse," said the stranger, sarcastically.

"Where did you learn all this?" demanded Abner. "Who's been slandering the horse?"

"I got my information at your place, from one who ought to know."

A light dawned upon Abner Holden's mind.

"Herbert told him," muttered Abner to himself. "That cursed boy has spoiled my bargain, and he shall smart for it."

In a furious rage, he retraced his steps homeward, breathing threats of vengeance dire against our hero.

# CHAPTER XI. A CRISIS

Abner Holden's disappointment was excessive at the sudden falling through of his horse trade, and his feeling of anger against Herbert for his agency in the matter was in proportion to his disappointment. His chief thought, as he hurried home from the tavern, was that he would make the boy smart for his interference.

"I'll give him a good flogging," muttered Abner to himself, and he felt that this would be some slight compensation for the injury and slight loss which Herbert had caused him to sustain.

"I'll teach him to spoil my bargains," he said, while his face wore an expression decidedly ugly. "I reckon he won't do it a second time."

It was in this frame of mind that he reached home.

Herbert had just entered the kitchen with an armful of wood for the housekeeper, and having thrown down his burden, was about to go back, when, on turning, he confronted the stormy and wrathful face of his employer.

"He's found out," Herbert concluded at once, and he braced his nerves for the storm which he knew must come.

"Well, young man, I've an account to settle with you," said Abner, abruptly.

Herbert did not reply, but waited for Mr. Holden to state the matter. But in Abner's present angry condition, he chose to construe his silence into cause of offense.

"Why don't you speak?" he said. "What do you mean by looking me impudently in the face?"

"I have no intention of being impudent," said Herbert. "I think you are mistaken, Mr. Holden."

"Do you dare to tell me I am mistaken?" roared Holden, lashing himself into a rage.

"I don't mean to do or say anything that is not perfectly respectful," said Herbert, manfully, looking steadily in his employer's face.

"Why did you tell a pack of lies about my horse this morning, and so make me lose my trade?"

"I didn't tell a pack of lies," said Herbert.

"Didn't you tell the man who came here that he was an ill−tempered brute, and blind of one eye?"

Abner Holden glared upon the boy as if he wanted to spring upon him, and give him a thrashing on the spot.

"I told him that Spitfire was not suitable for a family horse."

"What did you tell him that for?"

"Because it was true."

"Supposing it was true, didn't you know that you were spoiling my trade?"

"I am sorry for that, Mr. Holden, but if he had bought the horse, supposing it to be gentle, it might have broken his wife's neck."

"What business was that of yours? That was his lookout."

"I didn't look upon it in that way. I thought he ought to buy the horse with his eyes open."

"You did, did you?" roared Abner. "Then I advise you to open your own eyes, for you're going to get one of the worst lickings you ever had."

Abner Holden's anger now reached an ungovernable pitch. Looking about him for a weapon, he espied the broom resting against the wall. He seized it, and with a scream of rage, made for Herbert, shaking off the grasp of the housekeeper, who tried to stay him.

Herbert, perceiving the peril in which he stood, ran round the table, which stood, with leaves open, in the middle of the floor. Abner pursued him with headlong haste.

"Lord preserve us! The man is mad!" ejaculated the housekeeper, trying to get out of the way. But in this she was not successful. The kitchen was small, and before she could guard against a collision, Abner had stumbled over Mrs. Bickford, and both came down together. She uttered a succession of piercing shrieks, and, with a view of relieving Herbert, pretended that her life was in danger, grasping Abner by the hair and holding him fast.

Herbert saw that this was the favorable moment for escape, and, seizing his hat, dashed out of the house. He ran across the fields as fast as his limbs could carry him, expecting that he would be pursued. Before we follow him, we will describe the scene that took place after his flight.

"Let go my hair, Mrs. Bickford!" exclaimed Abner, tugging vainly to break from the housekeeper's grasp.

"I dare not," she said. "I'm afraid you'll murder me."

"You are making a fool of yourself," retorted Abner. "What should I murder you for? But I will, if you don't let go!"

"Hello, who's talking of murder?" demanded a rough voice.

The speaker was a neighbor, who chanced to be passing, and was led to enter by the uproar, which was plainly audible outside.

"Save me!" exclaimed Mrs. Bickford. "He's threatened to murder me."

"Stop your nonsense, you old fool!" retorted Abner, vexed at the equivocal position in which he was placed.

"What's all this row about? Mr. Holden, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for attacking a defenseless woman."

"I didn't intend to," said Abner, sullenly. "She got in my way, and I stumbled over her; and then she seized me by the hair."

"What were you going to do with that broom?" demanded the other, suspiciously.

"What was I going to do? I was going to thrash that rascally boy of mine, and Mrs. Bickford knew it perfectly well."

"What has he done?"

"He? He's spoiled a trade of mine by his lying, and I was going to flog him for it, when Mrs. Bickford got in my way."

"Well, said the visitor, shrugging his shoulders, "I don't want to interfere in your affairs. I suppose that you've a right to flog the boy. but it strikes me that a broom handle is rather an ugly weapon."

"It isn't half heavy enough," said Abner, savagely; "but where is the boy? Did you see him?"

"Given leg−bail, I reckon, and I don't wonder at it."

"Run away?" ejaculated Abner, disappointed. "Did you see where he went?"

"No, I didn't, and if I had, I'm not sure that I would tell you."

Abner would like to have thrashed the man who showed so little sympathy with his anger, but he felt that it would hardly be prudent. He went to the door and looked out. But there was no trace of Herbert to be discovered.

"He'll get it when he does come back," he said to himself.

The idea that Herbert might not come back at all never once occurred to him. He resolved that the flogging should lose nothing by being deferred.

We must now return to Herbert, whom we left running across the fields.

His departure had been so sudden, that his prominent idea was to get out of the way of his employer's violence. He was at first under the impression that he was pursued, but when, after running perhaps a quarter of a mile, he ventured to look around, he saw, to his great relief, that there was no one on his track. Being out of breath, he stopped, and, throwing himself down on the grass in the shadow of a stone wall, began to consider his plans for the future.

Everything was in doubt except one point. He felt that he had broken, finally, the tie that bound him to Mr. Holden. He would not return to him. He had experienced enough of Abner's ugly and unreasonable temper to feel that there could be no harmony between them, and as to submitting to personal violence from such a man as that, his blood boiled at the thought. He knew that he should resist with all the strength he possessed, and what the result might be he did not dare to think. What lay before him in the future he could not conjecture, but whatever it might be, he felt that it was better than to remain an inmate of Abner Holden's household, and in his power.

But where should he go? That was a question not easily answered. After his experience of his uncle's indifference to him, he did not wish to appeal to him for aid, yet he felt that he should like to go to New York and try his fortune there. Thousands of people lived there, and earned enough to support them comfortably. Why not he? It was a thousand miles off, and he might be some time in getting there. He might have to stop and work on the way. But, sooner or later, he resolved that he would find his way to the great metropolis.

But there was one difficulty which presented itself at the outset. This difficulty related to his clothing. He had on a pair of overalls and a ragged vest which Abner had provided for him, intending that he should save the good suit he brought with him for Sundays. His present suit, which had been worn by half a dozen of his predecessors, Herbert decidedly objected to wearing, as, in addition to being faded and worn, it was by no means a good fit. He must get his other suit.

But this was in Mr. Holden's attic, and it would hardly be prudent to venture back for it, as Abner was on the lookout for him, and there would be a collision, and perhaps he might be forcibly detained. Fortunately, his money he had about him. This amounted, as the reader already knows, to nearly fifteen dollars, and would, no doubt, be of essential service to him in the project which he had undertaken. As to the clothes, he must think of a way of securing them, before setting out on his journey to New York.

## CHAPTER XII. RALPH THE RANGER

One thing was certain. There was no chance of obtaining the clothes at present. Probably his best course would be to wait till night, and then come back to the house on the chance of gaining Mrs. Bickford's attention. In the meantime, probably, the best thing to be done was to conceal himself temporarily in a belt of woods lying about a mile back of Abner Holden's house.

As soon as his breath was recovered, Herbert got up, and headed for these woods. A few minutes found him in the midst of them. He made his way with some difficulty through the underbrush, parting the thick stems with his hands, until he reached a comparatively open space of perhaps an acre in extent. In the midst of this space a rude hut was visible, constructed of logs, and covered with the branches of trees. In front of it, sitting on the stump of a tree, which perhaps had been spared for that purpose, sat a tall man, with very brown complexion, clad in a rough hunting suit. His form, though spare, was tough and sinewy, and the muscles of his bare arms seemed like whipcords. A short, black pipe was in his mouth. The only covering of his head was the rough, grizzled hair, which looked as if for months it had never felt the touch of a comb or brush.

Herbert, though he had never before seen this singular being, recognized him at once as Ralph the Ranger, as he was properly called in the village. For years he had lived a hermit−like existence in the forest, supporting himself mainly by his rifle. This was not difficult, for his wants were few and simple. What cause led him to shun the habitations of his kind, and make his dwelling in the woods, no one knew, and perhaps no one ever would know, for of himself he was silent, and it was not easy to draw him out.

He looked up as he heard Herbert's step, and said, abruptly: "Well, boy, what do you want?"

His manner was rough, but our hero was not afraid. He answered frankly, "I am hiding."

"Hiding? Who from?"

"From Abner Holden."

"Humph! Why should you hide from him? What has he to do with you?"

"I am bound to him, and he is angry with me because he thinks I interfered in a trade of his. He wanted to beat me, so I ran away."

"Good!" said Ralph, approvingly. "Tell me about it."

Herbert drew near, and told his story.

Ralph listened attentively.

"Boy," said he, "I think you are honest. There are not many that can be said of. As for Abner Holden, I know him. He's a mean skinflint. Pah!" and he spit, contemptuously. "You'd better not go back to him."

"I don't mean to," said Herbert, promptly.

"What are your plans? Have you formed any?"

"I want to go to New York."

"To New York," repeated Ralph, thoughtfully. "You wish to get into the crowd, while I seek to avoid it. But it is natural to youth. At your age, it was so with me. I hope, my boy, the time will not come when you, like me, will wish to shun the sight of men."

Herbert listened in sympathy, not unmingled with surprise, to the speech of this man, which was quite superior to what might have been expected from one of his appearance.

"When do you wish to start?" asked Ralph, after a pause.

"First, I want to get my clothes."

"Where are they?"

"In my room, at Mr. Holden's house."

"How do you expect to get them?"

"Mrs. Bickford, the housekeeper, is a friend of mine. I thought I might go there to−night, and attract her attention without rousing Mr. Holden. She would get them for me."

"Good! I will go with you."

"Will you?" asked Herbert, gladly.

He had felt a little doubt as to the result of his expedition, as, if Mr. Holden should be awake and start in

pursuit, he would stand a good chance of being captured, which, above all things, he most dreaded. But with so able an auxiliary as Ralph, he knew he could bid easy defiance to Abner, however much the latter might desire to molest him.

"Yes, I will stand by you, and you shall share my cabin with me as long as you like. You are not afraid of me?"

"No," said Herbert, quickly.

Ralph looked kindly at him.

"Some of the children run from me," he said. "It is not strange, perhaps, for I look savage, I suppose, but you do well to trust me. I will be your friend, and that is something I have not said to any living being for years. I like your face. It is brave and true."

"Thank you for your favorable opinion, Mr.—" Here Herbert paused in uncertainty, for he had never heard Ralph's surname.

"Call me Ralph. I have done with the title of \ civilization. Call me Ralph. That will suit me best."

"Thank you for your kindness, then, Ralph."

"What is your name?"

"Herbert—Herbert Mason."

"Then, Herbert, I think you must be hungry. Have you eaten your dinner?"

"No," said Herbert.

"Then you shall share mine. My food is of the plainest, but such as it is, you are welcome. Come in."

Herbert entered the cabin. The only table was a plank supported at each end by a barrel. From a box in the corner Ralph drew out some corn−bread and some cold meat. He took a tin measure, and, going out of the cabin, filled it with water from a brook near by. This he placed on the rude table.

"All is ready," he said. "Take and eat, if my food is not too rude."

Herbert did eat, and with appetite. He was a growing boy, whose appetite seldom failed him, and he had been working hard since breakfast, which he had taken at six, while it was now one o'clock. No wonder he was hungry.

Ralph looked on with approval.

"You are the first that has shared my meal for many a long day," he said. "Day after day, and year after year, I have broken my fast alone, but it seems pleasant, after all," he said, musingly. "Men are treacherous and deceitful, but you," he said, resting his glance on the frank, ingenuous face of his youthful guest, "you must be honest and true, or I am greatly deceived."

"I hope you will find me so," said Herbert, interested more and more in the rough−looking recluse, about whose life he suspected there must be some sad secret, of which the world knew nothing.

After dispatching the meal provided by his hospitable entertainer, Herbert sat down on the grass just outside the cabin, and watched lazily the smoke which issued from Ralph's pipe, as it rose in many a fantastic curl.

"How long have you lived here, Ralph?" asked our hero at length.

"Ten years," said the recluse, removing his pipe from his lips.

"It is a long time."

"Yes, boy, a long time in the life of one as young as you, but to me it seems but yesterday that I built this cabin and established myself here."

"Are you not often lonely?"

"Lonely? Yes, but not more so than I should be in the haunts of men. I have company, too. There are the squirrels that leap from bough to bough of the tall trees. Then there are the birds that wake me with their singing. They are company for me. They are better company than men. They, at least, will not deceive me."

He paused, and bent his eyes upon the ground. He was thinking, not of the boy beside him, but of some time in the past, and the recollection apparently was not pleasant.

The afternoon wore away at length, and the shadows deepened in the woods. Herbert wandered about, and succeeded in gathering some nuts, which he carried to Ralph's cabin. When eight o'clock came, the Ranger said: "You had better lie down and rest, my boy; I will wake you up at twelve, and we will go together to Holden's place, and see if we can get your clothes."

To this proposal Herbert willingly assented, as he began to feel tired.

He slept, he knew not how long, when he was gently shaken by Ralph.

"Where am I?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

The sight of the Ranger bending over him soon brought back the recollection of his position, and he sprang up promptly. Ralph showed him an easier way out of the woods than that by which he had entered, and less embarrassed by the growth of underbrush.

In half an hour they were standing by Abner Holden's house. It was perfectly dark, the inmates probably being fast asleep.

"I know where the housekeeper sleeps," said Herbert. "I'll throw up a pebble at her window, and perhaps it will wake her up."

He did as proposed. Mrs. Bickford, who was a light sleeper, heard, and went to the window.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"It is I, Mrs. Bickford," said Herbert.

"What, Herbert? Shall I let you in?"

"No; I don't want to come in. All I want is my clothes. They are up in my trunk."

"I'll go up and get them for you."

She went upstairs and quickly returned with the clothes, which she let down from the window.

"Are you hungry, Herbert?" she asked. "Let me bring you something to eat."

"No, thank you, Mrs. Bickford; I am stopping with Ralph the Ranger. He has kindly given me all the food I want."

"What are you going to do? Are you going to stop with him?"

"No, I am going East in a day or two. I am going to New York. I will write to you from there."

"I am sorry to have you go, Herbert. I wish things could have been pleasanter, so that you might have stayed. But I think I hear Mr. Holden stirring. Good−by, and may God be with you!"

She closed the window hastily, and Herbert, not wishing to get into a collision with Abner Holden, who he suspected might have heard something, withdrew swiftly. Ralph, who was standing near by, joined him, and both together went back to the woods.

## CHAPTER XIII. A MOMENT OF PERIL

Abner Holden did not suspect that Herbert actually intended to leave him permanently; but when evening came, and he did not return, he became apprehensive that such was the case. Now, for more than one reason, he objected to our hero's leaving. First, because he was a strong, capable boy, and his services were worth considerable, and, secondly, because he disliked Herbert, and it was a satisfaction to tyrannize over him, as his position enabled him to do. There are some men in whom the instinct of petty tyranny exists to such an extent that they cannot feel happy without someone to exercise their authority over. Such a man was Abner Holden. He was a bully and a tyrant by nature, and decidedly objected to losing one so completely in his power as Herbert was.

When night came and Herbert did not return, he decided to search for him, and bring him back, if found, the very next day. He did not impart his purpose to Mrs. Bickford, for he was at no loss to discover that the sympathies of the kind−hearted housekeeper were not with him, but with the boy whom he wished to abuse. When breakfast was over, therefore, he merely said: "Mrs. Bickford, I am going out for a short time. If Herbert should return while I am absent, you may tell him to finish hoeing those potatoes in the garden."

"Do you think he will come back, Mr. Holden?" asked the housekeeper.

"Yes; he will soon be tired of wandering about. He will learn to prize a good home after he has slept out of doors one night."

Mrs. Bickford did not reply; but she did not feel quite so much confidence as her employer appeared to do in the excellence of the home which Herbert had enjoyed under Abner Holden's roof.

"It's just as well he doesn't suspect Herbert's plan," she thought, and without further words, began to clear away the breakfast dishes.

Abner was not long in deciding that Herbert was hidden in the woods. That, indeed, seemed the most natural place of refuge for one placed in his circumstances. He determined, therefore, to seek there first.

We must now return to Herbert.

"If you will wait till nightfall," said Ralph, "you will be more safe from pursuit, and I will accompany you for a few miles."

This seemed plausible, and our hero consented.

Ralph went off on a hunting expedition, but Herbert remained behind, fearing that he might tear or stain his clothes, of which it was necessary, now, to be careful. How to pass the time was the question. To tell the truth, the hunter's cabin contained little that would help him. There were no books visible, for Ralph seemed to have discarded everything that would remind him of that civilization which he had forsaken in disgust.

Herbert went outside, and watched the squirrels that occasionally made their appearance flitting from branch to branch of the tall trees. After a while his attention was drawn to a bird, which flew with something in its beak nearly to the top of a tall tree not far off.

"I shouldn't wonder," thought Herbert, interested, "if she's got a nest, and some young ones up there. I have a great mind to climb up and see whether she has or not."

He measured the tree with his eye. It was very tall, exceeding in its height most of its forest neighbors.

"I don't know as I can climb it," he said to himself, a little doubtfully; "but anyway, I am going to try. There's nothing like trying."

This was a lucky determination for Herbert, as will speedily appear.

It was twenty feet to the first branching off, and this was, of course, the most difficult part of the ascent, since it was necessary to "shin up," and the body of the tree was rather too large to clasp comfortably. However, it was not the first time that Herbert had climbed a tree, and he was not deficient in courage as well as skill. So he pushed on his way, and though once or twice in danger of falling, he at length succeeded in reaching the first bough. From this point the ascent was comparatively easy.

In a short time our hero was elated to find himself probably fifty feet from the ground, so high it made him feel a little dizzy to look down. He reached the nest, and found the young birds—three in number. The parent bird hovered near by, evidently quite alarmed for the safety of her brood. But Herbert had no intention of harming them. He only climbed up to gratify his curiosity, and because he had nothing more important to do. Though he

did not know it, his own danger was greater than that which threatened the birds. For, just at that moment, Mr. Holden, in his wanderings, had reached Ralph's cabin, and Herbert, looking down, beheld, with some anxiety, the figure of the unwelcome visitor. He saw Abner enter the cabin, and, after a few moments' interval, issue from it with an air of disappointment and dissatisfaction.

"How lucky," thought our hero, "that he did not find me inside!"

Abner Holden looked about him in every direction but the right one. He little dreamed that the object of his pursuit was looking down upon him, securely, from above.

"I don't think he'll find me," thought Herbert. "Wouldn't he give something, though, to know where I am?"

But our young hero was doomed to disappointment. Just at that moment— the unluckiest that could have been selected—he was seized with a strong inclination to sneeze.

Alarmed lest the sound should betray him, he made desperate efforts to suppress it but Nature would have its way, and probably did so with greater violence than if no resistance had been made.

"Ker−chew!" sneezed Herbert, violently.

As he anticipated, Abner's attention was attracted by the loud noise, which he rightly concluded could hardly proceed from a bird or squirrel. He had just been on the point of leaving the cabin for some other part of the woods, but at this sound he stood still. Looking up to discover whence it proceeded, his keen eyes detected Herbert in his lofty perch. His eyes sparkled with joy.

"Ha, you young rascal!" he exclaimed. "So you are there, are you? You were going to run away, were you?"

Now that Herbert was actually discovered, his fear left him, and he became perfectly self−possessed and confident.

"Yes, Mr. Holden," he answered, quietly; "such is my intention."

"Boldly spoken," said Abner, provoked by our hero's coolness, for he had hoped to find him terrified and pleading for forgiveness. "I admire your frankness, and will try to equal it. I suppose you'll give it up as a bad job now."

"No, sir," said Herbert, firmly.

"Take care, sir," said Abner, in anger and astonishment. "Take care how you defy me. Come down here at once."

"What for?" inquired Herbert, without stirring.

"What for?" repeated Abner Holden. "That I may flog you within an inch of your life."

"That's no inducement," said our hero, coolly.

"Do you refuse to obey me?" shouted Abner, stamping angrily.

"I refuse to be flogged. You don't get me down for any such purpose, Mr. Holden."

"Then, by Heaven, if you won't come otherwise, I'll come up and help you down."

The angry man at once commenced the ascent. Anger gave him strength, and, though he was unaccustomed to climbing, he continued to mount up about halfway to the first branching off, somewhat to Herbert's uneasiness, for he felt there was a chance that he might fall into Abner's clutches.

But Abner's success was only temporary. At the height of a dozen feet he began to slip, and, despite his frantic struggles, he slid gradually to the ground, tearing his coat, which he had not taken the precaution to remove, and blistering his hands.

What was to be done?

In his anger and excitement, he drew a pistol from his breast pocket, and pointed upward, saying menacingly, "Come down at once, you young rascal, or I will fire!"

Herbert was startled. He did not believe the pistol to be loaded. Still it might be.

"Will you come down?" repeated Abner, fiercely. "Quick, or I fire."

Herbert's cheek was pale, but in a resolute voice he answered, "I will not."

Abner Holder, laid his finger upon the trigger, and would, in his anger, have carried his threat into execution; but at the critical moment he was conscious of a violent blow, and the pistol was wrenched from his hand.

Turning quickly, he met the stern glance of Ralph the Ranger.

## CHAPTER XIV. TAKEN PRISONER

"What does all this mean?" demanded Ralph, in a tone of command.

"What right have you to interfere?" said Abner Holden, sulkily.

"The right that any man has to prevent murder," said Ralph, briefly.

"I wasn't going to murder him."

"What were you going to do?" asked Ralph, looking keenly at Abner. "Why were you pointing the pistol at him?"

"I wanted to frighten him."

"You meant to have him think you were going to fire. I believe you were."

"Why didn't he come down when I bade him?"

"I'll answer that question," said Herbert, from the top of the tree. "Mr. Holden promised to beat me if I would come down, but I didn't think that a sufficient inducement."

"I have a right to beat you," said Abner, doggedly. "Ain't you bound to me; tell me that?"

"I was," said Herbert, "and if you had treated me well, I would have stayed with you; but I don't mean to remain to be abused."

"You hear the lad's answer," said Ralph. "I like his spirit, and I'll stand by him. He won't return with you."

While this conversation had been going on, Abner had been slowly edging himself toward the spot upon which Ralph had thrown the pistol, which he had wrenched from him. While Ralph was speaking, he suddenly darted forward, seized the weapon, and, facing about, said, with malicious triumph, "Now, you're in my power, both of you. We'll see whether he'll go back with me or not."

As he spoke he pointed the pistol toward Ralph.

The latter laughed contemptuously.

This irritated Abner Holden.

"I will count ten," he said. "Unless the boy begins to come down before I stop, I fire at you. One—two——"

"Hold!" said Ralph, and, drawing his revolver from beneath his hunting− jacket, he pointed it at Abner. "Two can play at that game, Abner Holden. This revolver is fully loaded. It gives me six chances of hitting you. You have but one chance with your pistol. The moment your finger touches the trigger, your doom is sealed. I never miss my aim."

A sickly hue overspread the face of Abner Holden. He had counted on Ralph's being unarmed. He saw that he had made an important and most unlucky mistake.

"Put down your revolver," he said, in a very different tone. "I wasn't in earnest, you know."

"I know nothing of the kind," retorted Ralph. "You looked to me as if you were very much in earnest."

Still with his revolver he covered Abner.

"Put down your weapon," said Abner, nervously. "It might go off."

"Yes, it might," returned Ralph. "I will lower it, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you lay down your pistol on the ground."

Abner demurred, but finally felt compelled to do as he was commanded.

"That is well," said Ralph, quietly. "Now, I will take care that you are not tempted by it again."

He walked toward the pistol, lifted it, and, pointing it in the reverse direction, fired it off among the trees.

"So much for that," he said. "Now, Herbert, you may come down."

Herbert complied promptly. He felt the utmost confidence in the prowess and good faith of his new friend, and did not fear to descend, though his bitterest enemy awaited him beneath.

Meanwhile an idea struck Abner Holden. He saw that he was no match for Herbert as long as Ralph chose to befriend him. He resolved to enlist the latter on his side.

"Hark you, Ralph," he said, "come aside with me. I wish to speak to you a moment."

Ralph followed him a few paces in silence.

"Now what is it you have to say to me?" he demanded.

"About this boy," said Abner, insinuatingly. "He is bound to me."

"Well?"

"And the law gives me authority over him."

"Well?"

"I want him to go back with me."

"Well?"

"Will you promise not to interfere between us?"

"I can't promise that," said Ralph, briefly.

"Stay a moment," said Abner, seeing that he was on the point of leaving him; "of course, I am willing to make it worth your while. I'll give you—well, three dollars, to help me secure him, and carry him back to my house."

"What do you take me for?" asked Ralph, looking at the other, steadily.

"For a poor man," said Abner. "Think a moment. Three dollars will buy you provisions for a week. They couldn't be more easily earned. In fact, you needn't do anything. Only promise not to interfere between the boy and myself."

Ralph turned upon him scornfully.

"I have promised the boy my protection," he said, "and you would have me forfeit my word for a paltry three dollars?"

"I'll give you five," said Abner, supposing that the sum he had offered was not sufficient.

"Not for five dollars, nor five thousand," returned Ralph, shortly. "I thought you meant to insult me, but I see you only judge me by yourself. The boy shall not return with you. Make up your mind to that."

"I can have you arrested," said Abner, angrily.

Ralph laughed.

"Let that comfort you for the loss of the boy," he said.

"I'll have the boy, too," muttered Abner, turning to leave them.

"Where are you going?" demanded Ralph.

"I am going home."

"Not yet."

"Why not?" demanded Abner, facing about.

"Because I can't spare you yet."

"What right have you to interfere with my movements?" said Abner.

"None, perhaps; but I will inquire into that afterward. It is enough that, for the present, you must stay here."

"I shall do no such thing," said Abner, and he again turned to go.

Ralph deliberately lifted his weapon, and took aim.

"What do you say now?" he asked.

"Surely, you will not fire at me," said Abner, turning pale.

"Not if you remain where you are."

"How long do you mean to keep me?" demanded Abner, sullenly.

"As long as may be necessary. That is all. Herbert, go into the cabin and look in one corner for a cord."

Herbert soon returned with a stout cord, tough and strong.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked Abner suspiciously.

I'm going to bind you," said Ralph, coolly.

"I'll have the law on you for this," said Abner, hoarsely.

"All in good time," said Ralph. "But I advise you to consider whether the law has nothing to say against attempted murder."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that you attempted to murder this boy, and would have done so, in all probability, if I had not interfered. When I am arrested, I shall feel it my duty to make this known to the authorities."

Abner was silent. He felt that Ralph's testimony would have an ugly look.

"Let me go," he said, after a pause. "You needn't be afraid of my troubling either of you. Don't tie me."

"Abner Holden," said Ralph, "I know you, and I know you are not to be trusted. I have resolved to help this boy to escape from you, and I mean to do it effectually. For this purpose, I must subject you to temporary

inconvenience. I advise you not to resist."

He had already tied the hands of Abner Holden, who, as he looked into the fearless, resolute face of the Ranger, felt that it would not do to resist. It chafed him most to think that Herbert, his bound boy, should be a witness of his humiliation, and he scowled savagely at our hero. But Herbert showed no triumph. His was a brave and generous nature, and had it rested with him, he would have let Mr. Holden go, but he did not think it best to interfere.

Ralph quickly tied both hands and feet, and then took the helpless body of Abner into the cabin, where he placed him in one corner.

"Are you thirsty?" he asked.

"Yes," said Abner, sullenly.

Ralph placed a cup of water to his lips. He also placed a loaf of bread beside him, which, though his hands were tied at the wrist, he would still be able to reach, and then beckoned to Herbert.

"Come," he said, "it is time that we were going."

Abner gnashed his teeth with anger, as he watched them issue from the cabin together, and felt how utterly helpless he was to prevent them.

# CHAPTER XV. A FOUR−FOOTED FOE

Abner Holden's reflections, when he found himself left alone in Ralph's cabin, bound hand and foot, were not of the most agreeable nature. It was humiliating to find himself baffled at every point, and, for once, completely defeated in his attempt to exercise his authority over the boy who had been bound to him.

That Herbert should escape from him beyond the chance of recovery seemed now almost certain. If he were free, something might be done. But he was so securely bound that it was impossible to get free without help, and the lonely situation of the cabin made it very doubtful whether anyone would come within hearing until the return of Ralph himself. When that would be was uncertain.

Three hours passed, and still no prospect of release. The bonds chafed his wrists, and his situation was far from comfortable. He tried to loosen the cords, but without success.

"Must I stay here all night?" he thought, in alarm.

But deliverance was at hand, though its first approach was disagreeable.

A large dog entered the cabin through the open door, drawn thither, probably, by curiosity. When he saw Abner he appeared to take a dislike to him, and barked vehemently.

"Go away, you brute!" said Abner, wrathfully.

The dog, however, appeared instinctively to understand that Abner Holden was able only to threaten him, and barked more furiously than before; sometimes approaching within a foot of the helpless prisoner, and showing a formidable row of teeth, which Abner feared every moment might fasten upon his arm or leg.

Abner Holden was not a man of courage. Though his disposition was that of a bully, he was easily frightened, and the fierce look of the dog alarmed him not a little. In fact, it might have tested the courage of a much braver man than Mr. Holden.

"Go away!" he shrieked, shrinking back as far as he could from the open mouth of his persecutor.

A hoarse bark was the only reply, and the dog made an artful spring, which was only a feint, but had too much the appearance of earnest to suit his enemy.

"Oh, will nobody save me from the brute?" groaned Abner, in an ecstasy of terror. "If I could only get my hands loose!" and he tugged frantically at the cord.

Feeling how utterly he was at a disadvantage, he condescended to coax his fierce antagonist.

"Be quiet, that's a good dog," he said, with hypocritical softness.

The dog noticed a change in his tone, and evidently viewed it with some suspicion. Still his bark became less fierce and his looks less threatening.

"Good dog!" repeated Abner, in wheedling tones. "There's some dinner."

And he pushed over the provisions which Ralph had left.

While the dog was apparently taking his offer into consideration, a boy's voice was heard outside, calling "Carlo, Carlo!"

The dog pricked up his ears and ran out of the cabin.

"So you are here, you truant," said the boy. "Why did you run away? What have you to say for yourself, sir?"

The dog answered by a wag of his tail.

"Oh, yes, you may wag your tail, but I've a great mind to punish you for running away, and putting me to the trouble of finding you."

"Hello!" cried Abner, in a loud voice.

"Who's that?" thought the boy, surprised.

As the voice evidently came from within the cabin, he ventured to the door, and looked in. He was considerably surprised to see Abner Holden, whom he knew well by sight, lying bound hand and foot in the corner.

"Is that you, Mr. Holden?" he asked, in a tone of surprise.

"Of course it is," said Abner, who was not in a very pleasant frame of mind.

"Are you tied?"

"Don't you see I am?" snarled Abner.

"Who tied you?"

"That rascal Ralph. I mean to have him hung, if I live."

"Ralph! Why, I thought he was quiet and peaceable."

"He tried to murder me, but changed his mind, and tied me, as you see."

"I can't understand it."

"There is no need of understanding it. Come and unfasten these cords. I feel stiff and cramped."

The boy tried to unfasten the cord, but it was too securely tied.

"Where is your knife?"

"I haven't got any."

"Then take the axe."

There was an axe standing at the corner of the room. This the boy got, and, with the keen edge, severed the string.

Abner stretched himself to relieve his cramped limbs. Then he bethought himself of his late persecutor.

"Is that your dog?" he asked, surveying his four−legged enemy with no friendly expression.

"Yes, that's Carlo. Come here, Carlo."

"He's been in here barking at me, and threatening to bite me, and now I'll have my revenge."

"What do you mean?" inquired the boy, in alarm, as Abner seized the axe and swung it over his head.

"Stand aside, boy!"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to kill that brute."

"No, no, he's a good dog. He won't do any harm," said the boy, in alarm.

"I'll kill him," said Abner, fiercely.

The dog surveyed his enemy with suspicion. He seemed to understand that danger menaced him. He growled in a low, hoarse, ominous tone, which showed that he was on his guard, and meant to do his part of the fighting, if necessary.

His owner had retreated to the door, and now tried to call him away.

"Carlo, Carlo, come out here, sir."

But Carlo would not come. He had no intention of shrinking from the danger that threatened him, but was bent on defending himself, as became a brave and dauntless dog, whose courage was above suspicion.

If Abner had not been so exasperated, he might have been terrified, but anger re−enforced his courage, and, moreover, he had a great deal of confidence that the axe which he held in his hand would make him more than a match for the dog.

"I'll kill him!" he exclaimed, and once more he swung the axe over his head, and brought it down with a tremendous force in the direction of the dog.

Alas for poor Carlo, if the axe had struck him! But he was wary, and knew something of warlike tactics, and with watchful eye carefully noted Abner's movements. The boy uttered a cry of alarm at the peril of his favorite, but Carlo sprang to one side just as the axe descended, and it was buried in the earthen floor of the cabin so deeply that Abner could not immediately recover it.

The advantage was thus transferred to the other side, and the dog was not slow in perceiving it.

With a bound he sprang upon his adversary, and bore him to the floor, seizing his coat between his strong teeth. He pulled and tugged at this with a strength which no ordinary cloth could possibly withstand.

"Take him off! take him off!" shrieked Abner in terror.

The boy sprang to the rescue.

"Come away, Carlo," he said, grasping him by the collar; "come away, that's a good dog."

But, habitually obedient as Carlo was, his young master found it difficult to get him away. He felt that he had received a grievous injury—that his life had been attempted—and he wanted to have satisfaction. Finally his master succeeded in drawing him away, but not till Mr. Holden's coat was badly torn.

The latter was crestfallen and angry, and not so grateful as he ought to have been to his young defender.

"I'll make your father pay for this coat, you young rascal!" he said.

"It isn't my fault, Mr. Holden," said the boy.

"Yes, it is. It was your dog that tore my coat."

"Carlo wouldn't have torn it, if you hadn't attacked him."

"He attacked me first."

"You had better go away, Mr. Holden, or he may go at you again."

A low growl from the dog whom he held by the collar re−enforced this suggestion, and Abner, uttering threats both against the dog and his master, strode out of the cabin and bent his steps homeward.

As he entered the kitchen, the housekeeper turned, and, noticing his torn coat, exclaimed, "Good gracious, Mr. Holden, what's happened to you? How came your coat so badly torn?"

"It was a dog," muttered Abner, who did not care to be questioned.

Mrs. Bickford supposed he must have taken off the coat, and the dog had torn it as it lay upon the ground.

"What a pity!" she exclaimed. "Whose dog was it?"

"Alfred Martin's. I'll make Martin pay for the coat. He has no right to keep such a brute."

"You must be hungry, Mr. Holden."

"Yes, get me something as quick as possible."

"Have you seen anything of Herbert?" asked the housekeeper.

"No," snapped Abner.

This was a falsehood, of course, but he felt rather ashamed to confess that he had seen Herbert, and that the latter had got the better of him. Mrs. Bickford perceived that he was out of humor, and did not press the question. She concluded that he was angry because his quest had been unsuccessful.

# CHAPTER XVI. JUST TOO LATE

Leaving Abner Holden bound in his cabin, Ralph led Herbert, by a short path, out of the woods.

"Your best course," he said, "will be to take the cars for Columbus at Vernon. At Columbus you will go to Wheeling, and from there, over the Baltimore Ohio Railroad to Baltimore, and thence to New York. But all this will cost money."

"I have money," said Herbert.

"How much?"

"About fifteen dollars."

"Is that all?"

"Is it not enough to carry me to New York?"

"Hardly. Besides, when you get there, how will you get along? Have you any relations in the city?"

"Yes, an uncle."

"Then you will go to him?"

"No," said Herbert, hastily.

"Why not?"

"He does not care to see me. Shall I tell you what sort of a letter he wrote to Dr. Kent about me?"

"Yes, tell me."

Herbert, in indignant language, which correctly represented his feelings, gave the substance of the letter, which is already known to us.

"I shall not feel easy," he said, "until I am able to return the ten dollars which my uncle sent me. I am not willing to remain under obligations to one who cares so little for me."

"I think you are proud," said Ralph, bending his eyes upon the lad's glowing countenance.

"Perhaps I am," said Herbert; "but is it not a proper pride?"

"I cannot say no," answered Ralph; "but would you feel the same about incurring obligations to a friend?"

"No," said Herbert; "that would be different."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I am going to ask you to accept help from me."

To Herbert's surprise, Ralph drew out a small bag, originally intended for shot, and drew therefrom five golden coins, of five dollars each.

"Take them," he said, simply.

Herbert hesitated, while his face indicated extreme surprise.

"I thought—" he commenced, and then paused.

"You thought me poor," said Ralph, finishing the sentence for him. "Is it not so?"

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Most people think so," said Ralph. "But it was not poverty that drove me from the busy world to this solitude. Rich or poor, I had money enough for my wants. Here I have little use for money. To me it is a useless and valueless thing. You need have no hesitation in taking this. But on second thoughts, I had better give you more." And he was about to draw forth more.

"No, no," said Herbert, hastily. "It is quite sufficient. You are very, very kind. Some time I hope to repay you."

"No," said Ralph. "Do not talk of repayment. Let me have the pleasure of giving you this small sum."

"How kind you are," said Herbert, impulsively, "and to a stranger."

"Yet my obligation to you is greater than yours to me," said Ralph.

"How can that be?" asked the boy, raising his eyes to Ralph's grave face.

"You are the first human being in whose society I have taken pleasure for years. Deeply injured by man, I conceived a hatred for the whole race. But in your frank face I see much to like. I think I could trust you."

"I hope so," said Herbert.

"You have inspired in me a new feeling, for which I cannot account. Yesterday the world had no attractions for me. To−day I feel an interest in your welfare, at least."

"Why do you bury yourself in this lonely place?" said Herbert. "You cannot be happy in it. Come with me to New York. It must be a beautiful place."

Ralph smiled gravely.

"To the young the world seems bright," he said. "It is after years have swept away one illusion after another, after faith in one's fellowmen has been sorely tried, and the hollowness of the world's friendship has been proved, that the brightness fades."

"You have seen more of life than I," said Herbert, "and perhaps it is presumption in me to question what you say; but I cannot help feeling that you are mistaken. I am sure that there is such a thing as true friendship."

"How many true friends are you blessed with?" asked Ralph, a little sarcasm in his tone.

"Not many, perhaps, but some. There is good Dr. Kent and his family. I am sure of their friendship. Then," he added, his color slightly rising, "I think I have found another friend," and he looked in the face of his guide.

The grave face softened.

"Thank you, my lad," said Ralph. "You are right there, at least. You can rely upon my friendship being sincere."

"Then I am right, am I not?" said Herbert, smiling brightly.

"I believe you are," said the guide, after a pause, "and I thank you for teaching me a lesson."

"Man was made in the image of God," said Herbert. "If we doubt man, I think it is the same as doubting God."

Ralph did not reply, but walked on in thoughtful silence.

"How far is it to Vernon?" asked Herbert, when they had emerged from the woods.

"It is five miles farther. Can you walk so far?"

"Oh, yes; I have good stout legs. But suppose Mr. Holden should escape. He might pursue us."

Ralph smiled.

"I think I shall find him in the same place when I return," he said.

"He will be very angry with you."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Ralph, indifferently.

"Are you not afraid he will have you arrested?"

"No, I care little. If I am fined, I will pay the fine, and that will be the end of it."

"But you might be imprisoned?"

"If I see any danger of that, I shall be tempted to charge Abner Holden with his attempt upon your life. Don't make yourself anxious about me, my lad. I have little fear of what the law may do as far as my agency in this affair is concerned."

Ralph seemed so entirely unconcerned that something of his confidence was imparted to Herbert. Noting the erect mien and fearless glance of his guide, every movement betokening strength, he could not help feeling that Abner Holden would be rash to make such a man his enemy. He felt safe in his protection, and his apprehensions of capture passed away. So with lightened heart he walked the five dusty miles to the village of Vernon, accompanied by Ralph.

It was a thrifty village, with neat and tasteful dwellings lining the principal street. The railroad and manufactories had built it up rapidly and given it an air of prosperity which was pleasant to see.

"We will go at once to the railway station," said Ralph. "You may catch the next train, and it will be as well to leave this neighborhood as soon as possible."

They were fortunate enough to reach the station fifteen minutes before the eastern train departed.

Herbert bought a ticket for Columbus, fifty miles distant, and entered the train.

"Good−by, Herbert," said Ralph, from the platform.

"Good−by," said Herbert. "Thank you for all your kindness to me. Shall I not see you again?"

"I do not know," said Ralph, musing. "I have no wish nor intention of going to New York at present, yet I have a feeling that we shall meet again."

"I hope it may be so," said Herbert. "I shall be glad to see you again."

While he spoke the shrill sound of the railway whistle was heard, the train started, and Herbert was fairly off on his journey.

Just as he was leaving the depot, a wagon drove hastily up to the station, and Abner Holden jumped out. Herbert saw him as he looked from the window, and for a moment he was apprehensive, but the train was fairly

on the way.

"Stop! stop!" vociferated Abner. "Stop, I say!" for he had also caught sight of his bound boy on the way to freedom.

"You don't think they will stop the train for you, you fool!" said a man standing by. "You ought to have come sooner if you wanted to go by this train."

"I don't want to go by it," said Abner.

"What do you want, then?"

"My boy's run away, and I have just seen him aboard the train."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Your son?"

"No, I hope not. It's a young rascal that's bound to me."

"If he's a young rascal, I shouldn't think you'd want him back."

Turning away, for he saw that he had failed, his glance rested on Ralph.

Instantly his anger rose.

"It's your doings," said he, shaking his fist in impotent wrath at the sturdy hunter, whom he would have attacked had he dared. "It's your fault, and you shall pay for it if there's law in the land."

"What will the law say to your attempt to shoot the boy?" demanded Ralph, coolly.

Abner turned pale, and realized that his best course was to keep quiet about an affair which might seriously compromise himself.

# CHAPTER XVII. NEW ACQUAINTANCES

Herbert stopped overnight at Columbus.

The first train eastward left Columbus at seven o'clock in the morning. It was Herbert's intention to take this train, but unfortunately, as he thought at the time, the clock at the hotel by which his movements were guided was ten minutes too slow. The consequence was, that before he had quite reached the depot he saw the cars going out at the other end. He ran as fast as possible, hoping still to make up for lost time, but it was in vain.

"You're too late, youngster," said a porter, who had been assisting to stow away baggage. "You'll have to wait till the next train."

"When does the next train start?" asked our hero.

"Twelve o'clock."

"Then I shall have to wait till that time," Herbert concluded, with regret.

Yet, as he directly afterwards thought, it could make no particular difference, since he had no stated engagement to meet, and this consideration enabled him to bear the inevitable delay with a better grace.

"I suppose," he reflected, "I might as well go back to the hotel."

He turned to leave the building when a carriage drove hastily up to the station. It was drawn by two horses, and driven by a negro in livery. A lady put her head out of the window and inquired anxiously if the train had started. She addressed this question to Herbert, who happened to be nearest.

"Yes, madam," he answered, respectfully.

"I am so sorry," said the lady, in a tone of vexation and perplexity. "It was very important that my father should take that train."

"There is another train that starts at twelve," said Herbert. "It will make a difference of a few hours only."

"Yes," said the lady, "but you do not understand my difficulty. The few hours' difference in time would be of small importance, but my father is blind, and is, of course, for that reason, dependent upon the kindness of others. A gentleman of our acquaintance was going by this train, who would have taken charge of him and seen him safe to his destination. By losing the train we lose his services."

"My dear," said an elderly gentleman, sitting on the opposite seat, "if I can get somebody to see me on board, I think I can manage very well."

"On no account, father," was the hasty reply, "particularly under present circumstances."

"Where is the gentleman going?" asked Herbert, with interest.

"To Philadelphia."

"I am going on to New York," said our hero. "I have been disappointed like you. I expected to take the early train."

"Do you intend to go by the next train, then?" asked the lady.

"Yes, madam."

"Then, perhaps—I have a great mind to ask you to take charge of my father."

"I shall be very glad to be of service to you," said Herbert. "There is only one objection," he added, with some embarrassment.

"What is that?"

"Why," said Herbert, frankly, "I am obliged to be economical, and I was thinking of buying a second−class ticket."

"Oh," said the lady, promptly, "there need be no difficulty about that. If you will take the trouble to look after my father, we will gladly pay for your ticket."

"I am afraid my services will not be worth so much," said Herbert, modestly.

"You must leave us to estimate them. If you do what you have undertaken, we shall consider the expense well incurred."

Herbert made no further objection. He felt, indeed, that it would be quite a lift to him, in the present state of his finances, and besides would be a very easy way of earning the money. He therefore signified his thanks and his acceptance of the offer.

"When did you say the train starts?" asked the lady.

"At twelve."

"Nearly five hours. That will be too long to wait. I think, father, we will go home."

"Yes, my dear, I think that will be best."

"Are you obliged to go home before starting?" the lady inquired, addressing Herbert.

"No, madam, I have no home in Columbus. I passed last night at a hotel."

"Have you any particular plan for spending the next few hours?"

Herbert answered in the negative.

"Then will you not ride home with us? You will then be ready to start with my father."

"I shall be happy to do so."

"I think that will be much the best plan. Pompey, open the carriage door for the young gentleman."

Our hero was about to say that he could just as well open the door for himself, but he reflected that it was best to adapt himself to the customs of those he was with. He bowed, therefore, and waited till the coachman had opened the door for him, and stepped into the carriage. The lady signed to him to take a seat beside her, and the door was closed.

"Home, Pompey," said she, briefly.

The coachman ascended to his seat, and the spirited grays were soon whirling the party rapidly homeward.

It was a new position for our hero, and he felt it to be so. His parents had never been rich, and latterly had been very poor. Living in a small country village, he had never even seen so elegant a carriage as that in which he was now riding He sank back upon the luxuriously cushioned seat, and he could not help thinking how pleasant it would be if he could command so comfortable a conveyance whenever he wanted to ride out. But another thought succeeded this. If he were blind, like the gentleman whom he was to take charge of, it would be a very poor compensation to ride in a luxurious carriage. After all, things were not so unequal as they seemed at first sight.

"Since you are to be my father's traveling companion," said the lady, "perhaps you will not object to telling us your name."

"Certainly," said our hero, "my name is Herbert Mason."

"Are you going from home for the first time?" inquired the lady.

"I have no home," said Herbert. "My father and mother are both dead."

"Excuse me," said the lady, gently. "I am sorry to have touched upon a subject which must awaken sorrowful recollections. My father's name is Carroll. Father, you have heard that your young escort is Mr. Herbert Mason."

The old gentleman extended his hand, which Herbert took respectfully.

"I am afraid you will find me a troublesome charge," he said. "Since I have become blind I have been compelled to tax the kindness of others."

"The journey will be pleasanter to me," said Herbert, politely, "than if I were alone."

Mr. Carroll was evidently pleased with this remark, for he turned toward Herbert with increased interest.

"You can imagine how much more so it will be to me," he said. "I have not your resources for beguiling the tedium of the way. I would give all my possessions gladly, for your young eyes. All journeys are alike to me now, since, however interesting the scenery, it is a blank to me."

"That is indeed a privation, sir."

"Especially in the journey we are about to take. The Baltimore Ohio Railroad, as it is called, runs through a romantic and charming country, and affords views at once bold and beautiful. Have you ever traveled over the road?"

"No, sir."

"Then you will have all the pleasure of a first discovery. Before I became blind, before, indeed, the railway was located, I became, as a young man, familiar with this whole section of country, so that I have, at least, the remembrance of it. I am obliged now to live upon my memory."

"You say you have never been over this railroad," said the lady. "Have you ever been to the East?"

"No, madam, I have always lived in the State of Ohio."

"And you are now going to Philadelphia?" she inquired.

"I am going to New York," said Herbert.

"Indeed! Is it on a visit?"

"No, madam, I am expecting to live there; that is, if I can make a living."

"Are you dependent, then, upon your own exertions for support?"

"Yes, madam."

"You seem very young for such a responsibility."

"I am fourteen."

"I thought you a year older. My Oscar is fourteen, and I am afraid he would make a poor hand at supporting himself. What do you think, father?"

"I think you are right, my dear. Oscar has not been placed in circumstances to develop his self−reliance."

"No; that probably has something to do with it. But, Herbert, if you will permit me to call you so, do you not look forward to the future with apprehension?"

"No, madam," said Herbert. "I am not afraid but that I shall be able to get along somehow. I think I shall find friends, and I am willing to work."

"That is the spirit that leads to success," said the old gentleman, approvingly. "Work comes to willing hands. I think you will succeed."

"I hope so, sir."

Our hero was gratified to meet with so much sympathy from those whose wealth placed them far above him in the social scale. But it was not surprising, for Herbert had a fine appearance and gentlemanly manners, marked, too, by a natural politeness which enabled him to appear better than most boys of his age.

# CHAPTER XVIII. A YOUNG ARISTOCRAT

After a drive of three miles, which was accomplished in a short time by the spirited horses, the carriage entered, through an ornamental gate, upon a smooth driveway, which led up to a handsome mansion, of large size, with a veranda stretching along the entire front.

A boy, a little smaller than Herbert, ran out of the front door, and opened the door of the carriage before Pompey had time to descend from the box.

"What, grandpa, come back?" he said, in surprise.

"Yes, Oscar, we were too late for the train," said his mother. "I brought you back a companion for a, few hours. This is Herbert Mason, whom I intrust to your care, depending upon you to see that he passes his time pleasantly."

Oscar looked at Herbert inquisitively.

Herbert offered his hand, saying, "I am glad to make your acquaintance, Oscar."

"How long are you going to stay?" asked Oscar, as his mother and grandfather went into the house.

"I must return in time to take the twelve o'clock train."

"Is grandpa going, too?"

"Yes."

"And are you going to take care of him?"

"I believe so."

"I wouldn't want to.'

"Why not?"

"Oh, it's an awful bore to be tied to a blind man."

"You'd find it more of a bore to be blind yourself," said Herbert.

"Yes, I suppose I should. Grandpa wants me to go to walk with him sometimes, but I don't like it."

"If I had a grandfather who was blind, I think I should be willing."

"Wait till you have one, and you'll see how it is then."

"I suppose he needs somebody."

"Oh, well, he can take one of the servants, then. It's their business to work."

"Where do you live?" he asked, after a pause.

"I am going to live in New York."

"Are you? I should like to go there."

"Perhaps you wouldn't want to go as I am going."

"What, alone? Yes, I should rather go that way. Then I could do as I pleased. Now it's 'Oscar, do this,' and 'You mustn't do that,' all the time."

"That isn't what I mean exactly. I've got to earn my own living after I get there, and I don't know anybody in the city."

"You haven't run away from home, have you?"

"I haven't got any home."

"Where's your father and mother?"

"They are both dead."

"What are you going to do?"

"I hope to get into a store or counting−room and learn to be a merchant."

"I shan't have to work for a living," said Oscar, in a tone of importance.

"Because your family is rich, I suppose," said Herbert.

"Yes, we've got a large estate, ever so many acres. That's what mother's got. Then grandpa is rich besides, and I expect he will leave me a good deal of his money. He's pretty old, and I don't believe he'll live very long."

Oscar said this with such evident satisfaction that Herbert was disgusted, thinking it not very creditable to him to speculate so complacently upon his grandfather's speedy death.

"You seem to be well off, then," said he, at last, to the boy.

"Yes," said Oscar, "our family is one of the first in the State. My father is a Peyton."

"Is he?" asked Herbert, not appearing as much awestruck as Oscar expected.

"We've got a plantation in Virginia. We live there part of the year. My father's there now. I hope we shall go there soon."

"Do you like it better than here?"

"Yes, a good deal."

"This is a handsome place."

"Yes, this is mother's estate. The other belongs to father."

"Have you any brothers and sisters, Oscar?"

"I've got one sister. She's about twelve. But, I say, I thought you were a gentleman's son when I first saw you."

"So I am," said Herbert, emphatically.

"Was your father rich?"

"No."

"Did he have to work for a living?"

"Yes."

"Then he wasn't a gentleman," said Oscar, decidedly.

"Isn't anybody a gentleman that has to work for a living?" asked Herbert, his indignation excited by his companion's assumption of superiority.

"Of course not," said Oscar, coolly. "It isn't respectable to work. Niggers and servants work."

"That is where I don't agree with you," said Herbert, his face flushing.

"You don't pretend to be a gentleman, do you?" demanded Oscar, insolently.

"Yes, I do," said Herbert, firmly.

"But you're not one, you know."

"I don't know anything of the kind," said Herbert, angrily. "I suppose you call yourself one."

"Of course, I am a gentleman," said Oscar, complacently.

"You don't talk like one, at any rate," retorted Herbert.

This was new language for Oscar to hear. He had been accustomed to have his own way pretty much, and had been used to order round his father's servants and slaves like a little despot. The idea of being told by a boy who had to work for a living that he did not talk like a gentleman, did not suit him at all. His black eyes flashed and he clenched his fists.

"Do you mean to insult me?" he demanded.

"I never insult anybody," said Herbert, not feeling particularly alarmed by this hostile demonstration. "It is you that have insulted me."

"Didn't you tell me I was not a gentleman?" said Oscar, hotly.

"I said you did not talk like one."

"That's about the same thing," said Oscar.

"Just as you like. Even if I did say so, you said the same of me,"

"Well, suppose I did."

"I am as much a gentleman as you, to say the least," asserted Herbert.

"If you say that again, I'll knock you down," said Oscar, furiously.

"I'll say it all day, if I like," said Herbert, defiantly.

Perhaps it would have been better for Herbert to stop disputing, and to have taken no notice of Oscar's words. But Herbert was not perfect. He had plenty of spirit, and he was provoked by the airs Oscar chose to assume, and by no means inclined to allow him to arrogate a superiority over himself, merely on account of his wealth. Though manly and generous, he was quick to resent an insult, and accordingly, when Oscar dared to repeat what he had said, he instantly accepted the challenge as recorded above.

Had Oscar been prudent, he would have hesitated before endeavoring to carry his threat into execution. A moment's glance at the two boys would have satisfied anyone that the chances, in a personal contest, were decidedly in our hero's favor. Herbert was not only a little taller than Oscar, perhaps an inch and a half, but his shoulders were broader and his frame more muscular. Oscar had never done any work to strengthen his arms, while Herbert had been forced by circumstances to do so.

Oscar flung himself upon Herbert, and endeavored to bear him to the ground. But the latter, without an effort, repelled the charge, and flung himself free from his antagonist's grasp.

This naturally made Oscar more determined to overcome his foe. His face red with passion, he showered blows upon Herbert, which the latter parried with ease. At first he acted wholly upon the defensive, but, finding that Oscar's impetuosity did not abate, suddenly closed with him and threw him down.

Oscar rose but little hurt, for Herbert used no unnecessary force, and recommenced the assault. But the result was the same as before. Oscar was almost beside himself with mingled rage and mortification, and it is hard to tell how long the contest would have lasted, had not a servant come up and informed the boys that Mrs. Peyton wished to see them immediately. She had witnessed the whole scene from a window and felt called upon to interfere.

"How is this, young gentleman?" she asked, gravely. "You have scarcely been together twenty minutes, and I find you fighting."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Peyton," said Herbert, in a manly tone. "I feel ashamed of myself, but Oscar attacked me for claiming to be a gentleman, and I am afraid that my blood was up, and so we got into a fight."

"How is this, Oscar?" said his mother. "Did you so wholly lose your politeness as to attack your guest for asserting his claims to be a gentleman? I am annoyed with you."

"He says he has to work for a living," said Oscar, sullenly.

"So may you, some time."

"I am rich."

"You may not always be. At any rate, being rich doesn't insure gentlemanly behavior, as your conduct to−day clearly shows. Herbert, I hope you will excuse my son's rudeness."

"Here is my hand, Oscar," said Herbert, cordially. "Let us be friends."

Oscar hardly knew how to receive this overture, but he was finally thawed by Herbert's manner, and they were soon sauntering about on the lawn on the best of terms.

At half−past eleven, after an inviting lunch, the carriage was ordered, and Herbert and Mr. Carroll were driven to the depot, accompanied by Oscar, who went in his mother's place.

Herbert purchased tickets for both, being intrusted with Mr. Carrol's pocketbook for that purpose. He found a comfortable seat for the old gentleman, and sat down beside him.

# CHAPTER XIX. A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER

I pass over the route pursued by the travelers from Columbus to Wheeling, in West Virginia, as it possesses no special interest.

But after leaving Wheeling there is quite a change. Those of my readers who are familiar with the Baltimore Ohio Railway will be able to understand the enjoyment which Herbert derived from the bold and romantic scenery visible from the car windows. Mr. Carroll made him take the seat nearest the window, that he might have a better view, and from time to time Herbert described what he saw to his sightless fellow− traveler.

Northwestern Virginia is very mountainous and the construction of a railway through such a region was a triumph of engineering skill. At times the road makes bold curves, so that the traveler, looking from the car window, can see opposite him, across an intervening gulf, the track over which the train was passing five minutes before. At some places the track is laid on a narrow shelf, midway of the mountain, a steep and rugged ascent on one side, a deep ravine on the other, somewhat like the old diligence road over the Alpine Mt. Cenis. Here and there appear small hamlets, consisting of one−story cabins, with the chimney built alongside, instead of rising from the roof in the usual manner.

How long shall we be in reaching Baltimore, Mr. Carroll? "asked Herbert.

"I believe it takes about twenty−six hours," said the old gentleman. "But I do not mean to go through without stopping."

"I didn't know what your plan was," said Herbert.

"I have been meaning to tell you. Our tickets will allow us to stop anywhere, and resume our journey the next morning, or even stop two or three days, if we like."

"That is convenient."

"Yes. If it had been otherwise, I should have purchased the ticket piecemeal. I cannot endure to travel all night. It fatigues me too much."

"Where shall we stop, then?"

"I have not yet quite made up my mind. We will ride till about eight o'clock, and then stop over at whatever place we chance to have reached."

This arrangement struck Herbert favorably. He was in no particular hurry, and the scenery was so fine, that he feared that he should lose a great deal by traveling at night, when, of course, he could not see anything.

They sat for a while in silence. Then Mr. Carroll inquired, suddenly, "Did you ever fire a pistol, Herbert?"

"Yes, sir," was the surprised reply.

"Then you understand how to use one?"

"Oh, yes, sir. There was a young man in Waverley, the town where I used to live, who owned one, and I sometimes borrowed it to fire at a mark."

"Then I think I will intrust this weapon to your charge," said the old gentleman, drawing from his pocket a handsome pistol, and placing it in Herbert's hand.

"Is it loaded, sir?"

"No, not at present. We will have it loaded before going to bed. I will tell you," he added, in a lower tone, "my reason for going armed. It so happens that I have a large amount of money with me, and, of course, I feel a little concerned about its safety."

"Perhaps it will be well not to say anything more about it at present, sir," suggested Herbert, in a low voice. "You may be heard by someone who would like to take advantage of his discovery."

"No doubt you are right. I will follow your advice."

Herbert would not have thought to give this caution, but, just as Mr. Carroll uttered the words, "I have a large sum of money with me," a man dressed in a rough frieze coat, with black whiskers, and a general appearance, which, to say the least, did not prepossess Herbert in his favor, chanced to walk through the car. Whether he caught the words Herbert could not tell, but he paused a moment, and fixed an unpleasant eye upon the two, as if determined to know them when he should meet them again. There was another suspicious circumstance. It had evidently been his intention to pass through the car, but he paused abruptly, and, turning back, sank into an

unoccupied seat a few feet back of that occupied by Mr. Carroll and his young companion.

His attention naturally drawn by this suspicious conduct, Herbert was impelled to glance back once or twice. Each time he met the watchful look of the man fixed upon them, instead of being directed at the scenery outside, as was the case with the other passengers. When he saw that the boy was watching him, he turned his head carelessly, and commenced whistling. But this apparent indifference did not deceive Herbert for a moment.

"I will watch him," thought our hero. "I do not like his looks. If he means mischief, as I think very probable, it is necessary that I should be on my guard against him."

At half−past seven o'clock Mr. Carroll signified his intention of getting out at the next station. "I am beginning to feel tired," he said, "and shall feel the better for a good supper and a night's rest."

"Very well, sir," said Herbert.

It occurred to him that now they would get rid of the man who was watching them so closely.

"If he gets out of the train with us," he thought, "I shall know what it means."

The train slackened its speed, the sound of the whistle was heard, the brakes were applied, and soon the conductor, putting his head in at the door, called out "Oakland!"

"Here we are," said Herbert. "Give me your hand, Mr. Carroll, and I will lead you out."

The old gentleman rose from his seat, and, guided by Herbert, walked to the car door. At the door Herbert turned and looked back.

The man with the black whiskers, who a moment before seemed absorbed in a newspaper, had left his seat, and was but a few feet behind him.

Herbert did not believe that this was an accident. He felt sure that it meant mischief. But he did not on that account feel nervous, or regret that he had assumed a charge which seemed likely to expose him to peril. He had the pistol in his pocket, and that he knew would make him even with the rascal who was following them.

There was a covered carriage waiting outside to convey passengers to the only hotel which the village afforded.

"Shall we take the carriage, Mr. Carroll?" asked Herbert.

"Yes," was the reply.

Herbert assisted him in, and placed himself in a seat opposite.

There were two or three other passengers, but the man with the black whiskers was not to be seen among them.

"I may be mistaken," thought Herbert, who had rather expected to see him. "Perhaps he lives here, and I have been alarming myself without reason. Still, it is always best to be on one's guard."

A ride of half a mile brought them to a small but comfortable−looking inn. Herbert assisted Mr. Carroll to descend, and together they entered the house of entertainment.

"We shall want some supper. Herbert," said Mr. Carroll. "You may order some."

"What shall I order, sir?"

"I should like some tea and toast and some beef−steak. If there is anything that you would prefer, you may order that also."

"No, sir, I should not wish anything better than you have ordered."

"Tell them to get it ready as soon as possible. I feel weary with my day's ride, and shall retire early."

"I feel tired, too." thought Herbert, "but it won't do for me to sleep. I must keep my eyes open, if possible."

Supper was soon served. The toast was well browned, and spread with excellent butter. The steak was juicy and tender, contrary to the usual custom of country inns, and the tea was fragrant and strong. Both the travelers partook heartily, having eaten nothing since noon, with the exception of a little fruit purchased from the car window at one of the stations. Herbert was not usually in the habit of drinking tea at night, but on this particular occasion he wanted to keep awake, and therefore drank two cups, of undiminished strength.

"Now, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, when they had finished supper, "you may ask the clerk to assign me to a large room with a couple of beds in it. I should prefer to have you in the same room with me."

"Very well, sir."

He rose from the table, and went to the public room, one portion of which was occupied by the office. As he made his way to the desk, he observed the man with black whiskers on a settee at one end of the room. He was smoking a clay pipe. Herbert caught a stealthy glance directed towards himself, but that was all. The man

continued smoking, fixing his eyes with apparent interest on a large yellow handbill pasted on the opposite wall, announcing a performance by "The Great American Circus Company" the succeeding evening.

Herbert succeeded in obtaining such a room as he sought, and accompanied by a servant bearing a lamp, went back to the dining−room to accompany Mr. Carroll to it.

# CHAPTER XX. FACING A BURGLAR

Herbert deliberated as to whether it would be best to inform his aged traveling companion of the suspicious−looking man, who appeared to have followed them for no good purpose. He finally decided not to do so, since it would only alarm Mr. Carroll, and prevent his sleeping off his fatigue, while there would be no advantage gained, since a blind and feeble man could be of little use in repelling the burglar, should the stranger prove to be such.

The bedroom was large and square, and contained two beds. The larger of these was placed in the corner, and this was assigned to the old gentleman. The smaller was situated between the two side windows, and was, of course, the more exposed of the two. This Herbert was to occupy.

"Do you know how to load the pistol, Herbert?" asked Mr. Carroll.

"Yes, sir," said Herbert, confidently.

"I don't anticipate any occasion for using it," continued the old gentleman. "Still, it will be best to be prepared."

"So I think, sir."

"You won't be afraid to use it, if it should be necessary?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Carroll took a package from his carpet−bag and showed it to Herbert.

"This package," he said, "contains five thousand dollars in bank bills. If it were known that I had it, I should be in danger. I suppose it will be best to put it back in the carpet−bag."

"If it were mine," said Herbert, "I would not do that."

"Where, then, would you put it?"

"I would put it between the mattresses. If anyone should get into the room, they would seize the carpet−bag first, and, perhaps, make off before they could be stopped."

"I don't know but you are right," said Mr. Carroll. "Perhaps it will be well to put my watch in the same place."

"Yes, sir; I think it would be well."

"You see, Herbert," continued the old gentleman, "how much confidence I repose in you. Knowing where my watch and money are, it would be very easy for you to secure both, and leave me here, destitute and helpless."

"But you don't think there is any danger of my doing so?"

"No," said the old gentleman. "Though our acquaintance is so recent, I feel great confidence in you. As I cannot see the face, I have learned to judge of the character by the tone of the voice, and I am very much mistaken if you are not thoroughly honest and trustworthy."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert, his face flushed with pleasure at this evidently sincere commendation. "You shall not repent your confidence."

"I am sure of that, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, kindly. "But I must bid you good−night. This has been a fatiguing day, and I shall lose no time in getting to sleep."

"Good−night. I hope you will sleep well, sir," said Herbert. "There won't be much sleep for me," he thought.

Mr. Carroll lay down, and his deep, tranquil breathing soon assured our hero that he was asleep. He rose from his bed and examined the windows. All but one were provided with fastenings. But the one on the right−hand side of his bed could be raised from the outside without difficulty.

"I wish I had a nail," thought Herbert. "I could soon make it fast."

But there was none in the room, and he did not wish to go downstairs for one, since he would probably meet the stranger, who would then learn what precautions he was taking, and so, perhaps, vary his attack.

"That window will need watching," thought Herbert. "I wonder whether I shall be able to keep awake."

The excitement of his situation, and, perhaps, the strong tea, to which he was unaccustomed, helped him to remain vigilant. His mind was active and on the alert, and his ears were open to catch the least sound.

It was only half−past ten. Probably the attempt to enter the room would not be made before twelve, at least, in order to insure their being asleep.

Herbert examined his pistol. It was in excellent order, and was provided with two barrels, both of which he

loaded. Thus, he would have a double chance to defend himself. He did not remove all his clothing, but kept on his pants, in order to be prepared for emergencies.

There was an hour and a half to wait before midnight. The minutes passed slowly. Herbert for a time heard the murmur of voices in the barroom below, then steps ascended the stairs, and, after a while, all was hushed.

"I wish the fellow would come quick," he thought, "if he is coming at all, so that it might be all over, and I might go to sleep."

Time sped on. Herbert could hear the village clock striking twelve; but still all around remained quiet.

It might have been a half an hour later when he heard a slight noise, as he thought, under the window. Jumping softly out of bed, he took a peep out. It was just light enough for him to distinguish a dark form moving about, bearing something, which he soon perceived to be a ladder. That it was the black−whiskered man who had followed them, he did not doubt, and he felt confident that he intended to place the ladder against the window. He was not mistaken. He heard the top of the ladder softly inclined against the house, and then he felt that the critical moment, which was to test his courage, was close at hand.

Herbert's heart began to beat rapidly. He felt that he was taking upon himself a fearful responsibility in shooting this man, as he would probably be obliged to do in self−defense. But one thing he resolved upon. He would not take his life. He would only use such a degree of violence as should be absolutely necessary. He would even give him a chance by firing the first barrel in the air, in hope of frightening the robber. If that failed, he must wound him. There was little time for these thoughts to pass through his mind, for all the while the man was creeping up the ladder.

Herbert had moved a little aside, that he might not be seen.

Soon he perceived, by the indistinct light, the face of the stranger rising above the window−sill. Next, the window was slowly raised, and he began to make preparations to enter the room. Then Herbert felt that it was time for him to appear.

Stepping intrepidly to the window, he said: "I know your purpose. Unless you go down instantly, I will shoot you."

There was no tremor in his voice as he said this. Courage came with the occasion, and his tone was resolute, and self−possessed.

"So you're awake, are you, my chicken?" was the reply. "If you know what's best for yourself, you'll hand over the old man's money, and save me the trouble of getting in."

"Never!" said Herbert, firmly.

"Then I will take it myself, and give you something to remember me by, you little fool!"

He placed his knee on the window−sill, and prepared to jump in.

"One step farther," said Herbert, resolutely, "and I fire!"

He displayed the pistol, at the sight of which the burglar hesitated.

"Hold on a bit," said he, pausing. "I'll give you some of the plunder, if you'll put up that shooting iron, and make no trouble."

"Do you think me a villain, like yourself?" asked Herbert.

"By ——, you shall repent this," said the robber, with an oath, and he made another attempt to enter.

Click!

There was a sharp report, but Herbert had fired in the air, and the burglar was unhurt.

"Confusion!" he exclaimed; "that will raise the house!"

Then, espying the carpet−bag, he determined to jump in, seize it, and get away before the people in the house were fairly awake. As for the pistol, that had been discharged, and he supposed that nothing was to be feared from it. But he reckoned without his host. As he put one leg over, and had all but succeeded in getting in, Herbert fired once more, this time hitting him in the shoulder. He uttered a shriek of pain, and, losing his hold, tumbled backward to the ground.

The two reports alarmed the house.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Carroll, awakened and alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed, sir," said Herbert. "A man just attempted to get in through the window, and I have wounded him."

"You are a brave boy," said Mr. Carroll. "Where is he now?"

"He has tumbled to the ground, shot through the shoulder, I think."

There was a loud thumping at the door. Herbert opened it, and admitted half a dozen guests, headed by the landlord.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed all, in chorus.

"If you will come to the window, gentlemen, I will show you," said Herbert.

They followed him curiously, and the sight of the ladder and the wounded man, who was uttering groans of pain from the ground below, told the story at once.

"Served the rascal right," said the landlord. "Who is he?"

"The black−whiskered man who was in the barroom last night," said Herbert.

"I remember now; he asked particularly where you were to sleep—you and the old gentleman—but I did not suspect his purpose."

"I did," said Herbert, "and kept awake to be ready for him."

"You are a brave lad."

"I only did my duty," said Herbert, modestly.

"Help! help!" groaned the wretch below.

Herbert heard the cry of pain, and his heart was filled with pity. The man was, indeed, a villain. He had only been served right, as the landlord said. Still, he was a fellow−creature, and he was in pain. Herbert could not regret that he had shot him; but he did regret the necessity, and he felt sympathy for him in his suffering.

"Poor fellow!" he said, compassionately; "I am afraid he is a good deal hurt."

"Poor fellow!" echoed the landlord. "It serves him right."

"Still, he is in pain, and he ought to be cared for."

"He has no claim upon us. He may he there till morning."

"No," said Mr. Carroll. "Herbert is right. He is guilty, but he is in pain, and it is the part of humanity to succor him. Landlord, if you will have him brought in, and send for the doctor, you may look to me for your pay."

"Yet, he was going to rob you, sir," said the landlord, considerably surprised.

"Yes, that is true; but you don't know how strongly he was tempted."

"He looks like a hard ticket. I didn't like to give him a bed, but we can't well refuse travelers, if they have money to pay their reckoning. I made him pay in advance."

"Pray, lose no time," said Herbert, as another groan was heard; "I will go out and help you bring him in."

A lantern was lit, and the whole company followed the landlord out.

"Well," said he, throwing the light of the candle full on the sufferer's face, "you've got yourself into a fine pickle, haven't you?"

"Oh," groaned the burglar, "if it hadn't been for that accursed boy!"

"You'd have got off with the old gentleman's money. Well, it was rather unkind to interfere."

"Are you in much pain?" asked Herbert, bending over him.

There was something in his voice that betrayed the compassion he really felt.

The burglar looked up.

"You're the boy that wounded me, ain't you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Curse you! I don't know but you've killed me. I'm shot through the shoulder. Then, that cursed fall! I feel as if I had broken my back."

"I did not want to shoot you," said Herbert.

"What did you do it for, then?"

"Because you forced me to it. You were after Mr. Carroll's money."

"Didn't I offer to divide with you?"

"Yes, but, of course, I would not agree to that."

"Are you so much better than common folks?" sneered the burglar.

"I don't know about that. I would not steal."

"Take him up," said the landlord to the hotel servants. "He don't deserve it, but I've promised the old gentleman we'd see to him. Tom White, you may go for the doctor."

Two men approached and attempted to lift the wounded burglar. But, in the first attempt, they touched the

injured shoulder. He uttered a shriek of pain, and exclaimed, "You'll murder me!"

"Let me lift him," said Herbert. "Perhaps you were too rough."

At length, but not without much groaning on the part of the burglar, he was got into the house, and laid on a bed in a small room on the first floor.

"Do you feel better?" asked Herbert.

"A little."

"Do you think you have broken any bones in falling?"

"I thought so at first, but perhaps I am only bruised."

"When the doctor comes, he will extract the bullet, and relieve you of a good deal of your pain."

"You are a strange boy," said the burglar, with a look of surprise.

"Why am I?"

"You shot me, and yet you pretend to be sorry for me now."

"So I am."

"Then, why did you shoot me?"

"I have already told you. Because I was obliged to. I would not have done it, if there had been any other way. I shot the first barrel in the air."

"By accident?"

"No; I thought it would alarm you, and I might save the money without injuring you."

"Do you really mean that?"

"Yes."

"And you don't have any ill−will against me now?"

"No."

"That is strange."

"I don't know why it should be."

"I suppose I ought to hate you, because you have brought me to this pass," said the burglar, thoughtfully, "but I don't. That is strange, too."

"I am so glad you feel so," said Herbert. "I am very sorry for your pain, and I will do what I can to relieve it."

"I have no money to pay the landlord and the doctor."

"Mr. Carroll says he will pay all needed expenses." "The man I wanted to rob?"

"Yes."

"Then hang me, if I ain't ashamed of trying to rob him," said the burglar, earnestly.

"Have you ever robbed anyone before?"

"No, I haven't. I'm a rough customer, and have done plenty of mean things, but this is the first job of the kind I ever attempted. I wouldn't have done it, only I heard the old man say in the cars, that he had a lot of money with him. I was hard up, and on my way to Cedarville, to try to get work, but when I heard what he said, the devil tempted me, I believe, and I determined to keep you both in sight, and get out where you did. I've tried and failed, and that's the end of it. It's my first attempt at burglary."

"I hope it will be the last."

"You may bet your life on that!"

"Then," said Herbert, quietly, "I will intercede with Mr. Carroll for you, and ask him not to have you arrested."

"Will you do that?" asked the wounded man, eagerly.

"I promise it."

"If you will, boy, I will bless you, and if God would listen to such a scamp as I am, I'd pray for you."

"He will listen to you," said Herbert. "Try to lead a better life, and He will help you."

"I wish I'd met with such as you before," said the burglar. "I'd have been a better man than I am."

Here the doctor entered, and Herbert gave place to him. The wound was discovered not to be serious, and, the bullet being extracted, the sufferer found relief. Herbert returned to bed, and this time, having no anxious thoughts to weigh upon his mind, he soon sank into a refreshing sleep, in which the fatigues and excitements of the day were completely forgotten.

## CHAPTER XXI. HERBERT'S REWARD

"I owe the safety of my money to you, my brave boy," said Mr. Carroll, the next morning, as, after rising, he replaced the package of bank notes in his carpet−bag.

"I only did my duty," said Herbert, but his face flushed with pleasure at the commendations bestowed upon him.

"But in doing your duty, you displayed a courage and fidelity rare in one of your age."

"I am glad you approve of my conduct," said Herbert.

"If you continue to deserve as well of those who employ you, I am sure you will achieve success."

"I hope so, sir," said our hero. "I shall try to do my duty in whatever situation in life I may be placed."

"What are your plans when you reach New York?"

"I shall try to find a place in a store, or counting−room."

"Have you friends in the city on whose influence you can rely to help you to such a situation as you desire?" "No, sir; I have only myself to look to."

"Only yourself! It is a bold undertaking."

"Don't you think I shall succeed?" asked Herbert, a little anxiously.

"I do not doubt that you will succeed, after finding a place, but that is the difficulty."

"I supposed there must be plenty to do in a great city like New York."

"There is truth in what you say, but, nevertheless, many are led astray by it. There is, indeed, a great deal to do, but there are a great many ready to do it, and generally—I may say, always—the laborers exceed the work to be done."

"Perhaps," said Herbert, "many fail to get work, because they are particular what they do. If I can find nothing better to do, I will black boots."

"With such a spirit, I think you will succeed. But, perhaps, I can smooth away some of the difficulties in your path. I know a firm in New York—connections of our family—to whom I will give you a letter of introduction. If they have no room for you in their house, they may influence someone else to take you."

"I shall feel very much obliged to you for such a letter. It will do me a great deal of good," said Herbert, gratefully.

"I will gladly write it, but now let us go down to breakfast."

After breakfast was over, they looked in upon the wounded man.

"How do you feel this morning?" asked Herbert, going up to the bedside.

"Rather stiff, but I am not in such pain as I was."

"I am glad to hear it."

"That is the gentleman I was going to rob?" said the burglar, looking in the direction of Mr. Carroll.

"Yes."

"Is he—did you say anything to him about not prosecuting me?" he asked, nervously.

"Be under no apprehension," said Mr. Carroll, mildly. "I do not care to punish you more than you have already been punished. I prefer that you should lead a better life."

"I will try to do so. sir; but I was poor, and that made the temptation stronger."

"I can easily believe it. Are you wholly without means?"

"Nearly so."

"Here, then, is a purse containing a hundred dollars. It will probably pay your expenses during your illness."

The wounded man looked up in surprise.

"There ain't many that would pay a man for trying to rob them," he said.

"I do not pay you for that," said Mr. Carroll, "but because I do not wish you to be subjected to a similar temptation again."

The wounded man, who, under different treatment would have been defiant and profane, seemed quite subdued by such unexpected kindness.

"Well, sir," he said. "all I can say is, that I am very much obliged to you, and I hope you will be rewarded for

your kindness."

"It is easier to lead men than to drive them," said Mr. Carroll, as they left the chamber. "This man is rough, and not troubled much with a conscience, but harshness would make him still worse."

"Yes, sir," said Herbert; "I think you are right."

After breakfast they resumed their journey. In due time they reached Baltimore, and remained over night at a hotel. In the course of the succeeding day they arrived at Philadelphia, which was the termination of Mr. Carroll's journey. As the country through which they passed was unknown to Herbert, the journey was full of interest, but there was no adventure worth recording.

The time came when the two travelers were compelled to part.

"If I were going to a hotel, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, "I would invite you to remain with me a day or two; but I shall proceed at once to the house of a friend, and I shall not feel at liberty to invite you."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I think it will be best for me to go on to New York at once. I have got my living to make, and I am anxious to get to work as soon as possible."

"It is a praiseworthy feeling," said the old gentleman. "Life lies before you. I have left nearly the whole of it behind me. I am drawing near the end of my journey. You are just at the beginning. I shall hope to meet you again, but, if not, be assured that I shall always remember, with pleasure, my young traveling companion."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert.

"I shall not soon forget the essential service which you have rendered me," continued the old gentleman.

"Don't think of it, sir," said Herbert, modestly, "Anyone would have done the same thing in my place."

"I am by no means sure of that. At any rate, the obligation remains. You must allow me to acknowledge it in some measure."

Mr. Carroll drew out his pocketbook and handed it to Herbert.

"Will you oblige me," he said, "by counting the bills in this pocketbook?"

Herbert did so.

"There are sixty−five dollars," he said, passing it back.

"Will you take out fifty dollars?"

"Yes, sir—I have done it."

"That's the sum you will oblige me by keeping," said Mr. Carroll. "I hope it may be of service to you."

"You give me so much money?" said Herbert, in surprise.

"It is but a very small sum, compared with that which you have saved me."

"I don't think I ought to take so much," said Herbert, hesitating.

"You need not hesitate, my young friend. I am blessed with abundant means, and very well able to part with it. Besides, it is only one per cent. of the money which you have been instrumental in saving me, and you are certainly entitled to as much as that."

"I thank you very much for the gift, Mr. Carroll," said our hero, "and still more for the kind manner in which you give it to me."

"You accept it, then? That is well," said the old gentleman, with satisfaction. "There is one thing more. You remember that I spoke to you of a business firm in Pearl Street, New York, with the members of which I am acquainted. Last evening I prepared a letter of introduction to them for you. Here it is."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I was very fortunate in meeting with one so able and willing to assist me."

"You are very welcome to all the help I am able to give you. I shall be very glad if your life shall be as prosperous as mine has been. I must trouble you to do me one more service. If you will find me a cab, I will go at once to my friend's house."

No difficulty was experienced in obtaining a carriage. There was a cordial leave−taking, and Herbert once more found himself alone. But with rather more than sixty dollars in his pocket, he felt rich, and looked forward eagerly to his arrival in the great city, where he hoped to deserve and win success.

# CHAPTER XXII. ROBBED IN THE NIGHT

Herbert entered the cars, and took a seat by the window. His small bundle, containing all the extra clothing he had been able to bring away from the inhospitable home of Mr. Holden, he placed in the seat beside him.

It was yet early, and there were but few persons in the car. But as the hour for starting approached, it gradually filled up. Still, the seat next to Herbert remained untaken.

At length a young man, apparently about nineteen, walked up the aisle, and, pausing, inquired, "Is this seat engaged?"

"No," said Herbert, at the same time removing his bundle.

"Then, if you have no objection, I'll take possession."

He accordingly seated himself, and commenced a conversation.

"Going to New York?" he asked.

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Do you live there?"

"No; I have never been there before."

"Are you going on a visit?"

"No; I am going to live there; that is, if I can find anything to do."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"So am I. Suppose we hitch teams."

"I don't understand."

"Suppose we go to some hotel together. I have been there before, and can tell you where to go. It's awful dull being alone. I always like to pick up company."

Herbert hardly knew what to say to this proposition. He did not exactly like the appearance, or fancy the free and easy manners of his new acquaintance, but he felt lonely, and, besides, he hardly knew what excuse to make. He, therefore, gave his assent to the arrangement proposed.

"What's your name?" asked his new friend, familiarly.

"Herbert Mason."

"Mine is Greenleaf—Peter Greenleaf. Have you come from a distance?"

"From Waverley, in Ohio, not far from Cincinnati."

"I am from Philadelphia. I've been in a store there, but I didn't like the style, and I concluded to go to New York. There's more chance for a fellow of enterprise there."

"What sort of a store were you in?"

"Dry−goods store—Hatch Macy. Old Hatch is a mean skinflint, and wouldn't pay me half what I was worth. I don't want to brag, but there wasn't a man in that store that sold as much as I did. And how much do you think I got?"

"I don't know."

"Only seven dollars a week. If I hadn't made something another way. I couldn't have paid my expenses."

"I should think you might live on seven dollars a week."

This was before the war had increased the expenses of living.

"Couldn't do it. Board cost me four dollars a week, and that only left three for other expenses. My cigars cost me nearly that. Then I wanted to go to the theater now and then, and, of course, I must dress like a gentleman. I tell you what, seven dollars a week didn't begin to do me."

"How did you manage, then?"

"Oh, I made so much more by banking."

"By banking?" repeated Herbert, in astonishment.

"Yes; only it was a faro bank. I used to pick up considerable that way, sometimes."

"A faro bank!" repeated Herbert, in dismay. "Why, that's the same as gambling, isn't it?"

"Well, what's the odds? You take your chance, and you may win or lose. It's a pretty fair thing."

After this confession, Herbert became more than ever doubtful whether he should care to remain long in the company of his present companion.

Meanwhile, the cars were moving rapidly. Peter Greenleaf, as he called himself, talked volubly, and appeared to have a considerable familiarity with certain phases of life, the knowledge of which was not likely to have been very profitable to him. Still, Herbert was interested in his communications, though the opinion which he formed of him was far from favorable.

"Where are you going to stop when you get to New York?" inquired Peter.

"I don't know anything about the city. I suppose I shall have to go to a hotel first."

"Suppose we go to French's Hotel?"

"Where is that?"

"Near the park. It's on the European plan. You pay fifty cents a day for your rooms, and whatever you please for your meals."

"I think I shall like that. I shall want to get into a boarding−house as soon as possible."

"All right. We'll take a room together at the hotel."

This arrangement was not to Herbert's taste, but he did not care to offend his companion by objecting to it, so by his silence, he gave consent.

"What are you going to do in New York?" he asked.

"I shall look up a situation. I won't take less than fifteen dollars a week. A man of my experience ought to be worth that. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Herbert, dubiously, though it occurred to him that if he were an employer, he would not be likely to engage such a clerk at any price. But it is rather fortunate, all things considered, that we are able to keep our thoughts to ourselves, otherwise, the complacency of our companions, and sometimes our own, would run the risk of being rudely disturbed.

In course of time the terminus of the road was reached, and, crossing over from Jersey City, Herbert found himself, for the first time in his life, in the noise and whirl of the great city.

"And I am actually to live here," thought Herbert. "I wonder what Mr. Holden would say if he knew where I was?" Uncertain as his prospects were, he felt very glad that he was out of the clutches of the petty despot, whose chief pleasure was to make him uncomfortable. Here, at least, the future was full of possibilities of good fortune; there, it was certain discomfort and little to hope for.

"Where is the hotel you spoke of?" he asked, turning to Greenleaf.

"I'll lead you to it."

They walked up to Broadway, then up by the Astor House, and across the park to the hotel.

"We'll go in and secure a room the first thing," he said.

They entered, Greenleaf taking the lead.

"Show us a room with two beds," said Peter to the clerk.

A servant was summoned, and the room assigned to them was indicated.

"Have you any baggage?" asked the clerk.

"No," said Greenleaf, carelessly. "Mine was checked through from Philadelphia. I shan't send for it till morning."

"Then I must ask you to pay in advance."

"All right. Fifty cents, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Mason," said Greenleaf, "have you got a dollar about you? I've got nothing less than a ten."

Herbert drew out a dollar and paid for himself and his companion.

They were now shown up to a room on the third floor, which proved to be a very comfortable one, looking out on the street. Herbert was glad to get a chance to wash himself thoroughly after the dusty journey which he had just completed. This ceremony over, they went down to the restaurant connected with the hotel, and took a hearty meal. Greenleaf made an effort to have Herbert pay for both, but this time Herbert also had a bill to change. It was rather a suspicious circumstance, he thought, that Greenleaf, who had no bill smaller than a ten, paid for his meal out of a one−dollar bill.

After supper Greenleaf bought a couple of cigars, and offered Herbert one.

"No, thank you," said our hero.

"Don't you smoke?"

"No."

"Where have you been living all your life? I couldn't get along without my cigar."

"Don't you think it hurtful to a boy to smoke?"

"I don't know about that. I'm a man now, but I've smoked ever since I was a boy. I think it does a fellow good."

"But it's expensive."

"Yes, that's so. I expect I've smoked a thousand dollars' worth of cigars in the course of my life."

"Don't you wish you had the money instead?"

"Yes; I should rather like the money, but I shouldn't be half the man I am if I hadn't smoked. It's mostly milksops that don't smoke. Nothing personal, you know, Mason."

"Of course not," said Herbert, smiling.

"Better have a cigar."

"No; I guess not."

"You'll come to it in time. I'll smoke it for you, then."

After smoking, Greenleaf expressed his intention of going to the theater. Herbert preferred to go to bed early, feeling rather tired. He was kept awake at first by the noise of the horse−cars and the bustle of the street outside, as well as by the exciting thoughts that crowded upon him, suggested by his actual arrival in the city, where he hoped to make a place for himself by energy and industry. But at last he fell asleep.

He slept soundly through the night. But towards morning he had a dream in which Abner Holden figured. His old employer seemed to be approaching him with a smile of exultation, and was about to lay violent hands upon him, when he awoke. It was broad daylight, being already seven o'clock in the morning. Herbert remembered where he was, and looked across the room for Greenleaf. But he was not visible. The bed was disarranged, and evidently had been slept in, but the occupant had risen.

"I didn't think he was a fellow to rise early," thought Herbert. "I suppose he is downstairs. I might as well get up, too."

Herbert jumped out of bed, and, going to the wash−stand, washed his face and hands. He then proceeded to dress.

"I wonder Greenleaf didn't wake me up," he thought.

But the reason was too soon made evident. Happening to put his hand in the pocket where he usually kept his pocketbook, he was startled at finding it empty. Somewhat alarmed, he began to hunt round upon the floor, thinking it possible that it might have dropped out. But his search was vain. It was not to be found. He then examined carefully the remaining pockets, still without success.

It was not until this moment that a suspicion entered his mind concerning his companion.

"Is it possible," he thought, "that Greenleaf has been mean enough to strip me of my money?"

Herbert did not want to believe this. He disliked to think badly of anyone, and he still hoped it would prove otherwise. It was barely possible that Greenleaf had taken his money by way of playing a practical joke upon him, and he might now be downstairs, waiting to be amused at Herbert's look of dismay when he discovered that he was penniless. Drowning men will catch at straws, and Herbert, in his trouble, tried to think this was probably the way it had happened.

"Greenleaf is rather a hard case, according to his own account," he said to himself. "but I can't believe he would be mean enough to rob me. I will go downstairs and see if I can find him."

Accordingly, leaving his chamber, he descended the staircase, and made his way to the office.

Herbert went up and spoke to the clerk who chanced to be inside.

"Have you seen my roommate?" he asked.

"What is the number of your room?"

"No. ——."

"I remember now. He has gone."

"Gone!" echoed Herbert, in dismay.

"Yes; didn't you know of it?"

"He went away while I was asleep. How long since did he go?"

"He came to the office two hours since, and said he should not require the room any longer."

"Did he leave any message for me?"

"No."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No."

Such an expression of dismay and perplexity overspread Herbert's face that the clerk could not help observing it.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked.

"Yes," said Herbert. "He has robbed me of my pocketbook, containing all my money."

"Whew!" whistled the clerk. "How much had you?"

"About sixty dollars."

"You're unlucky, that's a fact. Have you nothing left?"

Just then it flashed across Herbert's mind that when he had paid for his supper he had changed a five−dollar bill, and placed the balance, about four dollars and a half in his vest pocket. He at once felt in that pocket, and found it still there. Greenleaf had contented himself with the pocketbook.

"I have a little left," he said.

He paid for his room in advance for another day, and went down to breakfast.

# CHAPTER XXIII. A BUSINESS CALL

It was certainly a startling discovery for Herbert to make, that out of sixty dollars he had only four left, now that he had paid for another day at the hotel, and this small sum must be further diminished by the expense of a breakfast. Unfortunately, too, he was quite hungry, for his misfortune had not taken away his appetite.

"I will make a good breakfast, at any rate," said Herbert, philosophically. "Afterwards, I will consider what to do."

He ordered a substantial breakfast, which, even at the low prices of a dozen years ago, amounted to fifty cents, and did full justice to what was set before him.

After paying at the desk, he went outside.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning, and this, with the comfortable feeling produced by having eaten a good breakfast, gave him courage for the new career upon which he was about to enter.

While considering what he should do first, the thought of the letter given him by Mr. Carroll flashed upon him. He felt for it hastily, and was rejoiced to find that that was safe, at least. Greenleaf had not taken that away, fortunately.

He looked at the direction. It was addressed to

"Messrs. Godfrey Lynn,
No. —— Pearl St."

It was not sealed, and was probably meant to be read by Herbert. At any rate, our hero so concluded, and opened the letter, not without curiosity as to what Mr. Carroll had written about him. He knew it must be favorable, of course, but found it even more so than he anticipated.

Here it is:

"MY DEAR MR. GODFREY: This letter will be handed you by a young friend of mine, by name Herbert Mason. My acquaintance with him has been brief, but he has been able, by his coolness and bravery, to do me a most important service, having saved me from being robbed of a large sum of money while acting as my escort from Ohio to Philadelphia. I have talked with him freely about his plans, and find that he will reach New York without friends, and with a very small sum of money, hoping before it is gone to secure a place in some counting−room, where he can make an honest living. I feel a strong interest in his success, and am persuaded that wherever he is placed, he will show rare capacity and fidelity. I wish it might be in your power to receive him into your own counting− room. But, of course, that must be according to your convenience. At any rate, may I rely on you to act a friendly part by my young friend, and to exert your influence toward procuring him a position elsewhere, if you cannot employ him yourself? Anything that you may have it in your power to do for Herbert, I shall consider as a favor done to myself.

I have just left my daughter, who, with her family, is well. Sincerely, your friend,

JAMES CARROLL."

"That is a very kind letter," thought Herbert, gratefully. "I hope it will do me good."

He decided to call and deliver it the same forenoon. If he had not been robbed of nearly the whole of his small capital, he would, first, have gone about the city, which was entirely new to him. But, with less than four dollars between himself and utter destitution, he felt that he had no time for sight−seeing. It was necessary that he should get to work as soon as possible.

He waited till ten o'clock, thinking it possible that the heads of the firm might not reach the counting−room till about that time. It was now eight o'clock only. He had two hours, therefore, to look about him.

"Shine yer boots?" said a ragged urchin, approaching, with a suggestive look at his soiled shoes.

It occurred to Herbert that it would be best to look as well as possible when visiting Godfrey.

"Ten cents."

"It's too much," said Herbert, thinking how few dimes constituted his entire worldly wealth.

"Well, five, then," said the bootblack, coming down to his regular price.

"Do you get much to do?" asked our hero.

"Some days I get considerable."

"How much do you make?"

"Pleasant days I makes a dollar, but when it rains, there ain't much to do."

"How much do you have to pay for sleeping?"

"Six cents."

"Six cents!" repeated Herbert, in surprise. "Where can you get lodged for that?"

"At the lodgin' house, corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets."

"Well," thought Herbert, "I needn't starve. If I can't get anything better to do, I can buy a box of blacking and a brush, and set up in business for myself."

To be sure, this would not be an agreeable occupation, but Herbert was bound to make a living by honest labor. If one avenue was closed to him, he must enter such as were open to him. He could not afford to be particular.

After his shoes were brushed, he crossed the park, and walked up Broadway. It was a wonderful sight to the country−bred boy, this gay thoroughfare, with its busy and bustling crowds, and its throngs of vehicles, never ceasing wholly, save at the dead hours of night. He thought to himself what a quantity of business there must be to do. Certainly, there must be room for one more worker. So, on the whole, the busy scene gave him courage, and he sauntered along as cheerfully as if he were not next−door to a beggar.

But at last the time came when he might safely seek out the gentleman to whom he had an introduction. Being a stranger in the city, he had to inquire for Pearl Street from a policeman, who answered his inquiry very civilly. He followed the direction, and found it at length. But the number of which he was in search was not so easily found, for he found the street meandered in a very perplexing way, so that at times he was not quite sure whether he was still in it, or had wandered from his way.

At last he found the place. It was a large, solid−looking building, of four stories in height. There were a number of boxes outside on the sidewalk. Inside, there was a large apartment occupying the entire first floor, with the exception of a room in the rear, which had been partitioned off for a counting−room. The partition was of glass, and, as he looked from the entrance, he could see a couple of high desks and a table.

"Is this Godfrey Lynn's?" he asked of a porter at the entrance.

"Yes," said the porter.

"I want to see Mr. Godfrey."

"I don't think he's in. You can go to the office and inquire."

Accordingly, Herbert passed down the length of the warehouse, and, pausing a moment before the door, he opened it, and entered.

There were two persons in the office. One was a thin−faced man, who sat on a high stool at one of the desks, making entries apparently in the ledger. This was the bookkeeper, Mr. Pratt, a man with a melancholy face, who looked as if he had lived to see the vanity of all things earthly. He had a high forehead naturally—made still higher by the loss of his front hair. Apparently, he was not a man to enjoy conviviality, or to shine on any festive occasion.

Besides Mr. Pratt, there was a boy, if we may take the liberty of calling him such, of about Herbert's age. He was fashionably dressed, and his hair was arranged with exceeding care. In fact, as Herbert entered, he was examining the set of his necktie in a little hand−glass, which he had taken from his coat pocket. Not quite suiting him, he set himself to rearranging it.

"Have you copied that bill, Thomas?" asked Mr. Pratt, looking up.

"Not yet, sir."

"You have been long enough about it. Put back that glass. You are quite too much troubled about your appearance."

"Yes, sir.

"If I didn't look any better than some people," said Thomas, sotto voce, "I shouldn't look in a glass very often."

Herbert naturally concluded that Mr. Pratt was the man to whom his inquiries should be addressed.

"I would like to see Mr. Godfrey, sir." he said.

"He is out of the city."

"Out of the city!" repeated Herbert, disappointed. "When will he be back?"

"Nor till day after to−morrow."

Herbert's countenance fell. In his reduced circumstances, he could hardly afford to wait two days. At his present rate of expenditure, he would be penniless by that time.

"Is Mr. Lynn likely to be in soon?" he asked, thinking that perhaps he would do in Mr. Godfrey's absence.

"No; he is sick at home. He may not be here for a week. Perhaps, I can attend to your business," he added. "What is it?"

"I think," said Herbert, "that I will wait till day after to−morrow, if you think Mr. Godfrey will be back then. I have a letter for him."

"If it's a business letter, you had better leave it."

"It is a letter of introduction," said Herbert. "I would rather present it in person."

"Very well," and Mr. Pratt went back to his ledger.

Thomas looked critically at the boy who had a letter of introduction to Mr. Godfrey, and said to himself, "He got his clothes from a country tailor, I'll bet a hat."

# CHAPTER XXIV. FINDING A BOARDING PLACE

Herbert left the counting−room of Godfrey Lynn, not a little depressed in spirits. The two days which must elapse before he could see Mr. Godfrey were to him a formidable delay. By that time his money would be almost exhausted. Then, suppose, which was very probable, Mr. Godfrey could do nothing for him immediately, but only hold out his promise of future assistance, how was he to live in the meantime? After all, he might have to realize his thought of the morning, and join the ranks of the bootblacks. That was not a pleasant thought to a boy of his education. All labor is honorable, to be sure, but, then, some occupations are more congenial than others.

If Greenleaf had not robbed him so basely, he could have afforded to wait. He felt sore and indignant about that. Nobody likes to own that he has been victimized, but Herbert was obliged to confess to himself that such was the case with him.

He walked about rather aimlessly, feeling miserable enough. But, all at once, it occurred to him, "Would it not be cheaper for him to take board by the week in some boarding−house?" Reckoning up, he found that his hotel bill would be three dollars and a half a week, while his meals, even if he were quite abstemious, would make as much more; in all, seven dollars. Surely, he could be boarded somewhere for less than that.

In the reading−room of the hotel he found a daily paper, and carefully ran his eye down the advertisements for boarders and lodgers. The following attracted his attention:

"BOARDERS WANTED.—A few mechanics may obtain comfortable rooms and board at No. —— Stanton Street, at three dollars per week."

This, be it remembered, was previous to the war, and before the price of board had doubled.

"Three dollars a week!" repeated Herbert. "Less than half my present rate of expense. I must go at once and secure it."

He found the way to Stanton Street, and found that No. —— was a shabby−looking house in a shabby neighborhood. But he could not afford to be fastidious. He accordingly stepped up without hesitation, and rang the bell, which emitted a shrill sound in reply.

A middle−aged woman, with a red handkerchief tied around her head, and a broom in her hand, opened the door and looked inquiringly at our hero.

"What's wanted?" she said.

"I saw your advertisement for boarders," said Herbert.

"Yes; I advertised in the paper this morning."

"Will you let me see your rooms?"

"Who are you looking for?"

"Myself."

"I don't know as you'll be suited. My price is low, and I can't give first−class accommodations for three dollars."

"No; I suppose not."

"Come up, if you would like to see what I've got."

The interior of the house was shabby like the outside, the oilcloth carpet faded, and the wall paper torn off in places. The stairs, too, were narrow and uncarpeted. All this Herbert observed, but he could not afford to be critical.

On the third floor, his guide threw open the door of a dark, little hall bedroom, meagerly furnished.

"I could give you this room by yourself," she said, "or a larger room with someone else."

"I would rather be alone."

"That's the only single room I have. Will you take it?"

"I think so," said Herbert, though he did not anticipate much enjoyment in such a poor place.

"When do you want to come?"

"To−morrow morning."

"Very well. I shall expect a deposit, so that I may be sure the room is let."

"How much?"

"A dollar will do."

Herbert drew a dollar from his pocket, and handed it to Mrs. Morgan, for such, she informed him, was her name.

Then he went downstairs and out into the air again.

"Well," he said to himself, "I'm sure of a home, such as it is, for a week. In that time something must turn up."

Examining his pocketbook he found that he had two dollars and a half left. Of that sum, two dollars must be reserved to pay the balance of his week's board. Out of the remaining fifty cents he must pay for his meals until the next morning, when he would take possession of his new boarding place. He wished that he had proposed to come to breakfast, but it was too late now.

With such a small sum in hand, he could not afford to dine on the same magnificent scale as he had breakfasted, but he must be rigidly economical. He decided that the cheapest food he could buy was a five− cent loaf at some baker's. This would probably last him through the day, and might prove sufficient for breakfast also, since he would take a regular dinner, though he doubted, from what he had seen of the establishment in Stanton Street, whether it would be a very inviting repast. But it was the best he could afford, and that was all he need consider.

Late in the afternoon, it occurred to Herbert to wonder where, in the city, his Uncle Stanton lived. Not that he had any intention of applying to him for assistance, even if matters came to a crisis, but he felt a natural curiosity as to how his uncle was situated. He found the directory readily, and, turning to the letter S, ran down the list of names till he came to Stanton, Benjamin.

He learned that his uncle's store was in the lower part of Broadway, while his house was in West Seventeenth Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

"I should like to see what sort of a house Uncle Benjamin lives in," thought Herbert.

There was nothing to prevent his gratifying this wish, as he had plenty of time on his hands. If he had had more money, he would have taken the horse cars, but in his present circumstances this would be imprudent. He decided, as it was only five o'clock, to take a leisurely walk up Broadway, noticing his uncle's place of business on the way.

A few minutes brought him in front of the latter—an imposing−looking building, with all the appearance of belonging to a prosperous merchant. Appearances are deceitful, to be sure, and no doubt there are some merchants, as outwardly prosperous, who might profitably change places with their head clerks. But Herbert naturally judged from appearances, and he could not help contrasting in his mind his own condition with that of his uncle's. But he was too manly to be despondent on this account, and thought rather, "I am young and ready to work, Some time, if I am patient and work hard. I may be as well off as Uncle Benjamin." The thought of applying to him for assistance was as far off as ever.

He pursued his way uptown, finding it a longer walk than he anticipated, arriving at half−past five at Union Square. At the upper end he turned off, and went down Seventeenth Street.

Carefully noting the numbers, he at length found his uncle's house. It was a handsome, substantial city mansion, and seemed appropriate as the residence of a rich New York merchant.

"So my uncle lives here," thought Herbert, and there rose involuntarily in his mind the memory of the humble Western home where he and his mother had struggled against poverty, while his uncle, who was evidently so amply provided with the world's goods, coldly held aloof, and forbore to offer the assistance which he could so well afford.

"If I had a sister, I could never treat her like that," thought Herbert, indignantly. "He would not help my mother. I will starve before I ask him to help me."

He paused a moment on the opposite side of the street to look at his uncle's house. While he was standing there, a boy of about his own age, apparently, came down the street whistling, and ascended the steps of his uncle's house.

"I wonder if that is my cousin Tom," thought Herbert. He knew the names of his cousins from his mother, though he had never seen them.

While he looked, he was struck by something familiar in the appearance of this boy. Where had he seen him before?

All at once it flashed upon him. It was the same boy he had seen in the counting−room of Godfrey He knew

him by his dandified dress and his face, which he had noticed at the time.

This was certainly a strange coincidence, that his cousin, for it was doubtless he, should be the first boy he encountered after reaching New York. It would be still stranger if Mr. Godfrey should offer him employment, and he should find himself a clerk in the same office as the son of his rich uncle. But it was by no means certain that he would be lucky enough to obtain such employment. Therefore there was no need of wondering whether, under such circumstances, Tom would recognize him as a relation.

Herbert walked thoughtfully back, and on reaching his room ate the remainder of the loaf which he had purchased at the baker's in the morning. It was not a very luxurious repast, but his walk had given him an appetite, and he had no difficulty in disposing of all that was left.

# CHAPTER XXV. GETTING A SITUATION

The next morning Herbert reported himself at his new boarding place. He found the fare very far from first−class, while his fellow−boarders appeared at the table mostly in shirt−sleeves, and were evidently workingmen. Our hero would have preferred a greater degree of neatness both in the table and in the guests, but he felt that he would be lucky, if he should find himself able to pay his expenses even here. He was not to be daunted by little annoyances, but looked for compensation in the future.

He waited impatiently for the next day, when Mr. Godfrey would return. Upon the success of the interview with him much depended.

At length it came, and Herbert once more set out for the warehouse on Pearl Street. He entered without question, and made his way to the counting−room. Looking through the glass door, he saw his cousin—whom he surveyed with new interest now that he knew the relationship—and the bookkeeper. But, besides these, there was an elderly gentleman, rather stout, with a pleasant face, the expression of which reassured him.

"Is Mr. Godfrey in?" he asked, on entering, with a look of inquiry at the gentleman just described.

"That is my name. What can I do for you?" said Mr. Godfrey, turning towards him.

"I have a letter for you, sir," said Herbert, producing it from his pocket.

Mr. Godfrey held out his hand for it, and ran his eye rapidly over its contents.

"So your name is Herbert Mason?" he said, raising his eyes after finishing it.

"Yes, sir."

At the mention of this name, Tom Stanton, whose curiosity had led him to listen to the conversation, wheeled rapidly round on his stool and surveyed our hero with intense curiosity. He knew that Herbert Mason was the name of his cousin. Could it be possible that this boy was the cousin whom he had never seen? A little later, and he was convinced of it.

"You have just come from Ohio, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"My friend, Mr. Carroll, writes me that you were instrumental in saving him from being robbed while acting as his escort to Philadelphia."

"It wasn't worth mentioning," said Herbert modestly.

Mr. Godfrey noticed his modest tone, and it pleased him—modesty not being an unvarying characteristic of young America.

"My friend refers to it as an important service. I should like to know the particulars. Mr. Carroll is a connection of mine, and I am naturally interested in all that relates to him."

In reply Herbert gave a brief, but clear and intelligent account of the attempted burglary, passing over his own achievement as lightly as possible. But it was easy to infer, even from the little he said, that he had acted with bravery and self−possession,

"You behaved in a very creditable manner," said Mr. Godfrey, approvingly. "Many boys would have lost their self−possession. You have come to New York in search of employment, Mr. Carroll writes me?"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't, of course, know how you were situated in Ohio," said the merchant, "but as a general rule I think boys make a mistake in leaving the country for the city. Here the competition for work is sharp, and there is a surplus of laborers in every department of labor. Still," he proceeded, scanning Herbert's earnest face, "you look like a boy capable of making his way if an opportunity offers. You have but little money, Mr. Carroll writes."

"I have lost nearly all I had," said Herbert, "so that now I have very little left."

"You have met with a loss? Tell me about it. Indeed, I should be glad if you would confide to me freely your situation and hopes, and then I shall be better able to help you."

"I am almost ashamed to tell you how I was taken in," said our hero. "I suppose I ought to have been more prudent."

He recounted the manner in which Greenleaf had robbed him. Mr. Godfrey listened with interest, and so did Tom Stanton, who burst into a laugh when the narrative was concluded.

"What are you laughing at, Thomas?" asked the merchant, rather sharply.

"I was thinking how neatly he was taken in," said Tom, a little abashed.

"I should apply a different word to it," said Mr. Godfrey. "It appears to me the height, or rather the depth of meanness, to take advantage of a boy's confidence, and defraud him so scandalously. How much money have you left, Herbert?"

"Forty cents, sir."

"Only forty cents to begin life with in a great city!"

"Yes, sir; I have paid my board in advance for a week."

"Where do you board?"

"In Stanton Street."

Tom turned up his nose at the name of this street, which he knew was very far from fashionable, but this demonstration our hero did not observe.

"What board do you pay?"

"Three dollars a week, sir."

"A poor place, probably."

"Yes, sir, but I could afford no better."

"You are sensible to accommodate yourself to circumstances. Well, my young friend, it appears that you can't wait long for employment. Mr. Carroll has asked me to do something for you, and I am disposed to oblige him, not wholly for his sake, but partly for your own, for you seem to me a very modest and sensible boy. Mr. Pratt, do we need another boy?"

"No, sir, I don't think we do."

"Well, business will be brisker by and by. I think you can find a little for this young man to do in the meantime. He can go to the post office, and I believe I have a little extra writing to be done. Pass him a pen, and let him give us a specimen of his handwriting."

Fortunately, Herbert was a handsome writer, and this went a considerable way in his favor.

"Very neat," said the merchant. "By the way, Herbert, I suppose, of course, you know nothing of French?"

"Yes, sir, I can read it pretty well."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Godfrey, surprised. "Then you can be of service to me, that is, if you know it well enough. I received, this morning, a letter from a silk house at Lyons, a part of which I don't quite understand. The fact is, my French is rather poor. Do you think you could help me translate it?"

"If you will show me the letter, I will try, sir."

The merchant took a letter from the table before him and handed it to Herbert.

Our hero ran his eye rapidly over it, and then rendered it into English in a clear and grammatical way.

"Bless me, you're quite a scholar," said Mr. Godfrey. "I understand now. You've made it all plain. Where did you learn so much French?"

"My father taught me, sir. He also taught me Latin."

"Indeed, I congratulate you on possessing so good an education. Latin, however, isn't so much in my way. I haven't many Latin correspondents."

"I suppose not, sir," said Herbert, laughing.

"Still, it does no harm to know something of it."

Tom Stanton had listened with considerable surprise, mingled with mortification, to what had passed. It appeared then, that his country cousin, whom he had looked upon as a country boor, was his superior in education, and, as Tom secretly knew, in courage. And now he was going to be his fellow−clerk. He felt jealous and angry, fearing that Herbert, who appeared to be high in favor already, would eclipse him in the office.

"How much can you live upon economically?" asked the merchant.

"I know little of the city," said Herbert. "You can judge better than I, sir."

"You pay three dollars a week board. You'll need double that amount. Mr. Pratt, you may pay him six dollars a week. He will come to work to− morrow morning, and you may pay him Saturday, as if it was a whole week."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert, gratefully. "You are very kind."

"Do your duty, my young friend, and I shall be satisfied."

Tom Stanton listened in indignant surprise. He only got four dollars a week, and here was a country boy

placed over his head. He was imprudent enough to give expression to his feelings.

"Won't you give me six dollars a week, also?" he said.

"Why should I?"

"Don't I deserve as much as he?"

"Perhaps you do. But I don't give it to Herbert because he earns it, for it is not likely that he will do so at present. But he has no other resources. You have a comfortable home, and are not obliged to pay for your board out of your wages."

"No, I hope not," said Tom.

"Therefore you do not need as much as he does. You are not entitled to this explanation, but I give it, nevertheless, that you may know my motives."

Tom did not reply, feeling that it would be imprudent to do so, but he bent sullenly to his work, by no mans satisfied with the explanation. He began to feel a dislike for his cousin, and determined to injure him, if he could, in the estimation of the firm. It would have been satisfactory if he could have looked down upon him as an inferior, but that was not easy.

"I hope the fellow won't find out the relationship between us," he said to himself. "He'd be calling me Cousin Tom all the time, and I don't care about owning a cousin that lives in Stanton Street."

Tom need not have troubled himself. Herbert had no idea of claiming relationship, though, as we know, he was fully aware of its existence.

# CHAPTER XXVI. A FAMILY COUNCIL

As soon as he was released from business, Tom Stanton hurried home to impart the unexpected intelligence that his cousin Herbert had arrived in the city. As might be expected, the news gave no particular pleasure in the Stanton homestead.

"Did you tell him who you were, Thomas?" asked his mother.

"Catch me doing it!" said Tom. "I ain't quite a fool. I don't care about owning any pauper relations."

"He isn't a pauper," said Mr. Stanton, who, hard man of the world as he was, could not forget that Herbert was the son of his sister.

"He's the next door to it," said Tom, carelessly.

"Thomas is right," said Mrs. Stanton. "You may depend upon it, Mr. Stanton, that when this boy finds you out, he will apply to you for assistance."

"Possibly he may."

"I hope you won't be such a fool as to encourage him in his application."

"If he were in actual distress, my dear," said Mr. Stanton, "I should feel that I ought to do something."

"Then you'd allow yourself to be imposed upon, that's all I've got to say. There is no need of his being in distress. He is a stout boy, and capable of earning his own living."

"He might get sick," suggested Mr. Stanton, who was not so hard−hearted as his wife.

"Then let him go to the hospital. It's provided for such cases."

"Is Herbert good−looking?" asked Maria, with interest.

"He won't get a prize for his beauty," said Tom, disparagingly.

"Is he homely?"

"No," said Tom, reluctantly. "I suppose he'll pass; but he's countrified. He hasn't got any style," and he glanced complacently at his own reflection in a mirror, for Tom was vain of his personal appearance, though by no means as good−looking as Herbert. In fact, he was compelled secretly to confess this to himself, and for this reason was more than ever disposed to view his cousin with prejudice.

"I should like to see Herbert," said Maria, who had her share of female curiosity, and thought it would be pleasant to have a cousin to escort her round.

"Perhaps I'd better invite him round to dinner tomorrow," said Thomas, sarcastically.

"I wish you would."

"Thomas will do no such thing!" said Mrs. Stanton, decidedly. "It's my opinion that the less notice we take of him the better. Your father is in good circumstances, to be sure, but whatever he is able to do, ought, of right, to go to his own family. We don't want any poor relations coming here to get their living out of us."

"Just my sentiments, mother," said Tom Stanton, approvingly.

"It doesn't seem quite right," said Mr. Stanton, uncomfortably, "to neglect my sister's child."

"Don't make yourself ridiculous with your scruples, Mr. Stanton," said his wife. "It's the boy's duty to take care of himself. It would only do him harm, and lead to false expectations, if we allowed him the run of the house."

"Besides," said Tom, "I shouldn't want to have Tom Paget and Percy Mortimer, and other fellows that I associate with, ask me who he is, and have to tell them that he is my cousin."

This argument had considerable weight with Mr. Stanton, who was anxious to elevate himself in society, and looked with complacency upon the school acquaintances Tom had formed with the scions of distinguished families.

"Well," said he, rising from the table, "let it be as you will. We won't go out of our way to invite the boy here, but if he presents himself, as he doubtless will, we must take a little notice of him."

"I don't see why he couldn't have stayed in the country," said Mrs. Stanton. "It was the best place for him."

"Of course, it was," said Tom.

"He could have had no other object than to seek us out, and see what he could get out of us. For my part, I would advise you to recommend him to go back."

"He has secured a place, it seems, and would not be likely to give it up."

"It's a great pity he should have got into the same counting−room with Tom. He will presume on the relationship as soon as he finds it out."

Mrs. Stanton need not have been alarmed, for Herbert was too high− spirited to seek an intimacy where he had reason to think it would be disagreeable. But his aunt knew nothing of him, and judged him by herself.

"He's there, and it can't be helped," said Mr. Stanton.

"At any rate, if he does stay in the city," persisted Mrs. Stanton, "I hope you'll give him to understand that he needn't call here more than once in three months. That is as much as he can expect."

"After all, he is my sister's son," said Mr. Stanton. "I can't feel that this would be quite kind in us."

"Leave it to me, then. If you're too soft−hearted, Mr. Stanton, I will take all the responsibility, and the blame, if there is any."

"Well, I think you've said enough on the subject," said her husband. "Tom, run upstairs and bring me a cigar. You know where I keep the cigar box."

"You'd better send a servant, father," said Tom, coolly.

"It appears to me you are getting lazy, Thomas," said his father.

"Thomas is right," said Mrs. Stanton. "What do we keep servants for but to run errands?"

"Still, Tom might have obliged me in such a little matter."

"You shouldn't have asked him, Mr. Stanton. You seem to forget that we are not living in the style of half a dozen years ago. You should adapt yourself to circumstances."

Mr. Stanton said no more, but sent a servant in Tom's place. But he could not help thinking that the outward prosperity for which he was striving was not without its drawbacks, since it compelled him to look to servants for the most ordinary services.

The next morning Tom went to the counting−room, fully expecting that Herbert would claim relationship as soon as he discovered his name. While he would be compelled to admit it, he determined to treat Herbert with such a degree of coolness that he would take the hint, and keep his distance.

When he arrived at the counting−room, Herbert was already there, and Mr. Pratt also.

"Good−morning," said Herbert.

"Morning," muttered Tom.

"This is Thomas Stanton, your fellow−clerk," said Mr. Pratt, the bookkeeper. "I believe you have not been introduced."

"Now for it," thought Tom.

But rather to his surprise, Herbert made no demonstration, but merely bowed slightly.

"What does it mean?" thought Tom, a little perplexed. "Is it possible that he is not my cousin, after all?"

"I think you came from Ohio?" inquired Tom, impelled by his curiosity to ask the question.

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Why didn't you stay there? Couldn't you make a living there?" asked Tom, not over−politely.

"Probably I might," said Herbert, quietly.

"Then I think you should have stayed there."

"Which do you like best, the city or the country?" asked our hero.

"The city."

"So do I."

"But there's a difference. I have always lived in the city."

"I suppose boys often do come from the country to the city," said Herbert. "Was your father born in the city?"

"No," said Tom, glancing keenly at Herbert, to see if he meant anything by the question.

"Then it seems he must have preferred the city to the country."

Tom had his share of curiosity. He knew that it would be better not to pursue this subject further if he wished his cousin to remain ignorant of the relationship between them. Still, he was anxious to know what Herbert's actual knowledge was, and whether he would be likely to avail himself of it. He was therefore tempted to say, "I suppose you have no relations in the city?"

"What makes you think I haven't?" asked Herbert, looking at Tom rather peculiarly.

"I don't think anything about it. I only asked," said Tom, a. little confused.

"Yes, I have an uncle in the city," said Herbert, quietly.

"Oh, indeed," said Tom.

He said nothing more, for he felt that he might betray his knowledge of the relationship unintentionally. Herbert's manner left him as much in the dark as ever.

Mr. Pratt set Herbert to work on some writing, and Tom, also, was soon busy. After a while Mr. Godfrey came in.

"Good−morning, Herbert," he said, pleasantly, offering his hand. "So Mr. Pratt has set you to work, has he?"

"Yes, sir."

"I think we shall find enough for him to do, eh, Mr. Pratt?"

"Yes, sir, I think so," said the bookkeeper, who perceived that Herbert was in favor, and it was as well to fall in with his employer.

"That's well. How do you like your boarding place, Herbert?"

"It isn't a very nice one, sir, but it is as good a one as I have a right to expect for the money I pay."

"Come round and dine with us to−night," said the merchant. "Mrs. Godfrey will be glad to see you. I'll give you my street and number."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I shall be glad to accept your kind invitation."

Tom listened to this invitation with envy. Mr. Godfrey occupied a high social position. Moreover, he had a pretty daughter, whom he, Tom, had met at dancing school, and he would have been very glad to receive the invitation which had been extended to "that beggar, Herbert," as he mentally styled him.

# CHAPTER XXVII. AT THE CONCERT

Herbert felt a little diffident about accepting his employer's invitation to dinner. Brought up in the country in comparative poverty, he felt afraid that he should show, in some way, his want of acquaintance with the etiquette of the dining table. But he had a better than ordinary education, and, having read diligently whatever books he could get hold of, possessed a fund of general information which enabled him to converse intelligently. Then his modest self−possession was of value to him, and enabled him to acquit himself very creditably.

Julia Godfrey, the merchant's only daughter, was a lively and animated girl, a year or two younger than Herbert. She had been the belle of the dancing school, and Tom Stanton, among other boys, had always been proud to have her for a partner. She, however, had taken no particular fancy to Tom, whose evident satisfaction with himself naturally provoked criticisms on the part of others. Of this, however, Tom was unconscious, and flattered himself that his personal appearance was strikingly attractive, and was quite convinced that his elaborate and gorgeous neckties must attract admiration.

Julia awaited the advent of her father's young guest with interest, and her verdict was favorable. He was, to be sure, very plainly dressed, but his frank and open face and pleasant expression did not need fine clothes to set them off. Julia at once commenced an animated conversation with our hero.

"Weren't you frightened when you saw the robber?" she asked, for her father had told her of Herbert's adventure with the burglar.

"No," said Herbert, "I did not feel afraid."

"How brave you must be?" said Julia, with evident admiration.

"There was no need of my being frightened," said Herbert, modestly. "I was expecting him."

"I know I should have been frightened to death," said Julia, decidedly.

"You are a girl, you know," said Herbert. "I suppose it is natural for girls to be timid."

"I don't know but it is, but I am sure it is not natural to all boys to be brave."

Herbert smiled.

"I was out in the country, one day, walking with Frank Percy," proceeded Julia, "when a big, ugly−looking dog met us. Frank, instead of standing by, and defending me, ran away as fast as his feet could carry him. I laughed at him so much about it that he doesn't like to come near me since that."

"How did you escape?" asked Herbert, with interest.

"I saw there was no use in running away, so I patted him on the head, and called him 'Poor dog,' though I expected every minute he was going to bite me. That calmed him down, and he went off without doing any harm."

Herbert found Mrs. Godfrey to be a pleasant, motherly−looking lady, who received him kindly. He felt that he should like it very much if she was his aunt, instead of Mrs. Stanton, whom he had never seen, and did not think he should care about meeting.

"What do you think of Tom Stanton?" asked Julia, "Of course, you know him—the other boy in pa's counting−room."

"I am not very well acquainted with him yet," said Herbert, evasively, for he did not care to say anything unfavorable of Tom. "Do you know him?"

"Yes, he used to go to the same dancing school with me last winter."

"Then you know him better than I do."

"I don't like him much," said Julia. "He's always thinking of himself and his neckties. He always came to dancing school in a different necktie; to let us know how many he had, I suppose. Didn't you notice his necktie?"

"It was pretty large, I thought," said Herbert, smiling.

"Yes, he's fond of wearing large ones."

"I am afraid you are talking uncharitably, Julia," said her mother, mildly. "Girls, you know, are sometimes fond of dress."

So the conversation drifted on to other topics. Julia, at first, addressed our hero as Mr. Mason, until he requested her to call him Herbert, a request which she readily complied with. They were soon on excellent terms, and appeared to be mutually pleased.

"Young people," said Mr. Godfrey, after dinner, "there is to be an attractive concert at the Academy of Music this evening. I secured seats this morning for four. Suppose we all go?"

"I shall be delighted, for one, papa," said Julia. "You will like to go, Herbert, won't you?"

"Very much," said our hero.

"Then you can escort me, while papa and mamma walk together."

Herbert felt that this arrangement would be very agreeable, so far as he was concerned. It was, in fact, adopted, and the four paired off together, as Julia had suggested, Julia amusing Herbert by her lively remarks.

Entering the hall, they followed the usher to their seats, which were eligibly located only a few rows back from the stage.

Just behind them sat a party, among whom the new arrivals produced quite a sensation. Not to keep the reader in suspense, that party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, Tom and Maria. There was but slight acquaintance between the two families, as Mr. Godfrey's stood higher, socially, than Mr. Stanton's. The gentlemen, however, had a bowing acquaintance, and the young people had met at dancing school.

"Why, there's Mr. Godfrey and his family, Tom," said Maria, turning towards her brother. "Who's that boy with them? Julia hasn't got any brother, has she?"

Tom had watched the entrance of the party with lively dissatisfaction. That his beggarly cousin should appear in public on such intimate terms with Julia Godfrey, to whom he himself had paid attention, but without any special encouragement, struck him as particularly mortifying.

"Mr. Godfrey's son!" he said, disdainfully. "That boy is Herbert Mason."

"Our cousin?" asked Maria, with interest. "Ma, did you hear?" she whispered, eagerly. "That boy in front of us is Cousin Herbert."

"That boy with the Godfreys?" said Mrs. Stanton, in surprise.

"Yes, he's talking with Julia now."

"Are you sure? Who told you?"

"Tom."

"Is it true, Tom?"

"Yes," said Tom, frowning.

"What could have induced the Godfreys to bring him along?" said Mrs. Stanton, who was no better pleased than Tom at the social success of the poor relation.

"He's quite good−looking," said Maria.

"Nonsense," said her mother, sharply. "He has a very countrified look."

The news was communicated to Mr. Stanton, who looked with interest at his sister's son, whom he had not seen since he was a very young child. He fervently wished him back again in Ohio, where he might conveniently forget his existence. Here in New York, especially since an unlucky chance, as he considered it, had brought him into the same counting−room as his son, it would be difficult to avoid taking some notice of him. But, so far as pecuniary assistance was concerned, Mr. Stanton determined that he would give none, unless it was forced upon him. Had he known our hero better, he would have been less alarmed.

With all his prejudices, Mr. Stanton could not help confessing that Herbert was a boy of whom any uncle might be proud. Though plainly dressed, he did not seem out of place at a fashionable concert, surrounded by well−dressed people.

It must not be supposed that Herbert was left in ignorance of the vicinity of the only relations he had in the city.

"There's Tom Stanton, just behind you, with his father and mother and sister," whispered Julia.

Herbert turned his head slightly. He was desirous of seeing what his uncle and aunt were like. His uncle met his gaze, and turned uncomfortably away, appearing not to know him, yet conscious that in his affected ignorance he was acting shabbily. Mrs. Stanton did not flinch, but bent a cold gaze of scrutiny upon the unwelcome nephew. Tom looked supercilious, and elevated his pug nose a trifle. Maria, only, looked as if she would like to know her cousin.

It was only a hasty glance on Herbert's part, but it brought him to a rapid conclusion that he would not claim relationship. If any advances were made, they must come from the other side.

Tom fidgeted in his seat, watching with ill−concealed vexation the confidential conversation which appeared

to be going on between Julia and his cousin.

"What she can see in that boor, I can't imagine," he said to himself.

Moreover, though Julia had looked around, she had not deigned any recognition of himself, and this hurt his pride. He finally determined to overlook the neglect, and address her, which he could readily do, as he sat almost directly behind her.

"Good−evening, Miss Julia," he said, familiarly, bending forward.

"Oh, good−evening, Mr. Stanton," said Julia, coldly, just turning slightly. "Herbert, isn't that a beautiful song?"

"She calls him Herbert," said Tom, in scornful disgust. "I wonder if she knows he is nothing but a beggar?"

"How are you enjoying the concert, Miss Julia?" he continued, resolved not to take the rebuff.

"Very well," said Julia. "By the way," she continued, with a sudden thought, "I believe you are acquainted with Mr. Mason."

Herbert, upon this, bowed pleasantly, but Tom said, in rather a disagreeable tone, "I know Mr. Mason slightly."

"Oh," said Julia, arching her eyebrows, "I thought you were both in papa's counting−room."

"We shall know each other better by and by," said Herbert, smiling.

Tom did not appear to hear this, but tried to keep up the conversation with Julia, desiring to have it appear that they were intimate friends; but the young lady gave brief replies, and finally, turning away, devoted herself once more to Herbert, much to Tom's disgust. In fact, what he saw made Tom pass a very unpleasant evening, and when, on their return home, Maria suggested that Julia had taken a fancy to Herbert, he told her to mind her own business, which Maria justly considered a piece of rudeness wholly uncalled for.

## CHAPTER XXVIII. PETER GREENLEAF AGAIN

Notwithstanding he was receiving a salary larger than is usually paid boys of his age, Herbert felt cramped for the want of money. Six dollars a week would have paid his expenses comfortably, if he had been well provided to begin with. But all the clothing he had, besides what he wore, he had brought with him in a small bundle, the greatest part having been left in his trunk at the house of Abner Holden. He often wished that he could have them with him, but, of course, this wish was vain. Indeed, Mr. Holden, when the conviction was forced upon him that there was no chance of recovering his bound boy, quietly confiscated the trunk and its contents; and this, to some extent, consoled him for the departure of the owner.

Herbert found himself sadly in need of underclothing; and, of course, his only suit, from constant wear, was likely to deteriorate rapidly. He saved all the money he could from his weekly wages toward purchasing a new one, but his savings were inconsiderable. Besides, he needed a trunk, or would need one, when he had anything to put in it.

"If I only had that money Greenleaf stole from me, I should be all right," he said to himself, after long and anxious thought on the great question of ways and means. "I don't see how I can save up more than two dollars a week out of my wages, and it will take a long time for that to amount to much."

There certainly did not appear to be much chance of saving more. His boarding place was as cheap as he could obtain, or, if there were cheaper anywhere, they would probably be also poorer, and our hero felt that Mrs. Morgan's was as poor as he should be able to endure.

He was rather mortified, too, at the poverty of his wardrobe. Mrs. Morgan asked him one day, "When is your trunk coming?" and Herbert was obliged to own, with some shame, that he had none. The landlady looked surprised, but he had no explanation to offer.

"I suppose I shall have to wait till my wages are raised," thought Herbert, with a little sigh. This, he reflected, would not be very soon, as he had started with a salary greater than he was likely to earn, as Mr. Godfrey had said.

But relief was nearer than he anticipated.

One day, as he was walking up the Bowery, he saw, at a little distance in front of him, a figure which he well remembered. The careless, jaunty step and well−satisfied air were familiar to him. In short, it was Peter Greenleaf, who had played so mean a trick upon him at the hotel.

Herbert's heart beat quick with excitement, mingled with pleasure. He felt a natural indignation against this young man, who had cheated him so remorselessly, and left him, indifferent to his fate, alone and almost penniless in a strange city.

What should he do?

Close behind him was a policeman slowly pacing his regular round. Herbert went up to him, and, pointing to Greenleaf, rapidly recounted his grievances.

"It was a mean trick," said the policeman, who was a favorable specimen of his class. "Is this the first time you have seen him?"

"Yes."

"Tell me what you want to do."

"I want to get my money back."

"Probably he has spent it. How long since he robbed you?"

"Three weeks."

"Not much chance, then. Probably his pocket's empty, unless he's fleeced somebody else in the meantime. However, it's as well to see what can be done. Now, I'll tell you how to act. Go up to him boldly, and demand your money. If he bluffs you off, call me."

"All right," said Herbert.

He hastened his step, and, advancing, tapped Greenleaf on the shoulder.

Greenleaf turned. When he recognized Herbert, he looked surprised and disconcerted. But he had plenty of assurance, and quickly determined upon his course. Assuming a stolid look, he said: "Well, my lad, who are you;

and what do you want?"

"You know who I am, well enough," said Herbert, angrily.

"Do I? Then I'm uncommonly forgetful. I haven't any recollection of your interesting countenance," he said, with a sneer.

"I suppose you don't want to remember me, Mr. Greenleaf," said Herbert.

"Greenleaf! You are thinking of somebody else. My name's Thompson."

"Your name was Greenleaf when you stopped with me at French's Hotel," said Herbert, sturdily.

"You're crazy, I fancy," said Greenleaf, shrugging his shoulders. "I never stopped at the hotel you mention, in my life."

"Where's the money you took from me?" demanded Herbert, who felt convinced of Greenleaf's identity, in spite of his denial.

"What are you talking about?" said Greenleaf, assuming a look of surprise.

"You went off before I was awake, with more than fifty dollars of mine."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said Greenleaf, drawing himself up. "I've a great mind to knock you over!"

"Mr. Greenleaf," said Herbert, firmly, "either return my money, or as much as you have got left, or I will call a policeman."

"Just what I shall do, myself, unless you stop this nonsense," said Greenleaf, angrily; but not without a sensation of uneasiness, as it struck his mind that Herbert might really intend to do what he had said.

"Once more, will you give up that money?" said Herbert, firmly.

"Stand out of the way," said Greenleaf, "if you know what is best for yourself!"

He was about to push by, thrusting Herbert roughly out of the way, when our hero turned, and his look summoned the policeman, who hastened to the spot.

"Give this boy his money," he said, authoritatively. "I know all about your little game. It's up now. Unless you hand over your plunder, you must go with me."

Greenleaf changed color, and was evidently alarmed.

"I've got nobody's money, except my own," he said.

"Come along, then," said the officer, taking him by the arm.

"Stop a minute," said he, hurriedly, finding that matters had come to a crisis. "If I give up what I have, will you let me go?"

"Well, that depends on how much you have."

"I've got twenty dollars."

Herbert was about to say that this would do, but the policeman shook his head.

"Won't do," said he. "Come along."

After a little haggling, Greenleaf produced forty dollars, which Herbert pocketed, with much satisfaction.

"Now go along, and mind you don't try any more such games."

Greenleaf needed no second permission to be gone. He feared that the officer might change his mind, and he might, after all, be consigned to the station house.

"Thank you," said Herbert, gratefully. "I needed the money badly. I shouldn't have recovered it but for you."

"Take better care of it next time," said the officer, not unkindly. "Take care not to trust a stranger too easily. Better take my advice, and put it in a savings bank." "I shall be obliged to use most of it," said Herbert. "What I don't need, I will put in the bank."

The recovery of so much of his lost money seemed to Herbert quite a lucky windfall. He went at once to a trunk store, and, for five dollars, purchased a good, durable trunk, which he ordered sent home to his lodgings. Fifteen dollars more he invested in necessary underclothing, and this left him one−half of the money for future use. Besides this he had six dollars, which, in three weeks, he had saved from his wages. With this sum, and the articles he had purchased, he felt quite rich, and returned to the counting−room—this happened during the hour given him for dinner—in unusually good spirits. He had other reasons for encouragement. He was getting accustomed to his duties at the counting− room. Mr. Godfrey always treated him kindly, and had called upon him again that very morning to assist him in translating a French letter, complimenting him, at the same time, upon his scholarship.

"I'll do my best," thought Herbert. "'Try and Trust,' that's my motto. I think it will bring me success."

But even while he spoke, an unforeseen danger menaced him.

## CHAPTER XXIX. SPARRING

After the concert, Tom Stanton took even a greater dislike to his cousin than before. To say that he was in love with Julia Godfrey would be rather ridiculous, considering his youth. Even if he had been older, Tom cared too much about himself to fall in love with another. But Julia had been a belle among the children of her own age at the dancing school, and there was considerable rivalry among the boys—or, I should, perhaps, say young gentlemen—for the honor of her notice. Tom desired it, because it would give him a kind of distinction among his fellows. So, though he was not in love with Julia, he was jealous when she showed favor to anyone else. But this feeling was mild compared with that he experienced when Julia bestowed her notice upon his penniless cousin. That Herbert should be preferred to himself, he thought, not only showed great lack of taste on the part of the young heiress, but was a grievous wrong to himself.

"I can't understand how girls can be such fools," thought Tom, as that evening, after returning from the concert, he surveyed his rather perturbed face in the mirror surmounting his bureau. "I wouldn't have believed Julia Godfrey would stoop to notice such a pauper."

Then a cheerful thought came to him. Perhaps she was only trying to rouse his jealousy. He had heard of such things. But, if so, why should she choose such a beggar as Herbert to practice her arts upon?

Certainly, to an unprejudiced observer, such a thought would never have suggested itself. The cool indifference with which Julia had treated Tom did not appear to argue any such feeling as would lead to the attempt to rouse his jealousy. But, then, Tom was not an unprejudiced observer, and considered his personal attractions such that any girl might appreciate them.

When he arrived at the counting−room the next morning, he found Herbert already there. Indeed, our hero was very particular to be punctual in his attendance, while Tom was generally at least a quarter of an hour behind time.

"I saw you at the concert last evening, Mason," said Tom, who wanted to get a chance to say something disagreeable.

"Yes, I was there," said Herbert. "You sat in the row just behind us."

"Yes. I suppose you were never at a concert before."

"Not in New York."

"Mr. Godfrey was very kind to take you."

That was what Herbert thought himself. But as Tom expressed it, there was something in his tone which implied a conviction of Herbert's social inferiority, which our hero did not like.

"I have found Mr. Godfrey very kind," he said, briefly.

There are not many employers who would invite a boy in your position to a concert with his family," said Tom.

"I believe my position is the same as yours," said Herbert, nettled.

"I don't see it," said Tom, haughtily. "Will you explain yourself?"

"I believe we are both in Mr. Godfrey's employ," said Herbert.

"Oh, yes, so far as that goes. But I am the son of a rich man," said Tom, pompously.

Herbert might have replied that he was the nephew of a rich man, but he had no disposition to boast of his relationship to his cousin's family.

"I don't see that that makes any difference," said Herbert.

"Don't you? Well, I do."

"We are both boys in Mr. Godfrey's employ."

"That's true, but then, he took you out of pity, you know."

Tom's tone as he said this was very aggravating, and Herbert's face flushed.

"I don't know anything of the sort," he retorted.

"No, I suppose you don't consider it in that light," said Tom, carelessly; "but, of course, it is clear enough to others. Where would you have been, if Mr. Godfrey hadn't given you a place? Blacking boots, probably, among the street ragamuffins."

"Perhaps I might," said Herbert, quietly, "if I couldn't have got anything better to do."

"It's a very genteel occupation," sneered Tom.

"I don't think it is," said Herbert, "but it's an honest one."

"You may have to take it yet."

"Perhaps so. So may you."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded Tom, haughtily, his face flushing.

"I only said to you the same thing you said to me. If it's an insult on one side, it is on the other."

"You seem to forget that our circumstances are very different," said Tom.

"They are just now, so far as money goes. I get a larger salary than you."

Tom was very much incensed at this remark, being aggrieved by the fact that Herbert received more than he.

"I didn't mean that," said he. "Of course, if Mr. Godfrey chooses to give away money in charity, it is none of my business. I don't need any charity"

"Mr. Godfrey pays me for my services," said Herbert. "If he pays me too liberally now, I hope to make it up to him afterward."

"You seemed to be very intimate with Julia Godfrey last evening," said Tom, unpleasantly.

"I found her very pleasant."

"Yes; she is very kind to take notice of you."

"I suppose the notice you have taken of me this morning is meant in kindness," said Herbert, thinking his cousin very disagreeable.

"Yes, of course, being in the same counting−room, I think it right to take some notice of you," said Tom, condescendingly.

"I am very much obliged to you," said Herbert, sarcastically.

"But there's one piece of advice I should like to give you," proceeded Tom.

"What is that?" inquired Herbert, looking his cousin in the face.

"Don't feel too much set up by Julia Godfrey's notice. She only took notice of you out of pity, and to encourage you. If you had been in her own position in society—"

"Like you, for instance!"

"Yes, like me," said Tom, complacently, "she would have been more ceremonious. I thought I would just mention it to you, Mason, or you might not understand it."

It was only natural that Herbert should be provoked by this elaborate humiliation suggested by Tom, and his cousin's offensive assumption of superiority. This led him to a retort in kind.

"I suppose that is the reason she took so little notice of you," he said.

Tom was nettled at this statement of a fact, but he answered in an off− hand manner, "Oh, Julia and I are old friends. I've danced with her frequently at dancing school."

Herbert happened to remember what Julia had said of his cousin, and was rather amused at this assumption of intimacy.

"I am much obliged to you for your information," said Herbert, "though I am rather surprised that you should take so great an interest in my affairs."

"Oh, you're new in the city, and I know all the ropes," said Tom. "I thought I might as well give you a friendly hint."

"I am lucky in having such a friend," said Herbert, "and will take the advice as it was given."

Here the bookkeeper entered, and, soon after, Mr. Godfrey made his appearance.

"I hope you had a pleasant evening, Herbert," he said, kindly.

"Very pleasant, sir; thank you," said Herbert, in a very different tone from the one he had used in addressing Tom.

"I believe I saw you, also, at the concert, Thomas," said Mr. Godfrey.

"Yes, sir," said Tom. "I am very fond of music, and attend all the first−class musical entertainments"

"Indeed?" said Mr. Godfrey, but this was all the reply he made.

"My daughter insists that I shall invite you to the house again soon," said Mr. Godfrey, again addressing Herbert.

"I am very much obliged to her, and to you, sir," said Herbert, modestly. "I shall be very glad to come."

Tom's face darkened, as he heard this. He would have given considerable to receive such an invitation himself, but the prospect did not seem very promising.

"Mr. Godfrey must he infatuated," he said to himself, impatiently, "to invite such a beggar to his house. Mason ought to have good sense enough to feel that he is out of place in such a house. I wouldn't accept any invitation given out of pity."

"I wonder why Tom dislikes me so much?" thought Herbert. "He certainly takes pains enough to show his feeling. Would it be different, I wonder, if he knew that I was his cousin?"

Herbert thought of mentioning to Mr. Godfrey that he had recovered three−quarters of the money of which he had been robbed. It would have been well if he had done so, but Mr. Godfrey seemed particularly engaged, and he thought it best not to interrupt him.

# CHAPTER XXX. AN UNEXPECTED BLOW

Herbert felt happier than usual. He had recovered the greater part of his money, and thus was relieved from various inconveniences which had resulted from his straitened circumstances, He was the more elated at this, as it had seemed extremely improbable that the lost money would ever have found its way back to the pocket of its rightful owner. Then, he had a good place, and a salary sufficient to defray his modest expenses, and the prospect of promotion, if he should be faithful to the interests of his employer, as he firmly intended to be. It was agreeable, also, to reflect that he was in favor with Mr. Godfrey, who had thus far treated him with as much kindness as if he had been his own son.

There was, to be sure, the drawback of Tom's enmity, but, as there was no good reason for this, he would not allow it to trouble him much, though, of course, it would have been more agreeable if all in the office had been his friends. He determined to take an early opportunity to write to his good friend, Dr. Kent, an account of his present position. He would have done so before, but had hesitated from the fear that in some way the intelligence would reach Abner Holden, whom he preferred to leave in ignorance of all that concerned him.

These thoughts passed through Herbert's mind as he went about his daily work. Meanwhile, a painful experience awaited him, for which he was not in the least prepared.

About one o'clock a gentleman entered the counting−room hastily, and said, "Mr. Godfrey, I wonder whether I happened to leave my pocketbook anywhere about your office when I was here an hour ago?"

"I don't think so. When did you miss it?"

"A few minutes since. I went to a restaurant to get a lunch, and, on finishing it, felt for my pocketbook, and found it gone."

"Was there much in it?"

"No sum of any consequence. Between twenty and thirty dollars, I believe. There were, however, some papers of value, which I shall be sorry to lose."

"I hardly think you could have left it here. However, I will inquire. Mr. Pratt, have you seen anything of Mr. Walton's pocketbook?"

"No, sir," said the bookkeeper, promptly.

"Herbert, have you seen it?"

"No, sir," said our hero.

"Thomas?"

Tom Stanton was assailed by a sudden and dangerous temptation. His dislike to Herbert had been increased in various ways, and especially had been rendered more intense by the independent tone assumed by our hero in the conversation which had taken place between them that very morning. Now, here was an opportunity of getting him into disgrace, and probably cause him to lose his situation. True, he would have to tell a falsehood, but Tom had never been a scrupulous lover of truth, and would violate it for a less object without any particular compunction.

He hesitated when the question was asked him, and thus, as he expected, fixed Mr. Godfrey's attention.

"Why don't you answer, Thomas?" he said, in surprise.

"I don't like to," said Tom, artfully.

"Why not?" demanded his employer, suspiciously.

"Because I don't want to get anybody into trouble."

"Speak out what you mean."

"If you insist upon it," said Tom, with pretended reluctance, "I suppose I must obey you."

"Of course, if any wrong has been done, it is your duty to expose it."

"Then, sir," said Tom. "I saw Mason pick up a wallet from the floor, and put it in his pocket just after the gentleman went out. He did it so quickly that no one probably observed it but myself."

Herbert listened to this accusation as if stunned. It was utterly beyond his conception how anyone could be guilty of such a deliberate falsehood as he had just listened to. So he remained silent, and this operated against him.

"Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, mildly, for he was unwilling to believe our hero guilty of intentional dishonesty, "you should have mentioned having found the pocketbook."

"So I would, sir," said Herbert, having found his voice at last, "if I had found one."

"Do you mean to say that you have not?" demanded Mr. Godfrey, with a searching look.

"Yes, sir," said Herbert, firmly.

"What, then, does Thomas mean when he asserts that he saw you do so?"

"I don't know, sir. I think he means to injure me, as I have noticed ever since I entered the office that he seems to dislike me."

"How is that, Thomas? Do you again declare that you saw Herbert pick up the wallet?

"I do," said Tom, boldly. "Of course, I expected that he would deny it. I leave it to you, sir, if he does not show his guilt in his face? Just look at him!"

Now it, unfortunately for Herbert, happened that his indignation had brought a flush to his face, and he certainly did look as a guilty person is supposed to do. Mr. Godfrey observed this, and his heart sank within him, for, unable to conceive of such wickedness as Tom's, he saw no other way except to believe in Herbert's guilt.

"Have you nothing to say, Herbert?" he asked, more in sorrow than in anger.

"No, sir," said Herbert, in a low voice; "nothing, except what I have already said. Tom has uttered a wicked falsehood, and he knows it."

"Of course, I expected you would say that," said Tom, with effrontery.

"This is a serious charge, Herbert," proceeded Mr. Godfrey. "I shall have to ask you to produce whatever you have in your pockets."

"Certainly, sir," said our hero, calmly.

But, as he spoke, it flashed upon him that he had in his pocket twenty− six dollars, and the discovery of this sum would be likely to involve him in suspicion. He could, indeed, explain where he got it; but would his explanation be believed? Under present circumstances, he feared that it would not. So it was with a sinking heart that he drew out the contents of his pockets, and among them his own pocketbook.

"Is that yours?" asked Mr. Godfrey, turning to Mr. Walton.

"No, it is not; but he may have transferred my money to it."

Upon this hint, Mr. Godfrey opened the pocketbook, and drew out the small roll of bills, which he proceeded to count.

"Twenty−six dollars," he said. "How much did you lose?"

"Between twenty and thirty dollars. I cannot be sure how much."

"Here are two tens and three twos."

"I had two tens. I don't remember the denomination of the other bills."

Even Tom was struck with astonishment at this discovery. He knew that his charge was groundless, yet here it was substantiated in a very remarkable manner. Was it possible that he had, after all, struck upon the truth of the matter? He did not know what to think.

"Herbert," said his employer, sorrowfully, "this discovery gives me more pain than I can express. I had a very high idea of you. I could not have believed you capable of so mean a thing as deliberate dishonesty."

"I am not guilty," said Herbert, proudly.

"How can you say this in the face of all this evidence? Do you mean to say that this money is yours?"

"I do," said Herbert, firmly.

"Where could you have got it?" said his employer, incredulously. "Did you not tell me when you entered my employ that you were almost penniless? You have been with me three weeks only, and half your wages have been paid for board."

"Yes, sir; you are right."

"What explanation, then, can you offer? Your case looks bad."

"The six dollars I saved from my wages, at the rate of two dollars a week. The twenty dollars is a part of the money I was robbed of. I succeeded in recovering forty dollars of it yesterday."

Here, Herbert related the circumstances already known to the reader.

"A likely story," said Tom, scornfully.

"Be silent, Thomas," said Mr. Godfrey. "Your story does not seem probable," he proceeded, speaking to

Herbert.

"It is true, sir," said our hero, firmly.

"What could he have done with your wallet, however?" said the merchant, turning to Mr. Walton.

"He has been out to the post office since," said Tom. "He might have thrown it away."

This unfortunately for Herbert, was true. He had been out, and, of course, could have disposed of the wallet in the way mentioned.

"I don't know what to think, Mr. Walton," said Mr. Godfrey. "I'm afraid the boy's guilty."

"I'm afraid so. I don't care so much for the money, if he will give me back the papers."

"I can't do it, sir," said Herbert, "for I never had them."

"What shall we do?"

"The other boy declares that he saw this one take the wallet from the floor, where I probably dropped it. It seems to me that settles the matter."

"I am afraid it does."

"Once more, Herbert, will you confess?" asked Mr. Godfrey.

"I can only say, sir, that I am innocent."

"Mr. Walton, what shall we do?"

"Let the boy go. I will leave it to his honor to return me the papers, and he may keep the money. I think he will make up his mind to do so by tomorrow."

"You hear, Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey. "While this matter remains in doubt, you cannot retain your situation."

"Thank you, Mr. Walton, for your indulgence," said Herbert; "but I am sorry you think me guilty. The truth will some time appear. I shall TRY to do my duty, and TRUST to God to clear me."

He took his hat and left the counting−room with a heavy heart, feeling himself in disgrace.

"I had great confidence in that boy, Walton," said Mr. Godfrey. "Even now, I can hardly believe him guilty."

## CHAPTER XXXI. MR. STANTON IS SURPRISED

While the events recorded in the last chapter were taking place in Mr. Godfrey's counting−room another and a different scene took place at the office of Mr. Stanton.

He had just finished reading the morning paper, and, as it slipped from his hand, his thoughts turned, transiently, to the nephew whose persistent failure to claim relationship puzzled him not a little. He was glad not to be called upon for money, of course; still, he felt a little annoyed at Herbert's reticence, especially as it left him unable to decide whether our hero knew of the tie which connected them. It was scarcely possible to suppose that he did not. But in that case, why did he not make some sign? The truth did suggest itself to Mr. Stanton's mind that the boy resented his cold and indifferent letter, and this thought made him feel a little uncomfortable.

While he was thinking over this subject, one of his clerks entered the office.

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Stanton," he said, briefly.

Mr. Stanton raised his head, and his glance rested on a tall, vigorous man of perhaps thirty−five years of age, who closely followed the clerk. The stranger's face was brown from exposure, and there was a certain appearance of unconventionality about his movements which seemed to indicate that he was not a dweller in cities or a frequenter of drawing− rooms, but accustomed to make his home in the wilder haunts of nature.

In brief, for there is no occasion for mystery, Mr. Stanton's visitor was Ralph the Ranger, who had assisted Herbert from the clutches of Abner Holden.

Mr. Stanton gazed at the stranger with some curiosity, but was unable to recognize him.

"Have you any business with me?" he asked.

"Yes," said the visitor, in a voice whose depth carried with it an assurance of strength.

"State it, then, as briefly as possible," said the merchant, with a little asperity, for there was not as much deference in the manner of the other as he thought there should have been. Like most new men, he was jealous of his position, and solicitous lest he should not be treated with due respect.

"I will do so," said the stranger, "but as it cannot be summed up in a sentence, I will take the liberty of seating myself."

As he spoke he sat down in an office chair, which was placed not far from that in which Mr. Stanton was sitting.

"My time is valuable," said the merchant, coldly. "I cannot listen to a long story."

As the visitor was plainly, if not roughly, dressed, he suspected that he desired pecuniary assistance on some pretext or other, and that his story was one of misfortune, intended to appeal to his sympathies. Had such been the case, there was very little prospect of help from Mr. Stanton, and that gentleman already enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure of refusing him.

"Don't you know me?" demanded Ralph, abruptly.

Mr. Stanton did not anticipate such a commencement. It had never occurred to him to suppose that his rough visitor was one whom he had ever before met.

"No," he said, "I never saw you before."

Ralph smiled a little bitterly.

"So I have passed entirely out of your remembrance, have I?" he said. "Well, it is twelve years since we met."

"Twelve years," repeated Mr. Stanton. He scanned the stranger's face with curiosity, but not a glimmer of recollection came to him.

"I dare say I met many persons at that distance of time, whom I cannot remember in the least now, even by name."

"I think you will remember my name," said Ralph, quietly. "Your memory of Ralph Pendleton cannot be wholly obliterated."

Mr. Stanton started, and it was evident from the expression of his face that the memory was not a welcome one.

"Are you Ralph Pendleton?" he asked, in an undecided voice.

"Yes, but not the Ralph Pendleton you once knew. Then I was an inexperienced boy; now I am a man."

"Yes, you have changed considerably," said Mr. Stanton, uncomfortably, "Where have you kept yourself all these years? Why have you not made yourself known before?"

"Before I answer these questions, I must refer to some circumstances well known to both of us. I hope I shall not be tiresome; I will, at least, be brief. You were my father's friend. At least, he so considered you."

"I was so."

"When he died, as I had not yet attained my majority, he left you my guardian."

"Yes."

"I was in rather an idle frame, and being possessed, as I supposed, of fifty thousand dollars, I felt no necessity impelling me to work. You gave me no advice, but rather encouraged me in my idle propensities. When I was of age, I took a fancy to travel, and left my property in your hands, with full power to manage it for me. This trust you accepted."

"Well, this is an old story."

"An old one, but it shall not be a long one. My income being sufficient to defray my expenses abroad, I traveled leisurely, with no thought for the future. In your integrity I had the utmost confidence. Imagine, then, my dismay when, while resident in Paris, I received a letter from you stating that, owing to a series of unlucky investments, nearly all my money had been sunk, and in place of fifty thousand dollars, my property was reduced to a few hundreds.'

"It was unlucky, I admit," said Mr. Stanton, moving uneasily in his chair. "My investments were unlucky, as it turned out, but the best and most judicious cannot always foresee how an investment will turn out. Besides, I lost largely, myself."

"So you wrote me," said Ralph, quietly. "However, that did not make it any the easier for me to bear."

"Perhaps not, but it shows, at any rate, that I took the same risk for my own money that I did for others."

Ralph proceeded without noticing this remark. "What made matters worse for me was that I had fallen in love with a young American lady who, with her parents, was then traveling in Europe. My circumstances, as I supposed them to be, justified me in proposing marriage. I was accepted by the young lady, and my choice was approved by the parents. When, however, I learned of my loss of fortune, I at once made it known, and that approval was withdrawn. The father told me that, under the altered circumstances, the engagement must be considered broken. Still, he held out the prospect that, should I ever again obtain a property as large as that I had lost, I might marry his daughter. She, on her part, promised to wait for me."

"Well?"

"I came to New York, received from you the remnant of my lost fortune, and sailed the next week for California, then just open to American enterprise. The most glowing stories were told of fortunes won in an incredibly short time, Having no regular occupation, and having a strong motive for acquiring money, it is not surprising that I should have been dazzled with the rest, and persuaded to make the journey to the land of gold."

"A Quixotic scheme, as I thought at the time," said Mr. Stanton, coldly. "For one that succeeded, there were fifty who failed. You had better have taken the clerkship I offered you."

"You are wrong," said Ralph, composedly. "There were many who were disappointed, but I was not among the number."

"Did you succeed?" asked Mr. Stanton, surprised.

"So well," answered the other, "that at the end of two years' residence, I found myself as rich as I had ever been."

"Had you made fifty thousand dollars?" demanded the merchant, in amazement.

"I had."

"What did you do? Why did you not let me know of your success?"

"When I once more found myself possessed of a fortune, I took the next vessel home with my money. I had but one thought, and that was to claim the hand of my promised bride, who had promised to wait for me ten years, if necessary."

"Well?"

"I found her married," said Ralph, bitterly. "She had forgotten her promise, or had been over−persuaded by her parents—I do not know which —and had proved false to me."

"That was unfortunate. But do you still possess the money?"

"I do."

"Indeed! I congratulate you," said Mr. Stanton, with suavity, and he held out his hand, which Ralph did not appear to see. Ralph Pendleton rich was a very different person from Ralph Pendleton poor, and it occurred to him that he might so far ingratiate himself into the favor of his former ward as to obtain the charge of his second fortune. He saw that it would be safe, as well as politic, to exchange his coldness for a warm and cordial welcome.

"Proceed with your story," he said; "I am quite interested in it."

## CHAPTER XXXII. RISEN FROM THE DEAD

Ralph Pendleton proceeded.

"This blow overwhelmed me. All that I had been laboring for seemed suddenly snatched from me."

"You had your money," suggested Mr. Stanton.

"Yes, I had my money; but for money itself I cared little."

Mr. Stanton shrugged his shoulders a little contemptuously. He could not understand how anyone could think slightingly of money, and he decided in his own mind that Ralph was an unpractical enthusiast.

"I valued money only as a means to an end, and that end was to make Margaret Lindsay my wife. She failed me, and my money lost its charm."

"There were plenty who could have consoled you in her place."

"No doubt, I might have been successful in other quarters, but I did not care to try. I left New York in disgust, and, going West, I buried myself in the forest, where I built a rude cabin, and there I have lived since, an unsocial, solitary life. Years have passed since I visited New York."

"What did you do with your money all this while?"

"I left it in the hands of men whom I could trust. It has been accumulating all these years, and I find that the fifty thousand dollars have swelled to ninety thousand."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Mr. Stanton, his respect for Ralph considerably raised. "And now you have come here to enjoy it, I suppose?"

"A different motive has led to my coming—a motive connected with you," said Ralph, fixing his eyes steadily upon Mr. Stanton.

"Connected with me!" repeated the merchant, uneasily.

"Yes."

"May I ask in what manner?"

"I expected the question, and am come to answer it. When I returned from Europe impoverished, you gave me a brief statement of the manner in which you had invested my fortune, and showed me how it had melted away like snow before the sun."

"You remember rightly. I bought, on your account, shares in Lake Superior Mining Company, which promised excellently, and bade fair to make handsome returns. But it proved to be under the management of knaves, and ran quickly down from par to two per cent., at which price I thought best to sell out, considering that a little saved from the wreck was better than nothing."

"This is according to the statement you made me," said Ralph, quietly.

"I am sure," said Mr. Stanton, "that no one regretted more than I do the disastrous result. Indeed, I had reason to do so, for I was myself involved, and suffered considerable loss."

"I am aware now that you were concerned in the matter," said Ralph, significantly.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Stanton, quickly, detecting something peculiar in his tone.

"I will tell you. You were right in denouncing the management as knavish. The company was got up by knaves, on a basis of fraud, and was from the first intended as a trap for the unwary. But there is one important circumstance which you have neglected to mention."

"What is that?" asked Mr. Stanton, in a voice which strove to be composed.

"I mean this," said Ralph, firmly, "that you yourself were the prime originator of the company—that you engineered it through to the end— that you invested my money with the express intention of converting it to your own profit. I charge you with this, that all, or nearly all the property I lost, went into your pocket."

The color came and went in Mr. Stanton's face. He seemed staggered by this sudden and unexpected accusation, and did not at first make reply.

Feeling forced to speak at last, he said: "This is very strange language, Mr. Pendleton."

"It is unexpected, no doubt, for after all these years you probably thought it would remain forever unknown; but in what respect is it strange? I have given you a statement of facts as directly as I could."

"They are not facts. Your charge is wholly false," said the merchant, but his tone was not that of a man. who

speaks the truth boldly.

"I wish I could believe it," said Ralph. "I wish I could believe that I was not deliberately swindled by one who professed to be my father's friend."

"On what authority do you bring this monstrous charge?" demanded Mr. Stanton, more boldly. "How happens it that you have not made it before?"

"For the simple reason that I myself did not suspect any fraud. I presumed that it was as you stated to me, and that your only fault was your injudicious investment."

"Well, I admit that, as it turned out, the investment was injudicious. Everything else I deny."

"Your denial is vain."

"You cannot prove the truth of what you say."

"So you fall back on that? But you are mistaken. I can prove the truth of what I say," said Ralph firmly.

"How?"

"Do you remember a man named David Marston?"

"He is dead," said Mr. Stanton, hastily.

"So you have supposed," said Ralph; "but you were deceived. He is not dead. I only encountered him a week since, quite by accident, in my Western home. He was your confidential clerk, you remember, and fully acquainted with all your business transactions at the time of which I am speaking. From him I learned how basely I had been deceived, and with what deliberate cruelty you conspired to rob the son of your dead friend."

"I don't believe David Marston is alive," said Mr. Stanton, hoarsely, with a certain terror in his face. "Indeed, I have proof that he is dead."

"I know the character of your proof. A paper was forwarded to you from Australia, whither you had sent him, containing the record of his death."

"Yes? What have you to say against this?"

"That the publication was a mistake. He was dangerously sick, and it was falsely announced that he was dead. That notice was sent to you, and you believed it to be true."

"I believe it now," said Mr. Stanton, doggedly. "Why should I not?"

"If you wish to be convinced, proof is at hand. Wait a moment."

Ralph Pendleton rose from his seat and left the counting−room. Two minutes had not passed when he returned with an elderly man, thin of face and wasted in figure, looking twenty years older than Mr. Stanton, though really of about the same age.

"This is David Marston," said Ralph—"the living proof that I have told you the truth."

Mr. Stanton gazed at him wildly, for to him it was as the face of one risen from the dead.

"How do you do, Mr. Stanton?" said David Marston, humbly. "It is many, many years since we met, sir."

"Are you really David Marston?" demanded Mr. Stanton, never taking his eyes off the shrunken figure of his old clerk.

"I am, sir; greatly changed indeed, but still the David Marston who was formerly in your employ. Time hasn't treated me as well as it has you, sir. I've been unlucky, and aged fast."

"I am afraid your mind is also affected. You have been telling strange stories to Mr. Pendleton here."

"True stories, sir," said David, firmly.

"Come, come, how much is he going to give you for this evidence of yours?"

"Stop, Mr. Stanton! You insult us both," said Ralph Pendleton, sternly. "I am not the man to buy false evidence, nor is David Marston the man to perjure himself for pay. David, I want you, in Mr. Stanton's presence, to make a clear statement of his connection with the mining company by which I lost my fortune."

David Marston obeyed, and in a few words as possible unfolded the story. It is not necessary to repeat it here. Enough that it fully substantiated the charge which Ralph had brought against his early guardian,

When he had finished, Ralph said, "You can judge what weight Marston's testimony would have before a court of justice, and whether it would help your commercial standing to have his story made public."

"What is it you want of me?" said Mr. Stanton, sullenly.

"I want restitution, dollar for dollar, of my lost money. I will waive interest, though I might justly claim it. But, were it all paid, interest and principal, the wrong would not be redressed. You cannot restore the bride who would have been mine but for your villainy."

How much time will you give me to pay this money?" asked the merchant, moodily.

"Ten days."

"It is a short time."

"It must suffice. Do you agree?"

"I must."

"Bind yourself to that, and for ten days I leave you free."

Satisfactory security was given that the engagement would be met, and Ralph Pendleton left the counting−room. But his countenance was scarcely more cheerful than that of the man he had conquered.

"I am rich," he said to himself; "but of what avail is it? Whom can I benefit with my wealth?"

This thought had scarcely crossed his mind when he came face to face with Herbert, walking with a sad and downcast face in the opposite direction.

## CHAPTER XXXIII. A FRIEND IN NEED

Herbert left Mr. Godfrey's counting−room very much depressed in spirits. But an hour before he had rejoiced in his excellent prospects, and, depending on the favor of his employer and his own fidelity, had looked forward to a bright future. Now all was changed. He was dismissed from his situation in disgrace, suspected of a mean theft. He had, to be sure, the consciousness of innocence, and that was a great deal. He was not weighed down by the feeling of guilt, at least. Still his prospects were dark. Suppose the matter should not be cleared up, and he should still remain under suspicion? How could he hope to obtain another place without a recommendation from his late employer? No; he must resign all hope of a position and adopt some street occupation, such as selling papers or vending small articles in a basket, as he had seen boys of his own age doing. He did not doubt but that in some way he could get a living, but still he would be under suspicion, and that was hard to bear.

While these things were passing through his mind he walked down Broadway, with his eyes fixed upon the sidewalk. All at once he started to hear his name called, and, looking up, to his unbounded astonishment he saw before him Ralph the Ranger, whom he had supposed a thousand miles away in his cabin in the Ohio woods.

The sight of a friendly face was most welcome to him at such a time, and Ralph's face was friendly.

"Ralph!" he exclaimed, seizing the Ranger's hand. "How did you come here? When did you arrive? You are the last person I expected to see."

"And you are the one I most wanted to see," said Ralph, his tone unconsciously softened by his friendly interest in the boy before him.

"I can say the same, Ralph," said Herbert, soberly, "for I am in trouble."

"In trouble, boy? I am sorry for that. Is it money? I can get you out of that trouble."

"It is not that exactly, Ralph. If you will come into the City Hall Park and sit down on a bench with me I will tell you all about it."

"Instead of that, let us go into the Astor House," said Ralph. "It is where I am stopping."

"You are stopping at the Astor House?" said Herbert, in momentary surprise. "Perhaps you do not know that there are cheaper hotels. Shall I direct you to one?"

"No, Herbert, I am not poor, as you perhaps think. I suppose I should be called rich; but that I can explain afterwards. For the present your affairs require attention. Come in."

They went up the steps of the Astor House, and Ralph led the way to his room, an apartment of good size and handsomely furnished.

"Now, Herbert, take a chair and tell me all," he said.

To repeat Herbert's story here is unnecessary. Ralph listened with attention, and when it was concluded he said: "The main thing is to account for the money in your possession. Do you think you should remember the policeman who aided you in recovering your money?"

"I am sure I should."

"Did he know how much money you recovered?"

"Yes, for he saw me count the bills."

"Then we must seek him out and induce him to go with us to Mr. Godfrey's counting−room and give his testimony."

"I never thought of that," said Herbert, his face brightening. "When shall we go?"

"Now. I have nothing else to occupy me, and the sooner you are righted the better."

They went out together, and made their way at once to the spot where Herbert had encountered Greenleaf. They had to wait but a brief time when the policeman came up.

"Do you remember me?" asked Herbert, going up to him.

"Yes," he replied; "you are the boy that overhauled a thief the other day, and got back his money."

"You see, he remembers," said Herbert, with satisfaction.

"My friend," said Ralph, "when will you be off duty?"

"In half an hour," said the policeman, in surprise.

"In half an hour, then, I want you to go with me to this boys employer and repeat your story. The possession

of the money has caused him to be suspected, and your evidence, confirming his own, will clear him of having obtained it improperly."

"I will go," said the officer, "and shall be glad to get him out of a scrape. It was all fair and above−board, and I'll say so cheerfully."

At the end of the half hour the three made their way to Mr. Godfrey's place of business and entered together.

Mr. Godfrey marked their entrance with surprise, and looked inquiringly at Herbert.

"Mr. Godfrey," said Herbert, respectfully, "I have come to prove to you that the money I have in my pocketbook is my own."

"I shall be very glad if you can do so," said Mr. Godfrey; and it was evident from his manner that he spoke sincerely.

"This officer knows all the circumstances, and will tell you what he knows."

The policeman made his statement, partly in answer to questions from Mr. Godfrey.

"The explanation is satisfactory," said Mr. Godfrey, "and convinces me. It does not, however, absolutely clear you, since between the time of the money being lost and your being searched you went out to the post office, and you might have disposed of the pocketbook and its contents on the way."

Herbert's countenance fell, but Mr. Godfrey hastened to add. "Although your vindication is not complete, I will say that I believe you fully, and will receive you back into my employ."

"You have forgotten one thing, sir," said Herbert. "Thomas declares that he saw me pick up the wallet and put it in my pocket."

"So I did," said Tom, boldly.

Mr. Godfrey looked perplexed, and was hesitating what to say when Mr. Walton, the owner of the lost pocketbook, hurriedly entered.

"Mr. Godfrey," he said, "I have to beg your pardon, and, most of all, the pardon of this boy," indicating Herbert. "I have found my pocketbook. I didn't lose it here, but my pocket was picked in the street. The pickpocket was arrested, and the wallet has been returned to me. This boy is innocent."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Godfrey, with emphasis. "Herbert, I will try to make amends to you for my transient suspicions of your honesty. As for you," he continued, turning to Thomas and speaking sternly, "I despise you for your mean attempt to injure your fellow− clerk. You must leave my employment to−day. I shall write to your father the reasons for dismissing you."

"I can get along without your paltry four dollars a week," said Tom, with bravado. "I am not a beggar."

"You may be something worse, if you do not amend, "said Mr. Godfrey." Mr. Pratt, you may pay him for the entire week, and he can go at once."

Although Tom professed so much disdain for the four dollars a week, he did not decline the week's pay directed to be paid to him, but placed the money in his vest pocket and went out with assumed nonchalance, though, in reality, deeply mortified at the unexpected discovery of his meanness.

"As for you, Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, "you can come back at once, and I will raise your pay to eight dollars a week. I owe you some reparation for the injury you came so near suffering. I will never again doubt your integrity."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert; "I shall be glad to come back."

"Before this matter is decided," said Ralph, "I have a proposition to make to Herbert. I am rich, and have no one to share or inherit my wealth. I propose to adopt him—to give him an opportunity to complete his education in Europe, whither I propose going, and if some years hence you shall be willing to receive him, he can then enter your counting−room to learn business. The amount of compensation will be unimportant, as I shall provide for him amply."

Herbert stared at Ralph in amazement. He could hardly realize that the offer was indeed a genuine one.

"Do you mean that I am to go to Europe with you, Ralph?" he said.

"Yes, if you like."

"I shall like it VERY MUCH," said Herbert, enthusiastically. "How can I thank you for so much generous kindness!"

"Your companionship will cheer me, and give me something to live for, Herbert," said Ralph. "Through you I hope some day to enjoy life again."

Herbert's clasped the Ranger's hand in impulsive gratitude, while his face beamed with pleasure.

"I congratulate you, Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, kindly, "though I am sorry to lose you. Whenever your guardian is ready to have you enter on a business career, a place in my counting−room shall be open to you."

"Ralph," said Herbert, seriously, as they went from the counting−room in company, "all that has happened seems so wonderful that I am a little afraid I shall wake up to find it all a dream."

"It is a change to me also," said Ralph, "to have a new interest in life. The past is a sealed book. Let us look forward to a bright and pleasant future. Whatever pleasures and advantages money can obtain for you shall be yours."

"Thank you," said Herbert, gratefully.

# CHAPTER XXXIV. CONCLUSION

"Where are you boarding, Herbert?" asked Ralph.

"In Stanton Street."

"I shall wish you at once to remove to the Astor House, in order that we may be together until we sail for Europe."

To this pleasant arrangement Herbert made no opposition. He found it a great change from the dirty and slipshod boarding−house to the elegant arrangements of a first−class hotel. It is needless to say that he enjoyed that change not a little. He often had the feeling, of which he had spoken to Ralph, that it was a dream from which he would some time awake. But the dream was destined to be a pretty long one.

Within a week, much against his will, Mr. Stanton paid over to Ralph Pendleton the fifty thousand dollars of which he had years ago defrauded him, and thus the Ranger found himself master of a fortune of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He settled without delay a comfortable annuity on David Marston, the old clerk, through whose evidence he had been able to ferret out the treachery of Mr. Stanton. Marston needed it, for his health was broken down and he was an invalid, prematurely old. He is now settled in a comfortable boarding−house in Clinton Street, and usually spends his mornings at the Mercantile Library Reading−Room, in Astor Place, reading the morning papers. Sometimes he ventures downtown, and takes a slow walk through the streets, crowded with busy, bustling men, and recalls the years when he, too, was one of them.

Before sailing for Europe, Herbert expressed a desire to repay his uncle the sum of ten dollars, which the latter had sent to him. Ralph was surprised when he learned that this uncle, of whom Herbert spoke, was the same man who had been his former guardian. He approved our hero's determination, and one morning Herbert entered for the first time his uncle's place of business.

"Is Mr. Stanton in?" he asked of a clerk.

The clerk, in reply, pointed to the office.

Herbert entered.

His uncle looked up, but although he had seen our hero at a concert at the Academy of Music, he did not recognize him in the new and fashionable suit which Ralph had purchased for him.

"Mr. Stanton, I suppose?" said Herbert, with quiet self−possession.

"Yes. Do you wish to speak with me?"

"I must introduce myself," said Herbert. "I am Herbert Mason, your nephew."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Stanton, surprised. "When did you come to the city?"

"Some weeks since."

"What brought you here?"

"I had my living to make. I preferred to make it in the city."

"The city is crowded. You had better have remained in the country."

"I do not think so," said Herbert.

"You could have got a place on a farm, and in time perhaps might have bought a little land for yourself."

Herbert smiled.

"I did get a place on a farm," he said; "but I did not like it."

"What are you doing in the city? Have you got a place?"

"Not at present."

"So I supposed," said his uncle, frowning. "I told you the city was overcrowded. You should not have come here. I suppose you relied on me to help you to something. But I have my own family to take care of, and my first duty is to them, as you must be aware."

"I don't think you quite understand my object in calling," said Herbert, quietly. "I have not come for assistance of any kind."

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Stanton, appearing to be puzzled.

"You sent me ten dollars in a letter to Dr. Kent some months since?"

"Yes. I felt that it was best for you to depend on yourself, and that more would only encourage you to

idleness."

"I have come to thank you for the LOAN," said Herbert, emphasizing the last word, "and to return the money."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Stanton, now thoroughly amazed.

Herbert repeated his former words.

"But I don't understand this. You are out of a place; yet you do not need this money."

"No, I do not need it."

This was certainly astonishing, and Mr. Stanton gazed at his nephew as if he did not know what to make of it.

"What are your plans?" he asked. "What are you going to do?"

"I sail for Europe next week," said Herbert, enjoying his uncle's surprise.

"Sail for Europe!" ejaculated Mr. Stanton, scarcely believing his ears.

"Yes, I am to go to school there, and shall probably remain three or four years."

"You are trifling with me," said his uncle, irritably. "How can you go to Europe without money?"

Herbert felt that the time had come for an explanation.

"A friend," he said, "kindly undertakes to pay all my expenses. I go with him."

"Who is your friend?"

"Mr. Ralph Pendleton. I believe you know him."

"Ralph Pendleton!" repeated Mr. Stanton, in renewed surprise. "How did you become acquainted with him?"

"The farmer with whom I was placed in Ohio ill−treated me. Ralph lived near by, and helped me to run away."

Mr. Stanton made no comment. Indeed, his surprise was such that he knew not what to say. His friendless and penniless nephew, as he had regarded him, was about to share advantages which he would gladly have obtained for his own son. When, that evening, at home, he told his family of Herbert's good fortune, Tom was filled with bitter envy. If it had been any other boy he would have cared less, but for "that begger Herbert" to go to Europe in charge of a man of wealth was very mortifying to his pride.

Mr. Stanton made a faint protest against receiving the ten dollars tendered by his nephew, but Herbert was determined to repay it. He placed it on the desk and eventually Mr. Stanton placed it in his pocketbook.

After some reflection, finding his nephew very differently situated from what he had supposed, Mr. Stanton, with the concurrence of his wife, whose opinion also had been changed, sent an invitation to Ralph and Herbert to dine with them previous to their sailing for Europe. Herbert, by his new guardian's direction, returned a polite reply, to the effect that they were too busy in making preparations for their departure to accept the invitation. Ralph did not feel like sitting as the guest of a man who had cruelly defrauded him, and had only done him justice when he was actually compelled to do so.

In due time our hero sailed for Europe with Mr. Ralph Pendleton. They divided their time between Paris and Berlin, Herbert studying at both places. With his natural good abilities, he made rapid progress, and at the end of four years was an accomplished scholar, able to speak both French and German with facility. In watching his progress, Ralph Pendleton found a new and fresh interest in life. He recovered from his old, morbid feeling, and became cheerful and happy. On returning to New York, Herbert, who felt that he should enjoy a life of business better than a professional career, entered the counting−room of Mr. Godfrey. At twenty−one, the junior partner retiring, he was received as partner in his place, his guardian, Ralph Pendleton, purchasing an interest for him at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. He developed good business abilities, and bid fair to swell this sum, in time, to a large fortune. There is a prospect that he will, in time, sustain a closer relation to his senior partner, as it is rumored that Julia Godfrey, now a brilliant young belle, prefers her father's young partner to any of the crowd of young men who pay her court.

The other characters in our story demand a few closing words. First, for Mr. Stanton. It might have been the sudden withdrawal of the fifty thousand dollars from his business that embarrassed him. At any rate, from that time nothing prospered with him. He met with loss after loss, until, in a time of financial panic he failed. He saved but a little from the wreck of his fortune, That little started him in a modest business, yielding him, perhaps, one−tenth his former income. The brownstone house was sold. He moved into a shabby house in an obscure street, where Mrs. Stanton spends her time mostly in bewailing the loss of her former splendor.

Tom developed habits of extravagance, and seemed indisposed to work steadily. Finally, when his reverses

came, his father was compelled to refuse further assistance, and now Tom, in an inferior clerkship, on a small salary, gazes with envy at his once−despised cousin, with whom he has completely changed places. How he will come out eventually is doubtful. Unless he changes considerably, it is not likely that his circumstances will ever be much better than at present.

Abner Holden died suddenly last year in a fit of delirium tremens. His habits of intemperance grew upon him until they led to this sad result. His death did not excite any very prolonged grief in the community, as his temper and uncertain honesty had made him very far from popular. To the housekeeper who had been kind to him, Herbert sent a valuable silk dress, of the richest fabric, of which Mrs. Bickford is very proud. She only wears it on great occasions, and then is particular to mention that it was presented to her by Herbert Mason, of the great New York firm of Godfrey Mason, who was once Abner Holden's bound boy.

Nor was Herbert forgetful of his good friends, the Kents. He paid off the mortgage on the doctor's place, and insisted on putting the house in thorough repair, and newly furnishing it, so that now the town of Waverley does not contain a handsomer house, inside and out, than that of Dr. Kent.

So we bid farewell to our young hero, fairly launched on a prosperous career, trusting that his life−path may be bright to the end, and that he may leave behind him, at the end of his career, the reputation of a noble and honorable merchant, and a life filled with good deeds.

THE END