

"Where do you put up?" asked Billy, swallowing something.

"Oh, lodgin' 'ouse, mostly; but tell what you've been up to yourself, can ye?"

"Yes, brant'ly. Give us half your papers. I'll sell 'em for you, and we'll meet at Twenty-first street, then I'll go down with you for the night."

How natural it seemed to our boy, who yesterday was on a quiet farm, to rush now like a winged imp up the Avenue, yelling: "Tel-e-gram! Tel-e-gram! Evenin' Post!" He espied a man on a door step, who looked toward him; he shot through the car that halted before Macy's; he rejoined Pete in excellent spirits. Somewhat later he had greeted several old associates, and visited an old haunt or two; but even before midnight a change came over the spirit of Billy's waking dreams. The gay, noisy old city of the afternoon lost some of its charms. The summer heat had not died out here, as in the fresh country. The old eating-house, which Billy patronised when the tide of his fortunes ran particularly high (and where this night he took Pete for a treat), the place was horribly close, and the stench of stale tobacco, garlic, beer, cabbage and unclean guests, and their garments, actually turned his stomach. He said he was not hungry; and saw Pete devour his share with secret disgust. At the lodging-house it was even worse. While at Farmer Ellery's he had enjoyed and gradually become accustomed to exquisite neatness, without even being conscious of it. As a fact, Mrs. Ellery's cooking was perfection; her kitchen was spotless; while Mr. Ellery's barns were in almost as good order as were her rooms; and what was true of the farm, was equally true of Prissy's smaller domain. The cabin was as sweet and clean as pure air, soap and water could make it. Now, the resting-place Billy had once found luxurious, was hard, dirty, and full of vermin. Unwisely he gave vent to his emotions by derisive sniffs, and muttered sarcasms about the condition of his couch. It was the signal for an outburst of ridicule from his old-time cronies.

Pete had accepted Billy on the former kindly nature, partly because he was of a kindly nature, partly because the poor Snipe had been a bond of union between them; but with Ned Wilkes, Tommy Boole, and the rest, it was different. Billy having seen more of the world, wearing very objectionably clean whole clothes, had, so it appeared to them, returned to put on airs; to tell what he had been reading;—to talk grandly of his future exploits. They gathered about him during the evening and listened rather silently at first, but in the end they began to taunt him. Tommy Boole, a red-headed boot-black had been head of his clique for several months, and he was decidedly jealous of the new comer.

"What are you down here to-night for, any way, Vanderbilt?" broke out "The Brunswick and the Windsor will keep you for a trifle more," put in Ned, viciously. "Just order out your baggage, my boy, and have it sent."

"Oh, he's been out on his country seat, where everything is fresh. He'll come out right when he's got a pawn-ticket for his watch and set up his diamonds," added another, and so they kept it going. Billy knew them well enough to show no spite; but when they beguiled him into confidential statements regarding his Texas enterprise, and then scouted the whole programme, his indignation was extreme. Billy had gone entirely beyond them in the literary way. They had no time for spelling-out blood-and-thunder romances. They were, it is true, open to skilful attacks on the romantic side of their nature; but just now, every scamp of waem was wild for the high seas. They scoffed at Texas as "played out" long ago. Ned said the grasshoppers ate it up when they devoured Kansas; and Tom added that if they did not the western fires burned up buffaloes and plains alike.

Billy having thrown buffaloes in as bait, they displayed such coarseness in their witticisms, such ignorance along with their real shrewdness that now Billy saw them somewhat as Si, or even as Mr. Ellery, might have seen them. He had remembered them as quick to plan, dashing and bold to execute. Now he reflected, that what they planned and carried out, was, after all, some single bit of fun or mischief, and never anything that required any real knowledge of the world, or any ability to act with continuity of purpose.

Long after every one of them was asleep

and snoring, Billy, hot, uncomfortable, and wide awake, was turning over in his mind schemes, which, even then, had he been back in his bed at the farm, he would gladly have given up forever—schemes that were fast appearing to him impractical, if not foolish. These wild Arab's talk of sea life was plainly absurd to Billy—why might not his Texas visions be as silly? He wished he had confided in Si Barnard. Here, in the stifling heat and foul air of the cheap lodging-house everything connected with city low life seemed suddenly fuel by contrast with the sweet quiet of the country. How could he have over-rated these old comrades, as he certainly had done, in thinking them capable of travel—of romantic research? Pete Hurlston was undeniably clever; but he had grown so lank, so hollow-chested, and coughed so persistently, he was not likely to come out strong in a raid with possible savages. The rest were nothing more or less than dirty, saucy, little wretches. Alas, poor Billy! He had only got far enough away from them to despise them. It took an older and better person than he was then, to look at them pitifully.

But what should he do? The thought of staying right here in the city, and taking up the former life just where these old mates were in it—and he could, perhaps, not do better than they—was very distasteful. To start forlornly off alone for some unknown regions, with no clear line of procedure marked out, was not an alluring arrangement. Before dawn of the next day, Billy would have given six inches of his stature to have been back at Farmer Ellery's. For what had he come, anyway? What put these notions into his foolish pate? As he mused there in the darkness, he came to a better appreciation of Stan Ellery's character, than weeks of previous intercourse with him had afforded him. Stan had been "stuffing him," and he had been a fool. Better still, he partially realized what true friends he had turned his back on so ungratefully. This last train of ideas never left him, after its start. All the following day it kept with him, gradually weighing him down with sadness.

He wandered about the docks, trying to get odd jobs, for selling papers had lost its old charm. In that day, it might truly be said, that Billy first saw New York city. He was a child no longer. He had been, insensibly, somewhat educated, and considerably elevated by contact with industrious, cleanly, sober men, and pure, motherly, Christian women. All the fifth, the drunkenness, the crime, the poverty, stood out plainly, in bold relief, before the eyes so lately turned from blue skies, green grass, and wild flowers.

At seven o'clock that night, there never was a more home-sick boy on earth than Billy Knox. As he sat on a curbstone opposite Fulton market, watching with a doleful face, the crowds for Brooklyn boats, there suddenly flashed into his mind—something Mr. Ellery once said to him: "Never be ashamed to repent. Don't go on in a foolish way because you've started. If your very shoes refuse to turn, get out of them, and go back barefooted. The cuts you get will make you more careful how you start another time."

He sprang to his feet with a whoop of joy that found the peanut man nearly suspect he'd found somebody's purse.

Billy had been missing nearly a day, before the mystery of his disappearance was cleared up by Si Barnard, who found the missing pinned to the wagon cushion in the barn. It was very blindly worded, but when he had carried it in to the assembled family, they made out that Billy had run away to seek his fortune in the far West. Si was out of all patience; Mr. Ellery was sincerely sorry, while his wife grieved openly. Billy, in his letter, had spent much time and pains in telling them how kind he thought them all.

"That shows," said Mrs. Ellery, "that the poor foolish child had right feelings. He was doing so well, and might have made a good, industrious man. What do you suppose will become of him, now?"

The farmer shook his head regretfully, and made no reply. When Si, during the rest of the day, would vent his indignation by mild abuse of the young "vagabond," Mr. Ellery would only express a fear that he had trusted too much to Billy's being influenced by his surroundings, and had given him too little direct instruction and advice. He understood matters more clearly when his good wife found in Billy's room, under

the bed, a few of the trashy yarns Stan had given him. He saw too, that several had Stan's name scrawled on their covers. But Stan, when questioned, seemed greatly surprised at Billy's flight. The books, he said, were some nonsensical things he bought out of curiosity, and threw away. Billy must have fished them out of the waste paper barrel.

When Prissy found the silver on granny's bed, she knew what it meant. Her heart was very soft towards the young "scawag," as Si called him, and after she had mourned a little over him in Si's presence, the latter relented enough to say: "If he had the least idea where the chap had got for, he'd 'quit work for a day or two and follow him up."

About six o'clock of the third day, Silas Barnard was milking Brownie in the lane. He did not see a boy who came slowly toward the cottage, lagging now and then, where the golden rod and asters were thickest, as if he meditated hiding under some hedge. Brownie placidly chewed her cud. Billy, for he it was who approached, came nearer and nearer, uncertain of his reception, and exceedingly ashamed of himself.

A shadow passed between Si and the sunset light; he looked up, and it was almost a miracle that every drop of milk was not upset, when he saw Billy Knox standing there, every feature quivering with excitement. Si's lips puckered for a long whistle expressive of astonishment. Suddenly Billy made a dive for Brownie, flung his arms around her neck, and, half sobbing, half laughing, kissed her honest old face. Si understood all the forlorn, homesick penitence implied by the performance, but it all struck him so comically, that he roared with laughter. In the twinkling of an eye, Prissy Tarbox was on the scene; and how her face lighted up at the sight of sheepish Billy! She did not laugh when Si, convulsed with emotion, choked out:

"You can't be first, Prissy; he has kissed the cow already!"

She cried reprovingly: "Now you stop teasing him, Si Barnard. I will kiss him, for I'm perfectly overjoyed to see him back! What did possess you to run away, child?" And, good as her word, the rosy young woman gave the boy a sounding salute, that made his heart warm with gratitude, and which caused Si, who was usually terribly bashful, to exclaim boldly:

"Don't stop, Prissy, don't! If he could give one to the cow, you certainly might count me in!"

Miss Tarbox offered to box his ears; then laying hold of Billy, she bore him triumphantly into her cottage. How inexpressibly beautiful the humble place looked! To sit again at a neat table and eat wholesome food daintily cooked; to have granny make a little extra fuss over him, chiefly because Prissy was doing so, and not that she understood the situation; to pour out every detail of his experiences, not sparing himself, and to have Prissy believe that Mr. Ellery would overlook his wrong doing this once—how good and comforting it all was!

"The first thing you do," said the practical spinster; you go down to the brook and take a bath. It has been a warm day, and the water won't be too cold. Meanwhile I'll beat and dust your coat, and make sure you have brought no awful creatures back from that city lodging-house. Then, when you are clean, go up and make your neekest apologies to Mr. Ellery, and tell him how ashamed you are of yourself, as you well may be."

Billy, swallowing a big bite of apple pie, nodded approval of her sentiments. "I kind of think," said Prissy, with an idea of finding out something herself, "that he'll be more lenient, because he suspects Stan Ellery hasn't done you any good."

"Oh, I was a fool on my own account, and I shan't go up to him a confessing some other fellow's sin."

"Well, maybe you had better not," assented Prissy, "it generally is unnecessary." That was the only time Stan Ellery's name was mentioned in connection with the events related. Billy was no tell-tale; but he had found out for himself, who were his friends, and who not. This was enough.

In the twilight he went to the farm. Mrs. Ellery was very kind to him. Nan said, frankly, she was "very glad to see him again." Mr. Ellery took him alone into a room, but his hand on the boy's arm was as gentle as it was firm. He talked for an hour to Billy, and it was a talk and an hour that left its stamp on his soul. He drew from

him all his crude ideas of what he wanted to become, or to possess; and then, because he was good and manly himself, he showed Billy that to become a good man was a grand aim. Beyond this he went, and made the boy see that work well done was noble, was inspiring, was enough to fill any life with interest.

When the wanderer fell asleep that night again in his clean bed, it was with a great sigh of content, and the reflection: "Si Barnard will never forget that I kissed the cow, and Stan Ellery will twist me of it forever. I don't care, I'd kiss her again. I didn't see a person in the city that looked so good to me."

Si never told Stan, and never himself again alluded to that burst of affection.

(To be continued.)

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Oct. 18.—2 Kings 10: 15-31.

It will be necessary to read over carefully the intervening history, and teach the main outlines to the scholars.

A great revolution now takes place in the history of Israel. The work of Elijah is completed years after his death.

Subject,—true and false zeal.

I. The new king Jehu. Draw from the scholars a brief history of this man, and the way he became king, and his first acts as king.

If his first exhibition of zeal—in the destruction of the house of Ahab (ver. 15-17). The reason for this destruction in the sins of Ahab and his house, and the ruin that had brought and were bringing upon the nation.

Illustrations The righteousness of executing laws against criminals; of defending a home or a nation against robbers and destroyers. As we destroy wild beasts who otherwise would destroy us and ours.

Find the good and the false elements in this exhibition of zeal. A good work may be done with bad or selfish motives. Jehu's advantage in this work of his.

Illustrations from paste diamonds and imitation jewels.

III. His second exhibition of zeal—in the destruction of the worshippers of Baal (ver. 18-28).

Illustration of Jehu's treacherous promise to the Baalites, from the story in early Roman history of the Sabine maiden who agreed to betray the garrison of her father for what the Roman soldiers wore on their left arms, meaning their golden bracelets. They agreed to give the price asked. But when they entered the city they cast their shields, which they wore also on their left arms, upon the traitor maiden, and killed her.

Note the good and the bad elements in this exhibition of zeal.

IV. The imperfection of Jehu's work (ver. 29-31). This shows that his zeal in what he did was imperfect, and the source of the imperfection in a bad and selfish heart. Note especially the temporal reward for outward service, and the utter failure to receive the higher and more spiritual rewards, and why.

Illustrate by the prayers and aims of the Pharisees (Matt. 6: 1-5).

HOW MANY PEOPLE buy simply what is essential for the comfort of their households and put the surplus, be it only seventy-five or a hundred dollars a year, into the purchase of books! Yet all sorts of books, old and new, profound and wise, witty and bright, lying close at hand, needing but to be opened and read to give companionship, variety, and instruction to the passing hour, have far more to do with diversifying and enlarging the perception and taste than all the decorations that a general ransacking of the ages and climes can furnish. Yet very few people of substantial means expend regularly a hundred dollars on books during a year. It would not occur to a person of taste to borrow or hire a plaque for a week or a month in order to enjoy its beauty. But even the enthusiastic reader of a book is indifferent to its possession, and will make use of almost any expedient rather than expend a few shillings on the purchase of it. Yet for making life many-sided and of real worth, the easy acquisition and possession of books is of the highest importance.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*