

not in the least realize that he was on trial for the family credit.

Up hill and down dale they went, chiefly up hill, until at last a beautiful lake came in sight, with high cliffs rising from its shores, and fertile, undulating fields stretching beyond.

"There's the house. Are you glad to reach your journey's end, my boy?" asked Mr. Whitely, as he helped Ned down, and gave him into the care of motherly Mrs. Whitely, who welcomed him, gave him his supper, and then tucked him into such a comfortable little white bed, that he fell asleep without having time to be homesick.

The next morning, Ned was up bright and early, taking his first peep at country life, and enjoying it all hugely, though he found the cows and horses rather awe-inspiring at close range.

There were several children among the boarders, and though none of them were of Ned's age and condition in life, yet he was not lonely, for there was so much that was new to occupy him that he seldom missed the boys to play with, whom he had so longed for in prospect.

Sometimes he would wander about in the fields, and bring back treasures of all sorts of stones, weeds and grasses; at other times he would go to the lake shore, and, from the narrow, pebbly beach, forming a bay at one side, would sail bits of wood and bark, laden with a cargo of leaves, or twigs, or flowers.

His special admiration was a completely rigged sail boat, of miniature size, which was owned by Robbie Bates, whom Ned often watched with envious eyes as he sailed it. He would have offered to help, if he hadn't felt rather shy of Robbie's nurse, who was always with him, though he said in excuse to himself, "He's too little for me to play with, anyhow!"

One day, Robbie and his nurse had gone into the house, leaving the sail boat outside. No one was in sight, and temptation entered into Ned's heart, and without stopping to think twice, he picked up the sail-boat and hurried toward the lake with it. It was quite a distance to the path which led to the pebbly beach, and the way stretched along the top of the cliffs which skirted one edge of the lake. Ned was hurrying—in the consciousness of wrong-doing—and the first thing he knew, he had caught his foot in some projecting root and was lying flat on his face, while the sail-boat, jarred from his grasp, had disappeared over the edge of the bank.

Now what was to be done?

Ned crawled to the edge, and looking over he saw the sail-boat—which now he didn't care for in the least—lying some distance below. He also saw a hand-rail and some rough steps

leading down almost to the spot where the boat lay, and at once decided to go after it.

The steps were rough and far apart—having been started some years before as a short cut to the lake, but abandoned because of the steepness and danger of the way.

Ned found it difficult work, for though the hand-rail was secure, the steps had crumbled away in places, and slipped with him as he went. At last he reached the end of the hand-rail, and, clinging to the last post, almost swung himself to the next step, some distance below, dropping his hat as he came.

Now the boat was at hand, but Ned was more than ever in a plight. He couldn't take the boat up with him, for he needed both hands to help his climbing; and he surely couldn't go back without it.

He was only a little boy, after all, and as he realized his position, his scratched feet and torn clothes, he sat down on the step and broke into a loud wail.

"I want to go home! I want to go home! and I wish I'd never seen the old thing," he cried, and gave the boat an impatient push with his foot, sending it into the lake below, much to the surprise of Mr. and Mrs. Bates and Robbie, who happened to be near by in a row-boat.

"That's my sail-boat! I want my sail-boat!" Robbie said, and mingling with his cries came the voice from above, "Oh, I w-a-ant to go ho-on.!"

"Why, it's the fresh-air child!" said Mrs. Bates, in surprise. "How did he get there, do you suppose?"

"However he got there he must be got down," said Mr. Bates, decidedly. "It isn't a safe place for a child."

Having fished in the sail-boat, he rowed to the shore, and, tying the boat fast, said, "Now sit still, while I go and get that youngster."

It was not very far, though the way was steep, but Mr. Bates was a good climber, and, having reached Ned and found he was not hurt, he soon succeeded in getting him safely to the boat.

Robbie looked curiously at the dilapidated boat, then at dilapidated Ned, as if trying to trace the connection between them. "How did my boat come from up there? and how did the little boy get scratches on his legs?" he demanded.

"We want the little boy to explain that," said Mr. Bates, looking at Ned, who dissolved into tears again, and, between his sobs, told the whole story.

"Don't you know what taking other people's things is called?" asked Mr. Bates.

"Yes, sir," sobbed Ned.

"What!" asked Mr. Bates, and waited patiently for the answer, which was so long in