

do what other people did. All their instincts were the hereditary instincts of a line of decent home-builders. Why, now that their father was gone, should they not have a home, and clothing, and comfort, like other people?

Achilles was an unusually sturdy, shrewd lad. He had from early childhood worked for the neighbouring farmers, from the time, indeed, when at five years old he could only gather stones in a little home-made cart. From such labours he had secured food for himself, and often for his mother. Thus the habit of labour was formed in him, and better than other boys of his age he knew the methods of labour.

Letitia had never had opportunity to be a child; she had been her mother's friend, nurse, solace. Thanks to a good constitution, and the pure mountain air, her premature cares had not injured her growth or health. She was at an age when native pride and decent instinct begins to stir in favour of respectable clothes and tidy surroundings. She planned as enthusiastically as Achilles, and the two aroused and inspired their mother. At first Mercy had agreed to whatever was proposed, and had taken hold of the work merely to escape from thought and to please Achilles, lest in despair he should desert his unhome-like home. But as day after day drifted by in safety and peace, quiet and kindness and good food began to tell upon Mercy, bringing back health to mind and body. She caught some of the enthusiasm of her children; her house-keeper's instincts, which had not been quite destroyed, revived again. It seemed good to her to sit down in a clean room, with no terror of a maniac's return; it was a new experience seeing affairs improve and not retrograde, and finding that household belongings increased instead of diminishing.

The house well cleaned, all the bedding washed and aired, the clothes mended, new clothes made, all the refuse rags and tatters washed, cut, and braided into mats, in which work she was helped by the nimble fingers of Samuel, Mercy began to find a new comfort in living.

Nothing so revives a mother's heart as the thoughtful kindness of a child. How could Mercy but take comfort, when Achilles was so thoughtful for her? He came over the hills one evening, carrying on his head a comfortable splint-bottomed rocking-chair.

"I bought it for you, mother," he said, "of Mrs. Canfield. I bought it by work. I'm going over to churn for her evenings, all summer, and she gave me this, and she'll give me some other things; she has a lot of things up in her attic. There's a good lounge up there I can have if I work for it; it will look nice in this room, and Patty can sleep on it when she comes back."

Seated in this chair which Achilles had worked for, and Letitia had cushioned with patchwork, how could Mercy, with her feet resting on a mat braided by Samuel, fail to take hope and see more sunshine in life?

The garden had been Achilles' first care, and when the brown, well-worked beds lay in the spring sunlight; when beans, potatoes, and onions, cabbage and tomato plants, began to shine in green rows above the fresh earth, Achilles was busy mending the front fence, tearing down the stile and putting in a gate, repairing the barn-yard fence in readiness for Letitia's famous calf, making a place for the coming fowls. The dollar, hidden under the water trough, and which had been laboriously earned in cents and nickels, went for lumber, and more lumber was obtained by pledging all his work during the month of November.

What sweat of honest labour poured over little Samuel's angelic countenance, as his indefatigable brother kept him busy picking up stones, cleaning up the old wreck of a barn, raking and sweeping the yard, and then raking in grass-seed and oats.

"The oats," said Achilles, "will spring first, and be something green, and help the grass to set, and the chickens can pick up what ripens; in a year or two we'll have a green yard. Don't grumble at your work, Samuel, it is not half as hard as this tree-planting I'm doing," and Achilles looked with pride at four trees which he had set out.

"But I ain't half so big as you," puffed the tired Samuel.

"Work won't hurt you," said Achilles. "If you sit in school all day you can work hard at home, and you'll sleep the better for it. A boy that gets good bread and bacon and potatoes to eat, needn't growl at work. Did you get reg'lar good meals and quiet nights last year this time?"

To a child of six it is an effort to summon up the circumstances and emotions of a previous year. Samuel, having accomplished the task, admitted that "Las' year he didn't have nothin'."

"You had a drunken dad," said his brother, "and now he has gone you've no call to grumble at nothing. You pile all those stones into a real pretty border about that round bed I dug up there. Tish is that round bed I dug up there. Tish is going to bring over some flowers to plant out for mother. Mother's going to have a posy bed now, same as other people. I'm going to have this place worth something, and I've heard Mr. Lyman say that trees and flower-beds made a place worth a hundred or so dollars more any day."

And so Achilles worked and kept Samuel at work, and the stars had twinkled out in the pink west before Samuel was allowed to wash himself and tumble into the bed which he shared with his brother.

The first three Sabbaths of this new life the family worked the same as on other days. The boys hammered at the fence, and cut wood, and sawed and pounded at the barn, trying to straighten up the door, and nail back some loose boards; and Mercy was beguiled out to plant the asters and pinks and geraniums and seeds Letitia had collected.

But toward sundown of the third Sabbath Friend Amos Lowell rode up on Bay Betty, and in his arms he had Patty—a very different little Patty from the one he had taken away on the day of the trial.

"It is not my habit, Mercy Stanhope," said the Quaker, "to make visits on First Day. That is a day the good Lord has reserved for himself, and has he not said that in it we are not to do our own work or think our own thoughts?"

"Why, what are we to do then?" demanded Samuel, whose mind was ever on the alert.

"Thee must worship God, read his holy book, praise his name, examine thy conduct, think of the good land where the righteous dead live in the light of God's face."

"There now, Kill! What did you make me work for?" cried Samuel, while Achilles looked perplexed.

"Mercy, thee has wandered far from the teachings of thy youth. Thee has not done as well for the children as thee might have done," said Friend Amos sadly. "Thee was reared to hallow the holy day, according to the commandment."

"I know it," said Mercy. "But in these years when we had no clothes and no way of getting to church or to Sabbath-school, and when the poor things were safest out of the way and I dared not even get out my Bible, I have fallen into a way of letting them go just as on other days. I know it is wrong."

"Then thee must right the wrong. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. I feared thee was not keeping the day of rest, and so I came up to testify to thee and to thy house. Does thee read the Scriptures daily?"

"The nice story-book she had hidden?" cried Samuel. "Yes, Mr. Lowell, she reads that always after supper."

"That is well, but thee will remember to call me Friend Amos and to give me no vain appellations, such as are unseemly. Does thee pray, Mercy?"

Mercy flushed and shook her head. "Thee must pray, Mercy, and teach the children to pray also. After thee reads the Holy Word, then pray with thy house, and bid the children to pray with thee. This bid the children to pray with thee. This book, Samuel, is not merely a book of pleasing tales, it has in it the law of the Lord, and is able to make us wise unto salvation. Thy mother knows all that should be told and taught thee of God and thy duty, and she must instruct thee and the other children. I tell thee, Mercy Stanhope, he that builds on any other foundation than Jesus Christ and faith in him, as set forth in the Holy Word, builds on sand and shall fall away. If thee deprecates the good of thy household, and the blessing of God on thy labours, seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near."

The good man then took the Bible, read the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and advising the family to learn both by heart knelt down and made a fervent-supplication. He then urged them to attend church and Sabbath-school regularly; they were able to walk, and the weather and roads were good. He said he was quite ready to have Mercy purchase at his store whatever she needed for a suitable outfit for church-going, and he would wait for the money until she was able to pay it.

When Friend Amos and the smiling Patty had ridden away on Bay Betty, Mercy began to tell Samuel and Achilles how she had been taught to spend Sabbath when she was young, and what she had learned on that day.

"Tish goes to church with Mrs. Lyman," said Achilles, "and Mrs. Canfield told me last night, when I was churning, that we ought to go to church and be good Christians. I told her we had too much to do just now fixing the house, but she 'lowed she didn't know what good houses in this world was going to do us, if we didn't have houses not made with hands eternal in the heavens. I didn't say nothing, for I didn't know what she meant."

"Then I'd asked what she meant," said Samuel.

"I ain't so dead set on findin' out what things mean as you are," said Achilles, "but if going to church and saying prayers is respectable and going to make somebody of us we'll do it; and if you know anything else, mother, that is like folks for us to do, you let us know and we'll do it."

A month sufficed for Achilles and his co-workers to give the surroundings of their home a somewhat orderly and thrifty appearance. During the latter half of May, Achilles went to the village each morning, and working with the carpenter and glazier, who were busy on some new houses, he earned window-panes for the broken windows, a couple of door-sills to replace the worn-out ones, a pair of wooden benches, and two or three second-hand tools, as a hammer and saw. He took Samuel with him on the Saturdays, and had him pick up several pounds of nails, where a dwelling had been burned down.

With June, Achilles began to work for the farmers in his neighbourhood. He took his pay in meat, flour, vegetables, or pieces of furniture. The school closed for the summer about the first of July, and Samuel's life became a burden, what with weeding, and hunting for potato bugs—but he received some consolation from writing on a slate and reading in some small books with which his teacher had presented him. Mercy began to have ambition once more, as Samuel at her side continually asked, "What does this spell?" "What does that mean?"

Achilles regarded Samuel with pride. "Some day he'll be a judge, maybe, or a doctor," he said. "He'll let folks see that father couldn't keep us all down. We shall do well enough, now he's gone for good."

Achilles never dreamed that this speech hurt his mother, and Letitia was not there to hint the fact to him. Letitia was still working for Mrs. Lyman, intent on learning how to keep house, and earning clothes so that she could begin school with the fall term.

Mercy was beginning to have dreams of future respectability. Letitia, perhaps, could fit herself for a school-teacher. She recalled her own girlhood, its neat dress, pleasant home—why could not Letitia have something of this kind also?

Mercy herself was not idle. Not only was she busy at the house, but she went out to help her neighbours for a day at a time, or even as nurse for a week or two. The boys could get on fairly well in her absence, as it was summer, and it was a matter of the first importance now to procure dishes, cooking utensils, and some warm bedding.

Friend Amos, wisely alert for the family he had received as his especial charge from Providence on the day when Thomas Stanhope's earnest speech went to his heart, advised Mercy to look for sewing or knitting which she could do at home, so that the home could always be pleasant and homelike, and cheered by a mother's presence.

"Thee knows, Mercy, if thee is not there, the lads may begin to wander off for a bit, and as they stray around they may

fall into ill company and temptations, as their father did before them. It is thy home, Mercy, that is to moor thy boys to virtue, and all good and prudent habits."

"That is true," said Mercy, "and I only intend to try and earn a little money to fix up the house with, and then I shall try to get work from the ladies in town, or from the shops. I am a good hand with my needle, and some people like handwork best. Achilles is so fond of gay and nice things at home. Friend Amos, I hope you will not think I am wrong if I buy some window shades, and a red table cover, and a good lamp, and also some chintz to cover the lounge the boy earned from Mrs. Canfield?"

"Thee is quite right to buy these things, Mercy. Come to the store and thee shall have them at cost price."

And how glad a boy was Achilles, when in October, returning from an absence of four days, spent in corn-husking for a farmer, he found his home bright with his mother's earnings. The stove was blackened, a row of blue dishes ornamented the shelves he had put up, bright tins hung in the little closet, the lounge had a gaily-flowered cover; on the table was a red cloth, and a lamp with a shade, and the two windows had Holland shades with fringe, and beautiful little gilt crescents to pull them down by. Little Patty had come home. Friend Amos had reluctantly resigned her. Letitia's fowls were going to roost in the barn. Letitia was feeding her calf, and also another calf which had a history. That second calf Achilles had found in Mr. Canfield's pasture, such a feeble creature that the good farmer said that to knock it on the head would be the best solution of its life-problem.

Then Achilles boldly begged to keep the creature. He worked to earn milk for it, fed it from a bottle, kept it warm in an old quilt behind the stove, and at last, by his indefatigable care, it became a thrifty, frisky creature.

On Thanksgiving Day after church, Mercy prepared for her household a dinner of roast fowl and apple-sauce, and there was great rejoicing.

Then some one, passing by, handed in that letter written to them by the prisoner. Mercy read it with tears, Samuel sighed in sympathy, Letitia said it "sounded like a nice new father." Achilles was silent.

Then he and Letitia went out to look after the calves. Achilles caressed the head of his *protégé*, which had a white spot, reminding him of the beloved steer which had been as his Patroclus.

"I don't care what he writes about being sorry," he said to Letitia. "Let him be sorry, he ought to be. But he shall never come back here to raise Old Nick, and sell steers. I won't let him! He's out, and he'll stay out?"

(To be continued.)

RULES FOR USING BOOKS.

WHILE books are numerous and cheap, that does not justify their careless use. The length of time which school and other books last depends on the way they are used. Some people by care keep books neat and in good condition for years or even a lifetime, while others seriously soil or destroy them in a very little time. Children should be early taught how to handle books. The following rules are worthy of careful study; and their observance would, in a short time, greatly improve the appearance of books in many households:

- Never hold a book near a fire.
- Never drop a book on the floor.
- Never turn the leaves with the thumb.
- Never lean or rest upon an open book.
- Never turn down the corners of leaves.
- Never touch a book with damp or soiled hands.

- Always turn leaves from the top with the middle of forefinger.

- Always open large books from the middle, and never from the ends or cover.

- Never open a book farther than to bring both sides of the cover into the same plane.

- Never cut the leaves of a book or magazine with a sharp knife, as the edge is sure to run into the print, nor with the finger, but with a paper-cutter, or table knife.

- Never hold a small book with the thumb pressed into the binding at the lower back, but hold it with the thumb and little finger upon the back.