

MINE.

"My Lord and my God."

I dare not say, This wealth is mine,
Life many changes brings;
And while I count possession sure,
My gold has taken wings.

I dare not say, This place is mine.
I stand secure to-day;
To-morrow raging winds and waves
Sweep every prop away.

I dare not say, This honor's mine;
For fame is all of earth,
A flower plucked from the parent stem,
Transient, and little worth.

I dare not say, This joy is mine;
For joys, like drops of dew,
Sparkle and glitter in the sun;
Then vanish from our view.

But I can say, My Lord is mine!
He fails and changes never!
In Him I've wealth and name and place,
Sweet joy and truest happiness,
And He is mine forever!

—Mrs. Helen E. Brown, in *American Messenger*.

ERNEST ADLER.

BY MARGARET E. WINSLOW.

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CHAPTER I.—THE PROFESSOR'S BOY.

"So that is the little professor, is it? A fine specimen of a boy, and one to whose future you may well look forward with pride. I suppose this unexpected, though not unmerited good fortune of yours, is doubly valuable, as giving your boy a better start in life than he could otherwise have had."

"Why, yes," said the person addressed, a scholarly man, whose head, just beginning to silver, would have proved a delightful study to men of philological tastes; "the life of a country pastor, while one of the noblest possible to a human being, affords few educational advantages to the pastor's children. I don't consider the head professorship of this college a *rise* exactly, but it will place within my boy's reach opportunities for culture and advancement which he could never have attained in our Pennsylvania village or with the limits of my extremely moderate salary. For Ernest's sake I am very glad of, and thankful for, the change. If it please God, my boy shall make his mark in the world and be more than his father has ever been."

"And your wife—is she pleased also?"

"Not quite, and strangely—for she is usually the most reasonable of women—in this instance I can not make her listen to reason. She fears for Ernest's excitable, impulsive temperament the exposure to temptation incident to college life. She would rather, she says, know that her boy was a Christian than that he filled the most brilliant position upon earth. So, of course, would I; but I can see nothing incompatible in culture and religion; and, when I remind her that life in a college town did not prevent my becoming a minister of the Gospel, she answers that that was in Germany, and that things are very different now and here."

Under such favorable auspices did our hero's college life commence when he was only five years old.

Harton College is situated in a basin of hills through which the Kartoul River cuts its way a few miles above the town. Falling to a lower level by a succession of cascades and waterfalls about two miles above the town, the savage little river, suddenly shorn of its mountain-strength, quiets its frolicsome gambols, flows sedately between the green meadows and under two bridges, till, at the farther side of Harton, it makes an attempt to bend, embracing two sides of the college-green, and is soon again lost among the hills, between which it finds its way at length into the Susquehanna.

Very quiet and peaceful is the well-shaded college town. The older houses are constructed of square blocks of reddish sandstone, in whose crevices the clinging feet and tendrils of ivy and five-finger have long ago found ample lodgment, till gable ends and latticed windows peep out from a mass of greenery, which the softened winters of this sheltered valley never kill. Even the wooden dwellings have a "venerable flavor of antiquity," such as American villages can rarely boast, for college towns are not pro-

gressive; and though the building of the railway and the erection of the paper-mill did make a little stir and introduce a new element, that excitement subsided long ago, and the depot with the houses of the mill-owners and superintendent, look now as old as the professors' dwellings or the college buildings themselves.

Smooth, well-shaven lawns are a specialty of Harton. The damp, alluvial soil of the river-valley and the moist air are favorable to the richness of the turf and also to the cultivation and growth of flowers, and the bright parterres dotting the patches of emerald give a very English aspect to the whole scene.

The three college buildings, likewise of stone, stand on a slight elevation surrounded by a lawn which slopes to the river's brink on two sides, while on the third runs the high-road, the green and undulating meadow-lands beyond it gradually climbing the hills to the west. On either side of the river, between the college and the town, stand the picturesque dwellings already noticed—the president's mansion, those of the six higher professors, and that of the mill-owner. Above this the straggling town commences, and the homes of doctors, lawyers, clergymen, shop-keepers, etc., etc., are mingled with those of the humbler sort; though they have generally retired back toward the hills, leaving the streets along the river to the churches and the stores.

Such in brief is Harton; a very Paradise to the sight, and, as one would suppose, the happy valley in which the boys of many homes might be educated and fitted for life's duties, far removed from the dangers of temptation or the blight of sin. So thought Professor Adler, as from the window of his class-room he looked out upon the lawn where his red-cheeked, bright-eyed boy was playing, and forward over the boy's future, which the colloquy above quoted had suggested without one fear.

Spending the early years of his life in a German university, the Professor's passion for abstruse metaphysical study had preserved him from falling a prey to the temptations which surround youth of a more volatile and pleasure-loving turn of mind, and, as immediately after his early marriage he had emigrated to America and settled in a quiet country parish in Pennsylvania, he had seen little of a world which spreads its snares for the unwary feet of youth everywhere, but most of all in a country college town; for even into the paradise of Harton, the serpent who insinuated his slimy folds into Eden had succeeded in finding his way, and was watching with all his hydra-heads from many an upper chamber or back room in the hotels, the factory boarding-houses, the livery-stables, and other places where the wary professors little suspected his existence.

Two girls had come to the parsonage-home of the Professor before the advent of Ernest—girls, who now growing rapidly into tall young maidens, already gave promise of the great talents which placed one among the noble army of painters and gave the other the place of a rising literary star, until the light of the star was quenched in the raging waters at the loss of the ill-fated *Ville du Havre*. But it is not modern German fashion highly to appreciate the intellectual developments of women, and the father's pride as well as the mother's love were centred in the boy who had come to them ten years after his youngest sister. Of his future, man-like, his father dreamed; and, woman-like, the mother prayed.

Meantime the boy was rejoicing in his new surroundings. The college grounds afforded more ample scope for ranging than the poor little parsonage yard had ever given. The fairy shallops of the college boys, always ready for a twilight row upon the shining river, were a source of never-ending delight; while the attentions which the bright, handsome little fellow constantly received on all hands from the students who gave them from self-interest or sheer good-nature and from gushing young ladies and motherly elder ones, might easily have turned heads older and better ballasted than his.

Ernest Adler was one of those natures inclined to shine. His German pedigree showed itself in nothing but a splendid, well-balanced physique. For the rest he was as thorough an American as any boy at Harton. The sensitive susceptibility of his nature to every influence from without exhibited itself in a transparency which brought every good and brilliant thing to

the surface and made the child a perpetual source of amusement and entertainment to all by whom he was surrounded.

Little Ernest soon became the pet of the drawing-room coteries, which are so great a charm in the life of a college town, "Do bring your little boy, Mrs. Adler," the ladies would say in giving their invitations for the stately college tea-parties; "he is such a darling, behaves so like a little gentleman, and his cunning recitations quite break up the monotony of an evening."

"There will be plenty of room for your little brother," the girls would say to Ernest's sisters when planning a moonlight row; "his singing on the water is quite angelic!"

"Crowd in the little fellow somewhere," said the young men in arranging for a straw-ride. "Whoever stays at home, he must not; he makes more fun than all the rest of the party."

The versatility of the child as the years passed on made it very difficult to predicate in what line he would distinguish himself. He might be a poet, musician, or orator. The latter was in these earlier years his favorite development, and that which, while it made him the idol of Harton society and filled the hearts of his father and sisters with pardonable pride, caused that of his mother to vibrate between her fear of the seductions of worldly applause and her hope that her deep longing to see her son in the sacred ministry would be realized.

Thus passed the first ten years of Ernest's college life—sunshine and flowers, flattery and favors, and, withal, a sound education going hand in hand. As soon as he knew his letters the boy went regularly to the college grammar-school, where his quickness and docility won the hearts of all his teachers, who angured, and pleased his father with their auguries, the most brilliant college success.

For the rest, the learned Professor—gratified at the ever-perfect recitation reports, and flattered at the glowing verdict of society—buried himself more and more in his class duties and metaphysical studies, and never inquired how his boy spent the many leisure hours which his quickness of acquisition left at his disposal; nor who were the companions whose seed-sowing would tell on his future life.

Sometimes, as the years sped by, the mother's watchful eye detected symptoms that filled her with temporary alarm; but the boy's frank, open denial, his ready way of accounting for any suspicious circumstance, and his enthusiastic defence of his many friends, always lulled her suspicions. That her one great prayer was not yet granted she knew, but she knew also that "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and that she must wait in patient faith for that mighty breath of the Spirit which should transform her beloved child into a child of God.

CHAPTER II.—THE FIRST STEP.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Aunt Charity said she saw it with her own eyes."

"But Aunt Charity's name does not exactly coincide with her nature always; she is somewhat apt to look at the worst side of things, and she has never quite forgiven Professor Adler for being the means of rustiating her favorite nephew, Fred. I have heard her say that people had better look nearer home before they were hard on other folks' children, and that everybody was not a saint who was sly enough to seem so."

"That's all true; but Aunt Charity, though she is prejudiced, is not a liar, and she positively assured me that she saw Ernest Adler, if not exactly intoxicated, very far on the way to it New Year's night."

"I will not believe it," said the second lady, motherly and forgiving in her nature. "I have watched Ernest since he was a mere baby, and he has always been just what I should have liked my boy to be, had it not been the good pleasure of his far wiser Father to let him grow up in the Heavenly school where there is no temptation and no sin."

"None so blind as those that won't see," quoted the other speaker, quite innocent as to the extent of her own wilful blindness concerning the notorious aberrations of her own only son, and not suspecting that a long, smouldering jealousy added greatly to her readiness to believe the first breath of scandal about the college paragon.

The above conversation was the first breath, but a general respiration of the whole town followed, for not only is one person's business the business of every body in a small place, but the slightest flaw upon a shining mark is sure to rivet the gaze of every beholder. Other young men might be "gay" and "fast"; college scandals might arise with the usual frequency; hazing might be pushed to the limits of cruelty; the respect due to the Faculty ignored by practical jokes, and errors, of a graver nature, committed by others. In these constantly-recurring cases girls would sip and whisper some nonsense about "men of spirit," and elder people would vent their charity in the theodidactic platitudes of "sowing wild oats," and "boys will be boys." But with a professor's son it was very different.

How could a man be expected to govern the sons of other people when he could not govern his own? What an example to be set to the whole college; what an influence set to emanate from a minister's family! There, too, a boy who had been set up so far above other people, there is sure to be something wrong inside when the outside is so exceptionally fair. What was the Professor thinking about? What was the mother doing that the boy's associates and habits were not better looked to? etc., etc.

Thus ran the gossip of the social world of Harton, which quite enjoyed its new sensation, though, of course, in a deprecating kind of way. Strangely enough it never seemed to come into the heads or hearts of the good people to treat the boy's first fall with grave pity, to talk kindly with him and warn him of the precipice on whose verge he was treading, or to point out the many examples of those who had fallen from its edge to rise no more.

For it was a first offence, in this line at least, and the shame and humiliation of it were crushing the boy down with a sense of degradation almost greater than he could bear. How it had happened he hardly knew. Elate in his recent elevation to the Freshman class at the early age of fifteen, he had enjoyed his New Year's calls hugely, going from house to house and drinking in the flattery which his talents and education also, alas! so much of the ruby and amber poison in which healths are wont to be drunk on these festive occasions, that when he, at a late hour, made his last call upon Miss Charity, he could scarcely stand, and gave vent to some very unintelligible nonsense as his New Year's greeting. His mother had retired when he reached home, exhausted with the fatigues of the long day of entertaining, for every one in the town had called upon the Professor's wife and daughters, so he reached his bed undetected by the home circle, to fall heavily asleep, and wake to all the shame and misery of mental and physical reaction. To his im- possible, sensitive nature the transition from the pinnacle of joyous excitement was always an easy one to a corresponding depression, and in the present instance the depth of self-humiliation in the fall was proportioned to the height from which he had fallen. He hoped that no one but Miss Charity had seen him, and that perhaps her charity would be sufficient to induce her to keep her knowledge to herself; for had she not always treated him with the most flattering consideration? But he was not sure, and if the story should get abroad, he felt as though he never could lift up his head in Harton again. He wished his mother knew, that he could go and lean his aching head on her shoulder, and, as heretofore, in all his boyish troubles, claim her sympathy and consolation. But he could not summon courage to tell her. To a sensitive nature the sense of personal defflement, especially when first experienced, builds an impassable barrier between it and the pure things it has been accustomed to reverence and confide in. And so the revelation came from outside, and one day Ernest found himself called to his father's study to meet that upright man in a high state of righteous indignation.

"What's this I hear about my only son, having disgraced himself and his family by getting drunk?" said the Professor, sternly. "Of course I did not believe the report, but I want to know who are the companions you have chosen, association with whom has thus prejudiced the public mind against you?"

"It wasn't any of the boys' fault," said Ernest, too noble to let the reputation of any one suffer on account of his sin.

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