

parted straight and smooth—smooth! Bertie gave his own rough mop an impatient tug. "Refined manners"—oh, shutting doors quietly, wiping your boots, and always saying "thank you"; and here, I am sorry to say, Bertie added, "rot." "Strict honor"—well, that was not to use cribs, or tell untruths, even little white ones. He pushed the book impatiently from him.

It was a deal too hard to expect from a boy of eleven. "A gentleman"! Why, the other fellows would say he was a muff; and what could he do then? Fight them? It did not say a word about *not* fighting, that was one comfort; though he wasn't quite sure if it might not be included in refined manners.

It was a showery day; little spurts of rain had been dashing at intervals against the window, and then the sun had come out and smiled in, as if to apologize for their rudeness. It was shining now gloriously, so gloriously, that Bertie, snatching up his cap, flew down stairs on the way to the common where his school fellows were playing. Half way down the stairs he heard his mother's voice calling him to take some message or other. He hesitated. Should he pretend he hadn't heard, make a great clatter to drown another call, and run out quickly? Just as he planned this the words "good breeding" flashed into his mind. He turned slowly—after all, a fellow's mother;—it was with quite a bright, cheerful face he received his instructions and trotted off.

His way lay past the common—rather a pretty common, too, with green hillocks, great flaring bushes of yellow gorse, and every now and then a dip into a level stretch of green that made an ideal playground for a cricket pitch or marbles.

The common was alive with children, playing, rushing, shouting—all except one end, where stood a little group of boys. As Bertie passed this group a cry of distress from it smote his ear.

He ran quickly up. A big boy of twelve or thereabouts was holding a girl by the arm and

shaking her roughly; a torn kite lying at her feet indicated the nature of the strife.

"Horrid little sneak!" said the boy, with a rough shake, "you did it on purpose!"

Bertie knew the boy well—one Tom Tagg by name, no end for his bad temper; many a thrashing had poor Bertie had from him.

"What's the matter?" he inquired bravely, though there was a little shake in his voice. "Has she torn your kite?"

"I couldn't help it," sobbed the girl. "I never saw it lying there, and I fell."

The boy gave her another shake. "Just like a beastly girl," he said.

Bertie looked round; the other boys were smaller and looked afraid of Tom. He felt very sorry for the girl. Her hat was off, and she had a lot of fluffy, yellow hair, that came tumbling into the blue eyes that were looking so appealingly into the angry face above her.

Chivalrous—didn't that some how go with the meaning of gentleman?—helping the weak? Bertie spoke hurriedly:

"Let her go, Tagg! She's sorry, and the mischief's done!"

Tagg turned round fiercely. "You shut up!" he said rudely. "unless you want your head punched. I'm going to teach her not to spoil my things. I'm going to shove her into that gorse-bush!" and he began hauling her towards it.

Chivalrous—but did it mean against odds?

Bertie's heart beat, but he resolutely crushed down a momentary fear. "Leave her alone," he said more decidedly; "she's littler and weaker than you, and she's a girl!"

The boy laughed contemptuously; he was very near the gorse bush now, already the cruel prickles had caught her dress and were tearing at her jacket. She gave a piteous scream. Now or never! Bertie's right fist swung suddenly out—straight as it could go—right on the big boy's nose!

There was a howl, a rush; Bertie saw the big boy's hand

drop from the girl's arm, saw his eyes flaring with passion close to his, stood ready to receive the blow—when—bang!—crash! Tom had tripped over a stone and fallen headlong into the gorse-bush! There was a silence; then, as he struggled out with scratched hands and torn face, a scampering away of the other boys—only Bertie and the girl standing there silently.

The big boy stood half blubbing and picking the thorns from his hands and clothes. Bertie felt a sudden pity mixed with a little contempt for him.

"Can I help?" he said gently. The big boy did not answer; he let him help to brush away the thorns and leaves; then, when all was finished, turned sullenly away.

The little girl stood looking shyly at Bertie. Then suddenly a red blush came over her face and she shook her fluffy hair over her eyes. "Thank you," she said sweetly; "you're a gentleman!"

And Bertie went on his way well satisfied.—*A. Collyer.*

TAKE CARE.

They are going to the post-office together, taking the path through the woods, a slim, young girl and her grandfather. There is an impatient look only half-concealed on her face. She had meant to slip off quietly, but "of course he had to follow!" It is "very tiresome," she thinks, for him to stop and investigate all the empty birds' nests and the ant hills, and she listens half heartedly to the bits of information, remembered from his earlier days, that he is so pathetically anxious to impart. She never stops to remember that he has seen more than eighty summers, and that perhaps the very next one she will be free to come and go with no tremulously expectant face to elude, no halting step following her. Ah! but if she is at all the kind of girl we think, the very flowers will look up at her then with reproachful eyes! All the old walks will be full of haunting memories, and she would give up the joy of the whole summer if only she could