

If David said to himself a dozen times, 'served me right,' no one said so to him. His father seemed bent on making him and his mother laugh all through supper time. How was David to eat? His father went to draw the couch over to the table: David winced a little. Then his father drew the table over to the couch, hiding David in a gulf of darkness.

'I'll have to borrow a horse's nose-bag and give the boy his supper in that,' he declared.

There was no seriousness the whole evening, except for David's pain; until after he had been undressed and settled in bed.

How kind they all were! How good his mother was to forget his selfishness and rudeness!

'So you've been swinging to high, lad?' his father said, when David, after vainly trying for an hour to sleep, called his father in to him. 'It don't pay. Your mother and I have been thinking you not quite yourself of late.'

'Mother thought I was going with bad boys,' said David.

'Master Arthur is a fine lad, and I believe he'd not go with bad boys. No; but you've been swinging too high, lad.'

'Do you mean they're gentlemen and I'm not?' said David.

'I mean the catechism, boy; that its best to do our duty, be it work or be it play, 'in that state of life into which it hath pleased God to call us.' It's a fine thing to be a gentleman; but you're apt to turn out a poor imitation if you begin copying the wrong thing. It's not the doing as you please, and loitering around, and forgetting the people you love, and despising work and having your pockets full of money, that makes a gentleman.'

'But poor boys get to be gentlemen, sometimes, urged David; isn't that all right?'

'Yes; all right, if he climbs the way God meant him to. If you're a true man, David, you'll care little and God'll care little whether you're a gentleman or no. It'll not take him long, as I take it, to make any true man into a gentleman. There is a difference now, a difference that God let's be; but it's good, not bad, so long as we respect one another and help one another. Do you think Mr. Pierce could get along without me, or such as me? No more could I without him.'

'Why should he have more money than you?' asked David.

'Because God wills,' answered his father, a little sternly; 'leave that alone, lad. We're not put in the world to make money. I was put here to help on the world a bit by watching pulleys and cranks and levers, and by thinking of a new way or two, it may be, to help His affairs to go more smoothly where He trusts them to us. And unless I'm mistaken in you, He's much the same work for you, only better than ever I did, I hope. Why David lad, they're grand creatures, the wheels and the pulleys and cranks, as busy as the fairies, and as strong as giants. There! go to sleep and dream of them; and God keep you.'

'I think I could finish that mill model, mother,' David said, as he sat propped up on the couch next day, waiting for Arthur's promised visit. He was deep in the task when Arthur came, bringing a mould of jelly from his mother. Arthur watched him admiringly as he skillfully put the scattered pieces together.

'You do that better than you swing, David,' he said.

'I've been swinging too high,' David said, which Arthur did not fully understand.

He did understand, however, enough of David's ingenious model to beg him to let his father see it.

'I'm going to bring father down here to see it,' he exclaimed: 'you don't mind, Mrs. Carnduff, do you?'

David felt it an honor, indeed, when Mr. Pierce spent a full half hour the next evening talking with his father about the model, he felt like begging its pardon for having said it was 'no good'; he loved it now.

What came of that half hour was, that Mr. Pierce offered to have David placed in a school to be especially trained in knowledge of machinery. An offer which Mr. Carnduff gratefully accepted.

Arthur's visits made the weeks in which David was a prisoner among the happiest in his life. The books he brought taught David to love books as he never had; and the instruments for drawing which Mr. Pierce gave him were among his life-long treasures.

'That was a good swing, father,' he said one night; ain't I glad I tumbled!'

MABLE H. DESPARD.

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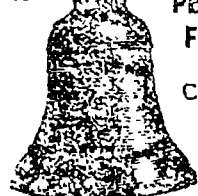
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