

CHAPTER II.

REUBEN'S QUARTER.

WHAT kept Reuben was this: it had been what he called one of his "unlucky" days. The errand-boys, and news-boys, and all other boys who had regular positions had been on hand, and nobody seemed to want anything carried anywhere, though the streets were full of people, with their arms full of bundles. It was getting near to sunset, the time when he generally went home to get orders about the errands for the night, and he had but five cents in his pocket. He knew just how much, or rather how little, flour, and coal, and potatoes there were in the house, and he knew that his mother had no money. He had hoped to have a grand day for business, and bring home at least twenty cents, and here it was, even worse than usual. Reuben Stone was ten years old, and rather a tall boy for his age; but he rubbed his worn-out jacket sleeve across his eyes, and made up his mind that this was a pretty hard world to live in. Generally, he managed to keep cheerful enough to whistle most of the time, but to-night he kept his lips shut tight, and trudged along with his head down.

"Halloo!" shouted a man from across the street.