

ken! it's Theodore Evans of course; yes, there go his heels around the corner. I declare that boy ought to be locked up!" "Now see that boy! right over the fence on our grass, tramping it down. Just open the door and tell him to go hunt butterflies in his own garden!" who pulled down that branch of honeysuckle? Theodore Evans, I'll warrant! that boy is the pest of the neighborhood!"

Such were the complaints uttered all through the town, day after day. Yes, Theodore Evans was "an awful boy" in everybody's opinion. Why did not some one teach him to be better? Well, Theodore had no mother; that was the beginning of it all. Such boys need mothers so much; fathers do not seem to understand how to take care of them. Theodore had a good father; everybody told him so; especially his aunt Martha, who kept house for them, and who said to him, at least once every day, "Theodore, it's a dreadful thing for a boy to go on as you do when he has such a good father. I declare! I do think boys—" and then Theodore would run off and hear no more, saying to himself, when he was well out of the way, "I am an awful fellow, I s'pose, but I can't help it." Then he would wonder if his good father had ever been a boy like himself and tormented people so.

Poor Theodore had a hard time of it; his father punished, and Aunt Martha scolded, but he only seemed to grow worse.

At last a happy event took place. Theodore's sister, who had been away at boarding-school for some years, came home. She was only fifteen years old; but she had written to her father for permission to finish her studies at home. The truth was that Alice was anxious to see "that boy," that brother of hers, of whom her father and aunt complained so much in their letters.

Theodore did not rejoice much at the prospect of having his sister at home. "Some one else to plague a body's life out!" he grumbled to himself. "A fussy school-girl, with curls, and ribbons, and stuff! pshaw! But she'll soon find out what awful things boys are!"

Sure enough, when the day came, there was Miss Alice with a head covered with brown curls, and the daintiest of blue ribbons fluttering at the neck of her dress! Poor Theodore stood in dismay at the door. But the young lady ran toward him with a smiling face, and put her arms about his neck, until the gay ribbons were pressed close against his old school jacket. Then she said, "How he has altered in three years, and grown! why he is almost as tall as I am!" and she stood up by his side, and looked as if she were really quite proud that "that awful boy" was her brother. And he, why he glanced slyly up into her face, and had a dim idea that she must be a sort of angel.

"Take care, Alice!" called Aunt Martha,

"your dress is rubbing right against those dirty boots! I have often told you, Theodore, to change them before coming into dinner."

Theodore looked half-ashamed and half-angry. But Alice said gayly, "Oh, it's only dust; it will brush off. He was in a hurry to see me, you know, to-day. Have you any slippers, Theodore? I have been making you a pretty pair, and I hope they'll fit. You must help me unpack my trunk after dinner." Theodore slipped quietly out of the room soon after and took off the dusty boots. He even stopped to brush his hair, feeling a little ashamed at such an unusual proceeding, and afraid that Aunt Martha might possibly think he had done it to please her.

Theodore had usually lived on a very haughty kind of principle, which I once heard a little boy express in this way: "I care for nobody, and nobody cares for me." But somehow, just then, he began to feel as if, perhaps, somebody did care for him after all, and he thought of the blue ribbons which had been pressed against his jacket, and of the smiling face which had looked so kindly in his own. How delightful it was to have that pleasant face by his side all dinner-time! And when he upset a glass of water, and his father told him "if he could not behave better he need not come to the table with the others," Alice quietly spread a dry napkin over the cloth, saying, "Accidents will happen sometimes; and then went on to tell of some things which used to occur at meals in boarding-school, making everyone and especially Theodore, feel more comfortable.

"That boy" did not break any windows, in the neighborhood, nor trample any flowers that afternoon, for he was busily and pleasantly engaged helping Alice to unpack her trunk, hanging up her pictures, carrying her books to the library, and thinking all the while that he had never had such a nice time nor been so useful before.

Suddenly he asked, as he stood looking down at the slippers Alice had given him, "Don't you hate boys?"

"Hate boys! why no; what do you mean?"

"Oh, they're awful fellows, I tell you! nobody likes 'em."

"Yes I do; and I'm glad I have a brother," said Alice, looking up at the young rogue, who stood there with his hands thrust in his pockets.

"You won't be when you find out what a plague he is. You'll hate the sound of his boots just as Aunt Martha does; and you'll get half-crazy with his noise. She says she don't know what boys are made for; and I don't either, unless they're, like mosquitoes, to torment the people."

"Oh no, Theodore, they were made to grow up wise and noble men, and do a great many useful things in the world. You know Aunt Martha is getting old, and has some queer ways, but we mustn't mind that; let us try and do what she likes, even if it is hard."