

happy circumstances which led to this. But tell me what your plans are, and I will only be too glad to give you any advice I can."

"Thank you," said Ernest, warmly; "I thank you a hundred times for all the kindness you have showed to me and to my widowed mother. May God reward you. In my occasional visits to the west, I met with a family of the name of Austin, whom my mother knew well when she lived in B——; and who still reside there. One of the sons is a lawyer, and has a fine practice in B——, but he has been, for some time, anxious to live in this part of the world; and, in writing to him the other day, I proposed an exchange, with which he seems delighted. It now remains with you, sir, whether he will take my place or not."

"Take your place!" exclaimed Mr. Clifford; "no one can ever do that. But what do you know of this young Austin?"

"Not very much, it is true. But all I know is very good; and he has been well brought up, and that is a great deal in his favor."

"Yes, a great deal; and there is no one here whom I would care to take into my office, I must confess. You think the fellow is steady?" queried Mr. Clifford.

"Perfectly so, as far as I am aware," replied Ernest. "He is rather a clever fellow, too; writes a good deal for the different publications and law-journals, and some of his articles are very good; and a man must have his head clear to write well."

"Very true," said Mr. Clifford. "I will think the matter over. I could give him a stated salary at first, and then, if he suited me, I might make him my partner. However, Leighton, as I said, I will think the matter over, and give you an answer to-morrow. But I am greatly troubled about your leaving. Old people don't like change."

"But, Mr. Clifford, you are not an old man," said Ernest.

"No, not very old; only—let me see—

fifty-eight; but, it seems to me, I have been growing old very fast of late, and cares seem to weigh upon me heavily; but this is the greatest grief I have felt for many a day. But, stay, Ernest," he said, recalling him. "How are you going to manage about your mother? If I can be of any assistance to her, I shall be very glad."

"Thank you, Mr. Clifford," answered Leighton, "my mother intends remaining here, for the present at least. Before very long, I hope to have a pretty good practice in B——, as I shall, in a measure, take Austin's place there, and be able to give my mother as much towards her support as I have while I have been with you. In the meantime, she will have the interest of a considerable sum I had saved from my salary, and for which I will have no use now. This, with her own income, will support her comfortably."

"It would be well, Leighton, if all widowed mothers had sons as good as you are," said Mr. Clifford. "And now, good-bye, for the present."

Mr. Clifford, after due consideration, resolved to write to young Austin, which he accordingly did, and was so much pleased with the answers he received, that he decided upon taking him into his employ; and when he came up to make the final arrangements, Mr. Clifford found that he had not been mistaken in the opinion he had formed of him from his letters.

Frank Austin was the second son of a retired officer, who had been living for several years in a flourishing city in the west. Frank, though very young when called to the bar, had already a good practice in B——. Having had a great desire, for some time, to live in L——, he gladly took advantage of the opening, and entered the office of Mr. Clifford, of whom he had been told a good deal by his friend Ernest. Of course, Austin had heard nothing of the engagement with Edna; and indeed, it was not until some time after his removal to L——, that he learnt that Mr. Clifford had any other daughter than Selina. He spent more of his leisure hours at Mrs.