

"Let me try," he said. "It looks so dead easy."

He picked up a small stone lying at his feet and threw it. It came so close to the nest that the boys held their breath.

"Good for you!" shouted Howard, forgetting, in his excitement over the sport, that they had almost quarrelled. "Try again, Harry, we must get the old thing down."

Faster and faster the stones flew, and still the marten's nest hung from the tower.

"This will fetch it," said Harry, picking up a big rock and throwing it. There was an ominous sound—a crash of broken glass, as the stone which had been meant to go forty feet, fell short by twenty, and went smashing through a window, shattering the pane to atoms.

Harry looked at Howard pale with dismay.

Howard shook his head and whistled.

"You'll catch it!" he said by way of consolation.

"It isn't a very bad break," Harry whispered; "not like one of the windows with pictures."

"It's bad enough; you'll get put out of the choir for it," replied Howard. "I wouldn't tell if I were you, Mr. Alison won't ever know who did it—it was an awful bad throw though."

"Here comes old John," broke in Harry, nervously. "Let's cut and run."

The boys made a dash across the churchyard, and only breathed freely when well out of sight of the gate.

"You'll stand by me, Howard, won't you? 'cause it was your fault, too."

"I'll back you up, never fear," said Howard—"but I'm glad I didn't break the window."

Harry could not make up his mind to tell his mother about the afternoon's escapade, though she asked him several times if he didn't feel well, he was so quiet; and he went to the choir next morning with a very heavy heart.

Nothing was said, however, before the service, about the broken window, and Harry thought to himself, with a deep breath of relief, "Old John hasn't told—perhaps he won't find it out."

He sang louder than usual to try and stifle the "still small voice" that kept suggesting such uncomfortable things to him, and reminding him of his good resolutions only a week before. How he almost wished for a chance to meet some great temptation like the brave knights his mother read about.

The recessional was,

"Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding,

Christ is nigh! it seems to say,"

and Harry's voice grew suddenly choked, as he thought of how he had failed to "cast away the works of darkness," like "the children of the day."

"Boys," said Mr. Alison, as they stood a moment after the prayer was finished, in the vestry-room, before you unrobe, I want to ask you a question. The sexton found one of the transept windows broken, last night, and said he thought the choir-boys must have done it. I hope he was mistaken, because you all know that it is against the rules to throw stones in the churchyard, and I have so often spoken of it, that I cannot believe it was done by the choir. If any of you know how it came to be broken, I hope you will tell me."

There was silence, though Harry's heart beat so loud he thought it must be heard. He looked at Howard, Howard shut his lips tight and telegraphed: "Don't say a word."

"John told me," continued Mr. Alison after a pause, "that he saw two boys run out of the gate as he came round the other end of the church. He declares that they were choir-boys, though he did not know their names. I want to get to the bottom of this, so I will ask you the simple question one by one; Did you have anything to do with breaking the window, Will?" "No, Sir."

"Did you, Gus?" "No, sir."

"Fred?" "No, sir."

"Johnnie?" "No, sir."

"Howard?" "No, sir."

"Joe?" "No, sir."

"Dave?" "Thornton?" "No, sir."

"Harry?" "Yes, sir."

Harry's eyes dropped as they met the surprised glance of the rector.

"How did you do it?" he asked, gravely.

"I was throwing stones at the marten's nest in the tower," Harry answered, in a low voice.

"Were you all alone?" No answer. "That is right," Mr. Alison said hastily, "do not tell; I had no business to ask you that question. If the boy is not brave and manly enough to own up himself, I do not want to make you tell on him. You know, I suppose," he continued slowly, "what I shall have to do? I am really grieved and disappointed, Harry, to be obliged to suspend you from the choir, but I cannot pass over such deliberate breaking of the rules."

Harry took off his cotta and cassock, swallowing down the big lump in his throat.

"Never mind," whispered Fred Pierson, "you'll surely get back by Christmas."

Howard slunk out of the door without once meeting Harry's indignant eyes. He was the most to be pitied of the two, for he knew that he had behaved like a coward and a sneak.

Harry felt better after he had poured out the whole story into his mother's sympathetic ears, she understood so well all about it.

"I haven't cast away the works of darkness much, have I?" he said, pathetically. "And I thought I was going to be such a splendid