

A violent thumping at the door caused him to start up and open it.

Lionel's sunny face appeared, his hands laden with apples and oranges.

"Look here, old fellow; I say, let's be friends, it was all my fault. So I've brought you these, and we'll make it up by eating them together."

James had sundry misgivings on the subject of the housekeeper's wrath when she should discover the depredations which her young master had committed on her cupboard, but Lionel speedily assured him that it was all right. "I went to my father and told him I had bullied you awfully, and I asked if I might have these things which Hunt had put upon the sideboard ready for dessert, and he said 'yes.'" So it's all right. Only won't Hunt just be astonished when he sees the empty dishes! Come, look sharp, and peg away, for I'm to be ready for a walk with the governor in ten minutes."

"He's kinder than any one in the whole world," said James to himself, "except my mother," and he sucked his orange vigorously. I'll never provoke you again if I can help it, and I'll follow you to the end of the world." There was a fixed purpose in the boy's eye as he made this resolution in his heart; and any one looking into his face might have read his thoughts, and knew that he had bound himself to his young master's service with all the strength of his own determined nature.

It was the dreariest time in all young James's life when Lionel really went to Eton. Every day, as he came back from school, he cut a notch in his stick in token that one more lonely day was really gone. He had little spirit left for his lessons, though he worked honestly at them, and none at all for his play. But the weeks rolled on, and holiday time came at last. Lionel at Eton could not have been more eager than James at the Manor. The carriage had scarcely started to meet the train before James was running off at full speed to the entrance of the park. There he would stand an hour or more, careless of heat or cold, wind or rain, waiting impatiently for the first glimpse of his friend that he might open the gates for him to their fullest width, welcome him with his loudest hurrah, and by waving his handkerchief announce his approach to the expectant household. Of course every one at the Manor, from Sir John to the under-housemaid, agreed that Lionel was, at each succeeding vacation, taller, handsomer, and cleverer than ever. Sir John had sometimes to say, "that must not be, my dear boy;" and the old housekeeper would exclaim, in her turn, "'a done now, do Master Lionel." But after all the lad got his own way a great deal, far more than was good for him, from his father as well as from the servants. "He had such a way with him," they said, "they were certain sure he took after his blessed mother." As for James he carried out to the utmost the resolution formed over the orange, and made himself a most obedient and willing slave. It was a great misfortune that they all wilfully blinded themselves to the domineering will, the unrestrained violence of temper, which occasionally betrayed itself. Nurse Hudson had some idea of it, but the Eton boy was now quite beyond her authority, almost beyond her influence. Sometimes, however, he would sit down by her, and have a chat about old days, and listen to her description of his mother. For if his temper was hasty, his heart was full of warm affection. At such times he would bear her words of remonstrance, and even owned she was right when she warned him of the danger and sin of his violence, and of the necessity of self-control. Another thing she could do for him,—pray; and that she did in earnestness, for she was a pious woman, and believed that what she asked in faith for the motherless boy would be granted her.—*Monthly Series of Church Stories.*—[To be continued.]