

the respect in which women were held by the negroes of the interior. In case of divorce it was the women who took the children. If a young man married a woman of a neighbouring village, he left his own village and went to live with his mother-in-law. It was his duty to pay her the greatest respect, and to supply her with firewood. Near the Zambese the young men had to make long journeys into the country in order to procure firewood for their mothers-in-law. [A laugh.] He had been told that to undertake such an expedition was tempting Providence, but at such assertions he only laughed, and he regarded those who made them as his weaker brethren. [Cheers.]

THE STORY OF A MASTER MECHANIC.

Our acquaintance with the subject of the following narrative was only of recent date. He is now a distinguished Master Mechanic on one of the most important roads of this country. We took pleasure in hearing, from his own lips, the details of his career, and we were so strongly impressed with the perseverance and self-reliance which he had displayed, that we resolved to throw together the substance of his history for the benefit of some of our younger readers. There are many engineers and mechanics, now of extensive reputation, who have been associated, at different times, with this person, and who will recognize him in the remembrance of one or another of the incidents now given. We employ nearly his own words:

'I lived at home until I was fifteen years old, and worked steadily on the farm. At this time, I made up my mind to hire out, and to do this, I resolved to go "down below," where farming was carried on to better advantage, and where higher wages were paid. I left home one morning early in April, starting before sunrise, and I walked that day, 38 miles, I dined on the way with people with whom my father was acquainted. At night I reached the house of an old miller, and put up with him. I told him what I had started for, and asked him what chance I had in that neighborhood. He told me he could send me to just such a place as I wanted, and charged me to be up early in the morning, and go there at once. I lost no time the next day in following his direction, and in due time was on the spot. I made a bargain with the man for seven dollars a month, worked every working day for seven months, and at the end of that time received my pay and started for home. I had left home with seventy-five cents in my pocket, and with my clothes tied up in a small bundle. I carried back with me my full pay, the seventy-five cents, and twenty-nine cents pocket-money besides, which the old farmer had given me. My outlays, in the time I was with him, amounted to twelve cents. I was not stingy with money, but I had no necessity nor especial temptation to spend money, while I was at work. All I thought of was to give satisfaction, and to get home again.

I had written once to my mother that I was at work, but did not tell her what I was doing. I walked all the way home. A stage line had been started that summer, and I might have ridden home for a dollar, but I chose to earn that dollar easier than in any other way, by walking. I got home late in the evening, and after a hearty welcome, and some supper, I gave my father my money. *He was pleased,—and to tell the truth, he did not often see so much.*

It was then decided that I should have some new clothes and go to school. My father said that my brother and I should thresh out oats enough to buy

a suit of clothes, and save my money, we threshed three weeks, and covered the barn floor with oats. They were sold, I had my clothes, and commenced going to school. After three weeks' schooling, I concluded to put forth again to work. I left home, and from that time till I was nineteen years old, I hired out for most of the time.

'When about nineteen, I felt anxious to 'go below,' and to work in some mill, shop, or mechanical business. Several young men of my acquaintance had done well below, and I had made up my mind that I should not follow farming any longer. I started for Lowell. For three days I went around to the mills, but could not even get admitted inside the yard. It was late in the fall, and a bad time to get work, as they were all full. I tried at the old Locks and Canal shops, and had the same ill-luck there,—as I could not even get admitted inside the gate. I well nigh abandoned the idea of getting work in Lowell, and seriously thought about returning home.

One day, walking near the canal, opposite the Appleton Corporation, I saw an old fellow who cleaned castings at the big shop, and who was then going in at a little back gate near the foundry. I stopped him and offered to him half a dollar if he would let me go in with him. He told me he would take no half dollar, but I might go into the yard, and he told me to mind and get into the shop at once, as if the watchman saw me loafing about the yard, they would drive me out. I did as I was told. In the shop I got to talking with a young man whose father was one of the job-hands. The young fellow told me that perhaps his father might give a job, and so he brought me up to him. The old man, after some talk with me struck a trade, agreeing to give me, besides my board, nine dollars the first month, eleven the second, thirteen the third, fifteen the fourth, and continue my pay at fifteen dollars a month, and board, for the rest of the year.

To me, that was a good offer, then. If I should come into the possession of fifty thousand dollars now, I should not be any more pleased than I was then.

I went out that evening, and bought me some stuff for two aprons, and I got me two towels and some soap. I had the aprons made up by the daughter of the woman with whom I was boarding, and the next morning, at the first stroke of the bell, I was in the shop. I never shall forget my first job. My boss showed me a keg of five-eighths bits, for card cylinders, and laying out some nuts on a string, he set me to work cutting these bolts by hand. What I had given me, I should now call enough for two days' work. I took hold, and by four o'clock I had them all done. I went to the old gentleman and told him I had finished my job. 'What,' says he, 'they are not well done, then.' He went with me and turned all the bolts on the floor. He tried a good many of them, and they were all cut alike. The nuts were all tapered so as to just go on with the fingers, and at the same time not to be too loose. 'Well,' says he, 'they are all right, sure enough. I gave you as I supposed, enough to keep you at work two days. Now, you needn't do any more to-day; and you can look around the shop and see what the other boys are doing. But mind you must never use oil to wash up with.—I remembered that, and I have had occasion to give the same directions, since to some of my young hands.

I worked there for nearly a year. My boss was a deacon in the church, and was a fine old gentleman. He was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature before I came away, and gave up his job, which was the cause of my leaving.