

they are not fit to eat, and to kill a bird just to see how well one can aim—why I believe when that boy knelt to say his prayers at night, Jesus would turn his face away."

"Oh, but didn't you hear mother call th m 'pests,' and don't they build their clay-nests in our chimneys, and, once in a while, don't they come tumbling down full of those horrid, little unfeathered balls, making a big litter of clay and soot? Ugh!"

"See that bright-eyed little one on the lowest wire. Hal, how pretty! Now it darts for a fly—"

W-h-i-z-z, went something right by Hal's head, and down fell the bird at his feet. The children had not noticed a blacksmith's shop near; but now they were filled with terror, as a man, with sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, caught Hal's arm and shook him roughly, saying:

"Flugin' at my birds, hey! You little rascal. I'll teach you better."

"Oh," exclaimed Nellie, "he didn't do it, sir; indeed he didn't."

As soon as Hal could catch a good breath he said:

"I didn't throw at all, sir; the rock came over my head."

"Then, young gentleman, I beg your pardon. You see I began to pet two swallows, so that they would come and eat out of my hand. Then they hatched, and more came, till now there are twenty-five, and they are all named, and know their names too. I planted these vines for them too. Somehow I loved this little Nellie best, because I named her after my own little Nellie that's dead; but now she's hurt, and will die, too, I'm afraid."

"Its leg is broken, sir; let me take it home with me and nurse it," said Nellie. "Its my namesake, sir," and she pressed her lips to its brown head as the blacksmith laid it in her hand tenderly, and then, as the tears glistened in her eyes, she added:

"I'll try not to let it die."

Then they said "Good-evening," and started homeward, and the blacksmith stood with arms akimbo, and watched them till almost out of sight. Not a word did the children speak until sure they were out of hearing, and then Hal, slapping his pocket emphatically, exclaimed:

"Whew! Ain't I glad I didn't bring my sling-shot!"

NO!

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW HARD IT IS TO CLIMB.

THREE months on a butcher's cart did Jack a great deal of good. He not only found out that he was not a remarkable boy, but that the people did not think so much of him personally as to overcome the unfitness, as they thought, of his position. That he was honest and cheerful did not prevent his old school-mates from dropping him as a friend and a sharer in their social amusements. He ate a good deal of what Mimy called "humble-pie" in the course of this time, and it did him much good, but it also filled him with a natural desire to make friends somewhere, and so he did his best to please his customers. He cut very liberal pounds of meat for one and another; threw in a good bit here for the cat, and a bone here for the dog,

and when some woman on his route persistently tried to beat down his prices he would abate a little for them without stopping to consider that this was really disposing of Mr. Marsh's property without his leave.

But the butcher soon began to perceive that the meat he sent out did not bring him in what it was worth; the daily shortage was small, but it was daily, and soon told on his profits.

He questioned Jack closely as to his exactness about weighing, and about the prices he asked.

"Why, I give 'em good weight!" said Jack, surprised.

"Exact pounds, do ye?"

"I don't stop for an ounce or two, Mr. Marsh; they think it's mean; and I throw in a bit of cheap stuff for the cat in some places, or a bone for the dog, and sometimes I have to let down a few cents on prices, they do badger me so."

"Well, now, that's it; it don't seem no great sum to you, and I know you're real honest about it; but you figger it up. That cats' meat would sell for ten cents a day at least; now wouldn't it?"

"I guess it would," Jack answered, in a dismayed tone.

"And supposin' you gave overweight of two ounces at sixteen places, that would be two pounds a day at, say, eighteen cents a pound at the lowest, that is thirty-six cents; and if you give 'em ten cents off at one place, and five at another, and ten at another, why there's a quarter more; and the bones would be worth five or ten for soup, average for 'em seven cents, say; there's seventy-eight cents a day, three times a week, that's \$2.34 a week. What d'ye think of that?"

Jack's eyes opened wide. He had not counted up these easy pennies.

"Well, Mr. Marsh, I never did think of it; that's the fact of the matter. I suppose I wanted to make it pleasant for customers, and have 'em like me," blurted out honest Jack.

"Well, so do, so do! Be civil and friendly, but I'm to say 'no' when they ask ye for what isn't really yourn to give."

"That's just like mother," said Jack, and Mr. Marsh laughed.

"I'd give consider'ble if I was as good for a man as Mrs. Boyd is for a woman, and I will say for 't she's fetched you up real well, and—"

"But, Mr. Marsh," broke in Jack, "you must take all that out of my wages."

"Sho! sho! I shan't do no such thing. You didn't go to do it, and you won't do it no more. Boys have got to learn, and learn by 'xperience; and you're honest clear through. I wouldn't no more dock your wages for that than nothing in the world. I don't want to have you do it no more, that's all."

Jack told his mother about the whole matter at night, as he always did. His troubles and his pleasures were all laid before her for counsel or sympathy, as the case might be.

"Mr. Marsh was quite right, Jack; you needed to say 'no.' Like most people, and particularly young people, you like to stand well with those about you; to have them like and admire you. This is all right to a certain extent. You know the Bible says, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' And you see the apostle puts the things that are true, honest, just, and pure before what is lovely and of good report. Take the Scripture order, and you will be all right. Now I think you ought to make restitution to Mr. Marsh, as it is right and just you should. He is very kind and generous, but you will fix this lesson in your mind and free your conscience by repaying him, though the great reason, of course, is that it is right."

So Jack did, much to Mr. Marsh's dissatisfaction; but he at once raised the boy's wages enough to make up the lost, in spite of Mrs. Boyd's remonstrance.

A few weeks afterward an old school acquaintance of Mr. Gilbert's, who was the cashier of a bank in Boston, called at his store, being in Danvers on business. The two had not seen each other for many years, and had grown far apart in that time. Mr. Gray was a Christian gentleman in the truest sense, and Mr. Gilbert was neither one nor the other. So the visit, made for old times' sake, was not much enjoyed by either, and was very brief. But in the course of their conversation Mr. Gray asked Mr. Gilbert if he knew of any young man or boy in Danvers whom he could get to fill a junior clerk's place in his bank.

"I want a boy from the country who is not up to city tricks; one who knows a little of accounts, and can be trusted."

"We-ell," said Mr. Gilbert, slowly, "I do know of such a boy; used to be here in my store. He's honest enough."

"Why isn't he here now?" asked Mr. Gray.

"O he knew too much; didn't mind his business, but wanted to help run mine."

"That sort of a boy wouldn't suit me," said Mr. Gray, decisively.

"Well, now, he just would," replied Mr. Gilbert, who in his secret heart really respected Jack. "He's too honest, that's the real fact of the case. You know there's tricks in all trades—hev to be; and he couldn't nor wouldn't take to 'em. You can't run a general store on Scriptor principles, an' he was bound to run it that way."

"Why can't you?" asked Mr. Gray.

"Well, you can't; you've got to get ahead of folks or they'll get ahead of you every time. It's doin' as you're done by, anyhow."

"It's doing as you would be done by?"

"That ain't the purpose. I should fetch up in the county jail pretty quick if I didn't look out for myself first. Let every man do that, I say, and the world'll gee."

Mr. Gray looked at his old school-mate with profound pity.

"My dear friend," said he, "did you ever hear that 'no man liveth to himself?'"

"More fools they, then," snapped Mr. Gilbert.

Mr. Gray saw that he was in no mood to receive any admonition, however gently or wisely urged, so he returned to Jack.

"What is this boy doing now?" he asked.

"Drivin' a butcher's cart. He couldn't get anything to do but that, so he done it. Showed good grit, too, for his folks have been first chop here in Danvers, ever since 'twas a town."

"Good!" said Mr. Gray, emphatically. "Where is the butcher's shop?"

Mr. Gilbert directed him, and in a few minutes he had found Mr. Marsh, and made his inquiries.

"Well, sir," said the good-natured butcher, "that feller is as bright as a dollar, and as true as a die. He's honest clear through. I'd trust him any day with gold untold, I would really. His mother's son couldn't no way help bein' good." And here Mr. Marsh branched off to a eulogy of Mrs. Boyd that pleased his visitor much, for Mr. Gray had faith in training.

"I don't want to lose him, neither," concluded Mr. Marsh, "but I know he'd ought to do better. He'll have to help his mother by an' by when them old ladies drop of; and the' aint no great promotion in the butcher business, nor no great profits if you deal on the square as I calculate to."

"But how came Gilbert to turn him off?" asked Mr. Gray.

"O I'll tell ye the hull o' that! Mrs. Donovan deals with me, she came into the market one day just as he driv off and told me the story. She can't say enough about Jack." And he went on to put Mr. Gray into possession of Mrs. Donovan's version of the story, which, even allowing for her Irish volubility and exaggeration, was another item in Jack's favour.

Then Mr. Gray went to see Mrs. Manice, and had a long talk with her, and the result was that soon after his return to Boston Jack was offered a place as junior clerk in the bank where Mr. Gray was cashier, at six hundred dollars salary; and it was decided, after some consultation and much prayer, that he should take the place.

It was very hard for Manice to let her boy leave her, but she liked what she had seen of Mr. Gray, and she knew—had known a long time—that some day that all her children must fly from the home nest, though it gave her many a heartache to think of it.

"I'm glad he is going to a respectable position at last," commented Aunt Maria, with a sniff.

"Yet the butcher's cart helped him to this place, Aunt Maria," said Manice, with a gleam of amusement in her eye. "Mr. Gray told me that when he heard that Jack was so determined to work that he took the first thing that offered he said to himself, 'That's the right sort,' and Mr. Marsh's recommendation was much heartier than Mr. Gilbert's, who only said he was 'too honest.'"

Even Aunt Maria smiled a little at this peculiar indorsement of Jack.

"Makes ye feel real bad, don't it," said sympathetic Mimy. "I know it does; but it's the natur' of things. You fetch up a boy to be a sort o' comfort to ye when you get some on in life, and fust you know away he goes and makes it home somewheres else; or if its girls aad they get so's to fly round, sort of helpful and folksy, up hops some chap or other 't you never sot eyes on in the livin' world before, and sperits 'em off to be married! It's awful tryin'."

Aunt Sally took the news in her own way. She laid out on Jack's needs a portion of her hoarded charity money. She had lately been much impressed with a sermon on the text,

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

And as Aunt Sally was an honest