

was nearly as durable and preservative as paint, he went valiantly to work when the spring rains were over, and put a good coat of pale yellow over the house and fence. The window-frames, eaves, and doors he touched up with Venetian red, and proud indeed he was of the result. The porch and the rebuilt barn were yet affairs for the future; but hop and honeysuckle vines threw finely, the trees Achilles had planted grew apace, the round flower-bed was gay with bloom, the two long benches placed one on each side the front door gave pleasant suggestions of evening rest. Thomas Stanhope would not have known his old home, so different is the work of the up-builder from that of the destroyer.

Achilles was wont to whistle lustily as he worked, but music he voted a bore; poetry, in which Samuel revelled, being lifted as into Paradise by the sound of a few rhymes, Achilles boldly denominated "fool stuff"; he preferred to get history and geography at second-hand from Letitia, and his Bible from Samuel, except when, as a respectable and exemplary head of a family, he read it on Sundays. On such occasions, also, Achilles preferred to read sitting out of doors, that he might be seen of men. This was not so much a puerile vanity as a desire that all should know by these presents that the Stanhopes had turned over a new leaf, and were on the up-grade toward the standing of the ancestral deacon.

Achilles made one exception in favour of a kind of knowledge which did not immediately tend toward the betterment of his fortunes. During the winter his teacher had announced that there would be a course of lectures in the town, on the effects of alcohol on the human system; these would be illustrated with diagrams and stereoscopic views. They were to be given under the auspices of the Temperance Society, and all were invited.

Achilles went; he listened with interest to the description of human anatomy, the human stomach and its lining, the delicate texture of the human brain, the physiology of the human blood. He stared, with eyes extended to their widest, at pictures of a clean and healthy stomach, and a stomach diseased and inflamed by the use of alcohol; he could discourse learnedly about red corpuscles and their abnormal arrangement under the influence of strong drink. Oddly enough, these lectures gave him more toleration and pity for his father. He expressed this privately to Letitia.

"A man that poured in whiskey as father did must have been in an awful case. His blood must have hurt him all the time, and his stomach must have been all knobs and knots, and sores, enough to set him crazy. It did set him crazy, so he didn't know what to do, and that made him cut up so. Now for me, if I'm the least little bit sick, I'm as cross as a mad dog, and if father felt that dreadful way the man told about, I don't wonder he cut up rough. Of course it was all his own fault, going into it at first; but once he got into it, there was that awful gnawing and burning, and exciting and craving all the time. Now I know enough not to get into any such fix. You don't catch me using up the inside of me like that. But I fairly don't wonder father threw things round loose, and tore about. Only don't you tell mother I say so."

"Why not?" demanded Letitia. "Oh, because—because she'll think I'm getting over the way he acted. But I'm not, and I won't. Mother writes to him, she thinks about him, she thinks too much of him; next thing she'll be wanting him back, and he shan't come back. I won't have him!"

"But, now he is shut up, and can't get any drink, you see, he'll get well, as folks do of any other disease, maybe, and then he'll be all right, and nice and kind."

"No he won't. I wouldn't risk him. No use to trust a man that's been a drunkard. There's nothing left in him to trust. Don't you hanker after him, Tish, and don't you let mother do it. We're well off as we are. I heard two men riding by last night say, 'Beats all how those Stanhopes are picking up, you wouldn't know the place.'"

During some of the time Achilles had been working in the town with the builders, he had overheard them also talking about him and his family. Achilles was a quick boy at any manual labour, and faithful in

doing exactly as he was told. A very little practice made him expert in lathing, and he could make a dollar and a quarter a day at it. As he lathed he could hear the carpenters in the next room talking about him; their words came in snatches, as he untied bundles, and fitted lath in little niches and corners.

"The boy's a real old-fashioned Stanhope. He's a regular worker. One of the kind to make and to save, and to spend sensibly. He's done wonders for that place, he runs it like a man. Rents out the big pasture, boards a couple of colts from town, and gets a dollar a week for each of them. Planning to put on a porch, and have a new barn; heard him asking and what a bay-window would cost, so his mother could have winter flowers. Ah, mother could have a very bad husband, but she's got a good son."

"She's well rid of Thomas." "Why doesn't she get rid of him, sure enough! The law will give her a divorce from him, as he's gone to the penitentiary. The law doesn't keep a woman tied to a convict."

"I reckon she thinks there's no need of it. He's gone, and she's safe and prospering. She is one of the kind that are wrapped up in their children. She won't want to marry again."

"I reckon not. She's had enough of marrying."

"But, in eight years and a half, back Thomas will come."

"Eight years is a long time. Like as not he'll die."

"Not much. He's hard to kill, or he'd have drunk himself under the ground long ago. He'll be back."

"Not till they're all grown up. I reckon Thomas won't want to show his face round here, and if he lives out a ten years' sentence, he will sneak off somewhere else when he gets free. He'd better; no one here wants him, and as long as he is gone his family hold their own respectability."

Over these words, and like words, Achilles brooded. He resolved to sound his mother's views on this subject. He said:

"Mother, did you know that you could get a divorce from father—because he is in the penitentiary?"

"Yes, my son, I know it," said Mercy gravely.

"And did you know if you got it, he could never come meddling round you or our house again?"

"Yes, Achilles, I know that."

"Well then, mother, why don't you do it?"

"Achilles, when I married your father it was for better or for worse."

"It has been all worse, and he made it all worse himself."

"I know it," said Mercy. "I have had much to forgive and I have forgiven it. I shall not take the divorce that the law allows me. I do not think divorce right."

"And do you mean to have him live with us again, and drag us down, and ruin us?" cried Achilles hotly.

"No, my son. When that long sentence is served out, you will be a man of twenty-three past, and Letitia will be twenty-two. You will be old enough to hold the home that you have made, and to protect Samuel and Patty. But if ever your poor father comes out from that long sentence, he shall find one friend, one to say a word of welcome, one to help him, and that one will be the wife who promised to love him, and be faithful to him until death."

There was something so noble and brave in Mercy as she said this, that all her son could do was to hang his head and mumble, "You're a thousand times too good for him."

"I can see," said Mercy quietly, "that I have been very wrong to sacrifice you children as I have to him. I should have taken the protection that the law allowed you. He was a man, and had made his choice; you were little and helpless, and no choice was allowed you. When I see you all well, happy, and improving, I feel how wrong I have been to allow you to be deprived of doing and being the best that you could. Your father and I were religiously brought up and well educated at the Academy here; your children should have had an equal chance. It is too late now to do more than repent over that. I wonder you were not all laid in early graves, like the little ones that are gone."

You must forgive my stupidity, Achilles. But when your father comes out of prison you will be all young, strong, full of hope, able to care for yourselves. He will be a broken-down, disgraced man, and I shall stand by him."

Achilles made no reply. He looked about the peaceful home which in fifteen months had been reconstituted by hard, united labour and scrupulous care. He registered a secret vow that that home should no more be defiled by the demon of drink; he was prepared to stand by his home against the world.

But the world was not against the home-making of Achilles, rather it seemed a sunshiny, helpful world, ready to lend him a hand in his endeavours. Work was always ready for Achilles among the farmers and in the town.

Spring brought planting and ploughing, and when the little home acres were planted, the hoeing and weeding fell to Samuel, while Achilles went to help the neighbours. During May he worked in the town for the carpenters, but in June and July he was haying and harvesting. August found him busy in the town, and the early part of September he devoted to his own place. Then came apple-picking, corn-husking, the fall ploughing, and after that work in the town again. In the winter evenings, with the aid of Letitia and his mother, Achilles succeeded in doing a little work at arithmetic and writing, and then he had his newspapers. He was busy as boy or man could be, and contented and happy because he was busy.

When his mother spoke of a possible coming time when he and Letitia could protect the younger children in their home, and she might go forth out of that comfortable shelter, to share his father's fallen fortunes, Achilles felt as if the glory and beauty faded out of life. Was not his mother more than half of his home? What incentive would he have to labour if she were not to be benefited? He noticed her on that second Thanksgiving Day, when they had kept their little family festa, and again a letter had come from the prisoner. Mercy was leaning back in her rocking-chair, her eyes fixed now on one child, now on the other, with motherly pride.

"Mother," said Achilles, with a little catch in his breath, "could you leave us? You said you might! Oh, could you?"

"You do not understand me, Achilles," said Mercy. "No, I could not leave you. I could not go where for even days at a time I should not see you all. I only meant that it might be that you would have to take care of your sisters and brother here, and I would take care of him—in the town perhaps."

"You speak as if it wasn't possible for him ever to take care of you. How old will he be when he comes out?"

"Forty-nine."

"There ought to be ten or fifteen years good work in him. You may make up your mind, mother, I'll never see you abused any more by him or any one. If he don't do right, I'll make him, if there is law in the land."

He went out to his usual refuge, the barn-yard fence. The sight of twenty-five fowls and three young turkeys, and two calves and three young turkeys, and nearly full-grown, now past calf-hood, and nearly full-grown, the two colts which he boarded, gave him a feeling of comforting importance and independence. What was that strange thralldom of strong drink which could lure a man away from home, family, friends, fortune, from his own better self? How could any one exchange the pure, free air of the mountain for the smoke, heat, and fowl, heavy smells of a reeking bar-room? How could any one leave the amiable, gentle, decent society of pigs, chickens, colts, and calves, for the companionship of quarrelsome, swearing, filthy human creatures? What was there in a saloon to make up for the wide spread of green pasture land, the shining earth turning brown from the furrow as the share sped through it? What was this infinite madness of destroying instead of up-building and creating? He looked up to the clear blue of the late autumn sky, he felt the spicy breath of the juniper and pine woods, he heard the call of the last departing birds, the high clangor of a flock of wild geese migrating, and suddenly he seemed to realize the earth with all its growth and life and glory, lying in the hand of the All-Father; he realized that God's work is always of life.

up-building progress from higher to higher, good out of evil, much from little, something from nothing. He who up-builds works in the line of God's work, he thought. He who fosters and nurtures and produces, runs nearest to his work who alone creates; he who wastes, neglects, destroys, is a yoke-fellow of Satan, the great destroyer.

Letitia came and stood beside him. She did not say that her mother had sent her, fearing that her boy might be moody and brooding.

Letitia looked about with pride. "Every one says how nicely we are improving this place," she said. "Do you suppose we can have the new porch and the roof made pretty with a dormer window, next summer?"

"I don't know," said Achilles, "I'm a little in debt yet at the store. We had to get so much at first, and Friend Amos said I'd better get the things, and have the good of them. And then, you see, we go on eating and growing, and wearing out clothes. But I'll try for it, Tish. Perhaps I can get the carpenter and the lumber, and work it out. I'm glad you are going to stay home now. You've been at Mrs. Lyman's nineteen months, and you only went to stay one."

"Well, I learned a great many things there. I learned how to make good butter, and to take good care of a cow and fowls. I'll be fifteen the first of April, and you'll be sixteen the tenth of April. The tenth, that was the day father got his ten years' sentence!"

"A pretty way for a boy to keep his birthday, having his father sent to the penitentiary, and worst of all, to be glad he was sent! That's what whiskey does for families!"

"Let us try to forget it," said Letitia. "Let us plan. I plan to keep as many as forty fowls, and to sell eggs, and to have some butter to sell, and so to do almost all our store trading with eggs and butter. I plan to get through all they teach in our school here, next July; and Friend Sara Lowell says in the fall I am to come and stay with them, and go to the High School in the town. I plan to get through the High School when I am eighteen, and be a teacher. What do you plan?"

"I plan," said Achilles, "to send Samuel through this school, and perhaps through the High School, and even to college, if he shows good sense, and is not likely to play the fool as some of the men say the Jenks boys did at college. I plan to make this place the nicest place of its size in the county, and buy a few acres more. I plan to set out grape-vines and peach-trees next spring. I plan and plan—and then a great black shadow falls over all, that father may come home and put us to shame and drag mother off with him; what is the use of planning if mother isn't in it?"

"No use," said Letitia, "but let us plan, and let us pray to God not to let such trouble come. He may even make father good. I read a text Sunday, 'Rejoice not over me, oh mine enemy; when I fall then shall I rise!'"

(To be continued.)

### A BLIND INDIAN MISSIONARY.

A BLIND Indian who had become a Christian went to a missionary and said: "I want a bell and a hymn book and a God-book."

When asked why he wished them, he said: "I live far away in a heathen village. If I can show the books to my friends they will, perhaps, believe what I tell them they contain, and I will ring the bell for them to listen to me."

He went away, and after a while the message came from his village asking for a missionary. The blind Christian was dead, but as long as he lived—a year and a half from the time of his visit—he kept tally of the Sundays, and when they came he would go through the village ringing his bell and singing his hymns and telling the "old, old story" as well he as could. Some of the hearers believed, and they wished to know more of Jesus.

ONE hundred and twenty-seven thousand and working women in New York support their husbands, presumably in drunken idleness.