

INJUSTICE.

"Boys," said Uncle Isaac, coming back to the dining-room, where his nephews stood laying plans for going out fishing in the pond that day, "I want the leaves taken off from the strawberry vines to-day. It's high time that the sunshine got to them. Now, boys, set to work with a will, and you shant be the worse off when night comes; and next month you shall have as many bowls of berries and cream as you can put away."

Augustus and Robert Warren were cousins. The fathers of the boys resided in Boston. Uncle Isaac lived in one of the beautiful towns which we find strung like jewels on all the railroad routes, for miles about the city. The two boys were very fond of getting away from the long vistas of red brick houses, to the fresh crystal air, the joyous sunshine, and the green hills of the country, as everybody is whose heart is not hard and whose vision is not seared to all true beauty.

"Uncle Isaac Warren" was a hearty, good-natured, kindly man, fond of his nephews, for he had no children of his own, and they were sure of a warm welcome and a "real good time" when they visited the pleasant gray cottage on the hill.

The boys were very unlike, however, in person and character. Augustus had light brown curls and blue eyes which laughed underneath them, and Robert had dark hair and deep brown eyes to match it. Augustus was a merry, indolent, fun-loving boy. Robert was reserved, studious.

The boys received their uncle's proposition with eagerness, and set to work among the beds with spirit. It was pleasant work with the sweet spring sunshine, the new golden wine of the year flowing in bright currents all over the earth.—The smell of the fresh springing grass had life and health in it, and the boys tore away the dark matting of last year's leaves and grasses from the beds, and found beneath it the tender sprouts of the strawberry plants, among which a little later would hang the great glowing berries.

"I say, this is pleasant work. Augustus!" exclaimed Robert, as he toiled diligently at the stratum of last year's leaves, from which all the grace and beauty had long since departed, and which

the winter storms had beat together in a dark, unsightly, decaying mass.

"Yes, it is," answered Augustus, and then he lifted himself with a sort of weary air, and looked about and descried on the fence close at hand a beautiful golden robin.

"Sh—sh Robert," he whispered, "I'm going to try to catch her;" and he started off with swift, light steps, and he had approached within a few feet of the bird, when it flashed its golden wings and was gone.

So Augustus came back once more to his work, but in a very few minutes he proposed to Robert to have an interlude, during which they could go down to the pond and see if any fishes had risen to the surface.

"Oh no," said Robert, in his rapid, decided way, "let's keep to work here until we've got through. I want to finish the beds before dinner."

Augustus did not demur any farther than to suggest five minutes couldn't make much difference anyway, which argument, however, did not seem to impress Robert. The former was in a little while engrossed by his "uncle's hired-man," who came down the road in the old wagon. Augustus stopped him.

"Where are you going, John?"

"Over to the mill. Get in, and have a ride, boys."

Augustus answered with a shout. Robert looked up and surveyed the team wistfully, but in a moment his answer came—

"I don't mean to give up this work until it's finished."

"What's the use of sticking at it so close?" inquired Augustus, with a mingling of contempt and argument in his voice.

"Because, when I work I want to work, and when I play I want to play. Father says you can't do two things well at once."

"Well, then, I'll do one—I'm going to play," answered Augustus, and off he started.

In an hour he returned, in high spirits, and before he set to work, he gave Robert a glowing account of the ride he had had. Not long after this Augustus had a chase with the dog, and helped some boys to search for a stray cow; and when noon came, although the beds were fin-

ished, he had done less than a quarter of the work.

"Well, boys, you've been smart. I didn't expect to see this," said Uncle Isaac, as he came along just after the boys had thrown themselves down under the tree. Uncle Isaac put his hand in his pocket: "How much must I pay you for this day's work?" he asked, with a pleasant twinkle in his eyes.

"Just what you think it's worth," the boys answered simultaneously. Uncle Isaac drew from his pocket a half dollar and a quarter.

"That's all the change I happen to have about me," he said. "I don't know which deserves the larger pay, but I reckon it's about equal; so I'll just throw the coin into the grass yonder, and he who finds the piece wins it."

I do not think this was by any means a judicious settlement of the matter on the part of Uncle Isaac; but as I said, he was a generous, easy, good-natured sort of man, and didn't give himself the trouble to inquire farther into the merits of the case. The boys had a short search for the money. Augustus found the half dollar—Robert the quarter.

"I think it's a real shame," murmured Robert Warren to himself, as he walked up and down the road a little later. I've worked just three times as hard as Augustus, and here he gets as much credit and twice as much pay. I say it isn't fair. I'm sorry now, I kept at it so hard. And to see him pocket the money without saying one word, although I know he felt ashamed, for he knew it was mine by good rights!"

Robert Warren's sense of justice was keen, and this had received a wound which pained him much more than the loss of the money. At last, with his face clouded with dissatisfaction, the boy threw himself down under the tree; and there a voice seemed to come and whisper to him—

"Why do you mind it so much, Robert Warren? You did your work not merely for the pay but because it was a pleasure to serve your uncle, and you did it faithfully, diligently, well; and in that you ought to find your reward, and not to be vexing and fretting yourself because that Augustus has got that which didn't belong to him. And if he was selfish enough to pocket the money, and keep it, why, that is his look out, not yours.—"