

only the additional attractions of the village debating-club to enliven the routine of duty.

At length a village merchant selected Mr. Smith from his many young associates, and tendered him a clerkship in his store. This fortunate occurrence alike testified to his previous good deportment, and opened the way for further advancement. He took his place in the store in May, 1841, when but seventeen years of age, with a fixed determination to make the most of his position, to be constant in service, and to advance the interests of his employers. Fortunately for the subject of our sketch, the Town Library was connected with the store. This library contained an excellent selection, embracing works of history, travel, and natural science. After the busy hours of the day were over, and during leisure hours, this library was his home, and its volumes his most loved companions. In this way he not only became conversant with all the valuable works in the library, but, keeping a constant eye to newspaper literature, became also familiar with all the political issues and struggles of the day. Nor was he, even at this age, in the matter of politics, unconcerned in his choice of issues. His sense of right confirmed him in the Whig faith. A fact that contributed much to his success was, that he found but little time to waste on society, and absolutely no time for any sort of dissipation. Always at his post of duty in the church on the sabbath, he grew in Christian character; and, ever active in the village lyceum, his mind was enabled to keep active pace with the most advanced issues in science, literature, and politics.

He remained at the village store of which we have been speaking about five years, during which time he won the most implicit confidence of his employers, and the highest respect of all his companions. Most of his salary was voluntarily handed over to his father.

Having observed the conduct of Mr. Smith during the years of his minority, we are, of course, prepared to enter upon an account of his truly successful life. Nor is it difficult for us to see how a life founded on such a boyhood, resting on such a youth experience, may be successful. It is an axiom not less true than old, that the faithful, obedient boy makes the favored and successful man. The

never-failing rule is not proven by its exception in this case.

At the age of twenty-one, in the spring of 1846, he was tendered a position in the celebrated dry-goods establishment of Lord & Taylor, in the metropolis of the nation. The advancement was marked; the progress was radical: but these did not outweigh the devotion with which Mr. Smith accepted his new and more responsible position in New York. He had been with this well-known firm but one year, when a more extensive field opened to his industry and perseverance. He was tendered an important position in the wholesale establishment of Ira Smith & Company of New York. This firm had an extensive Western trade,—a trade which, as we shall see, was the means of securing to the West the permanent residence of our subject. Mr. Smith accepted this position in 1847. This was before "travelling salesmen" were in vogue, when our Western merchants went on to New York twice a year to select their supplies, when the canal and lakes were open. At the close of the fall trade in 1847-48, Mr. Smith, having won the entire confidence of his employer, not only in his integrity, but his commercial ability, was sent to the Western States to take charge of and look after the interests of his house in this section. He performed this work in a manner attended by great success, until the fall of 1849, when he was offered a partnership interest in the establishment of a son of Ira Smith, who had opened a general store at Fox Lake, Wis. He was also tendered unlimited credit by his employers in New York.

Fox Lake was then a little hamlet with scarcely two hundred inhabitants, situated some seventy miles north-west from Milwaukee. There were in the town two stores, a few dwelling-houses, a saw-mill, and a small school-house, used alternately for teaching and preaching. The surrounding country was new, rich, and rapidly filling up with an intelligent, enterprising population; and it was plain to Mr. Smith that Fox Lake offered extraordinary inducements for the investment of skill and capital. His great foresight enabled him to penetrate into the future development of that region; and he decided to cast his lot with that people; and it may be said that this decision was of much importance to the common weal of Fox Lake.