

out. "Ah! this, then, is Douche," said he, running to turn it aside.

"Oh, you're up," said Fritz, looking in through an eyelet-hole in the door which Norman had not perceived. "Why didn't you turn the handle? No, that's not the way." He came in, and Norman saw the hinge he ought to have turned, but conjectured rightly that the water was stopped by some contrivance.

"Ah, I'll turn that handle before I go to bed in future," thought he.

"It's not here over-night," said Fritz, drily, as if he knew Norman's thought: and it occurred to the lad he had not seen the tube there on the previous evening.

"I'm not afraid of early rising," he said, half angrily. "There's no need of tricks to rouse me." Fritz made answer by a provoking kind of sceptical laugh.

It certainly was a strange, disagreeable kind of house. Neither place nor people were inviting. Norman lingered awhile in his room, and then examined the door, which had no fastening within it. The thought of the home he had left was heavy at his heart. How kind and considerate had been the treatment there. His leaving them seemed indeed rash and ungrateful. His self-esteem was sorely shaken, and it was something more than the custom of years that this morning bowed his knees, and made him commend himself to God, and pray fervently for the loved ones whom he had deserted.

Oh, hallowed bond! uniting the distant, comforting the sorrowful: if there were nothing more than the mystic yearning of the soul towards earthly friends—the purifying consecration of the spirit in tender human love, prayer would be a blessing that would fall and refresh like the dew; but if is more, it exalts to heaven, and blends with the rainbow round the great white throne.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII. REGIMEN.

"Books are men of higher stature,  
And the only men that speak aloud  
For future times to hear."

Mrs. BARRETT BROWNING.

NORMAN's sense of forlornness in the strange dwelling in the forest was soon to pass away, even as he descended from his chamber that first morning. His steps were stayed on the landing-place of the stairs at the sight of an open doorway, through which he saw a spacious apartment, entirely surrounded by well-filled bookshelves. From the absence of all decorations, and the bare, inkstained floor, with a leather-covered old writing-table in the midst, it looked a working library. A hasty glance from the doorway was all that he dared stay to take at that time. He hastened down, feeling a vague sort of indefinable comfort in there being such a room in the house. He had insensibly acquired, during his boyish years with Mr. Hope, that unexpressed yet deeply-felt love of books, which generated a confidence that those who made companions of them would not be likely to be bad men. He remembered too at that moment the "Directory" and the "Court Guide" were the only books in the house he had left.

In the hall stood Fritz, with a large apron over his tarnished clothes. He beckoned to Norman to follow him, and led the way down a passage to a long room, that crossed the whole rear of the house, and in which there were several small stoves or furnaces in different nooks, some just now lighted, slabs of marble, oak tables along the sides, and such a conglomeration of glass tubes, retorts, jars, crucibles, and apparatus wholly unknown to him, that he looked round in helpless bewilderment. Two doors out of this place led into other kinds of equally full work-places. In the one was a carpenter's bench and a turning-lathe, with numerous tools ranged in a rack along the wall; in another, at a table, before a bright gasburner, his eyes protected by a large pair of blue glasses, was the stooping form and broad bald head of Professor Griesbach, intently mixing some fluid, who took no other notice of Norman's entrance than to turn his head a moment, look at Fritz, and say, "He can rub down." Accordingly, in a few moments, Norman was put before an iron mortar, with a heavy pestle in his hand, and rubbing or grinding away

at some material that seemed to yield to his efforts very slowly. Fritz went to the furnace, and so they worked for an hour and a half. The latter part of the time the Professor had closed his door, Norman thought, because he had looked rather curiously in that direction.

A panel, sliding back of itself, showed the room in which the supper had been served last night, and explained the mystery of Mr. Griesbach's quiet entry. There a breakfast of the same brown bread, milk, and a bowl of dry pease-meal, was served for two. Fritz pointed to a basin and towel for washing hands, and in a few minutes, with his silent footfall, the master entered the breakfast-room, Norman following, and Fritz bringing up the rear. As there really was so little that needed serving, Norman was half amused at the man standing behind his master's chair, and not a little surprised to see the Professor make his repast off a little pease-meal stirred up with milk, and a slice of still darker bread than the brown loaf. Whether the surprise he felt expressed itself in Norman's face, or not, the Professor condescended, in the course of the meal, to observe, touching his basin lightly with a spoon, as he spoke, "Ninety per cent. of nutriment, young man. Eat this and grow strong."

When the breakfast was over, Fritz undid a section of the table, and sent it with a touch rolling out of the room, then returned with a large Bible, which he duly placed before his master, who, opening it, said to Fritz, "Blessed be the memory of Dr. Martin Luther!" The man answered, with what sounded like a bark, "Ja," and his master, adjusting his glasses, began to read, slowly and reverently, a chapter in German—to Norman's disappointment, as he did not, of course, understand a word. This exercise over, Fritz carried away the book, and the Professor said to Norman—

"If you have letters to write, you may go to the library till ten o'clock, then we resume work."

There were two things made this permission very pleasant to Norman; first, he was at liberty to write if he chose, and, next, he was glad to get a nearer view of the place, which he had only glanced at on passing. So he availed himself with alacrity of the privilege, and was soon gazing at the contents of the shelves. Many were foreign books, and all seemed to have seen service. But there were some hundred volumes of English classics, and a new world seemed to open before Norman, whose previous education rendered him not wholly ignorant of or indifferent to the treasure before him. He was too eager to look about him to be able to read that morning, though he took down several books, and walked about with an armful, scanning here and there with all the haste and bewilderment common to an inquiring, unformed mind turned loose amid the wondrous world of books. Much sooner than he expected, a whistle sounded, and then a voice through a speaking-tube uttered the one word, "Time." He returned to the laboratory, where both hard and silent work for four hours awaited him. Dinner was served at three, and consisted of a vegetable soup, an omelette, the same dark bread as before, and pure water. After this meal the Professor retired alone to the library, and Norman went out into the courtyard to explore. The simple structure of the house afforded nothing to his search, except that at a backdoor there was a little bit of a herb garden, where a few culinary herbs were cultivated, and at the kitchen window, which overlooked it, was an old woman darning stockings, who with Fritz, as Norman conjectured, formed the whole of the Professor's household. The vociferous barking of the dogs, which had greeted his first coming on the previous night, was renewed, and Fritz, coming out, offered to open the front gate and let him out—a service which, no doubt, the youth would have gladly availed himself of if there had appeared any disinclination to allow of his leaving the premises. As it was, he felt himself free to go out or stay in, and as the wintry wind moaned through the leafless branches of the forest trees, and drifted some fine sleet as it swept past, Norman was still feeling enough of the languor either of recent illness or rapid growth to decline the offer. In two hours he was again summoned

to work. An evening meal, similar to the last night's, he took alone, and before nine o'clock had to retire to his room for the night; though from his window he could see the reflection of light on the wall from the laboratory; and rightly conjectured the professor was still there. This day, he found, was a sample of the life that lay before him while he remained here. He remembered Dr. Griesbach's words, "You will learn something there;" and in the monotony that followed the first impulse of curiosity in so strange a dwelling, he was tempted to inquire, "What can I learn, grinding or mixing substances or compounds of which I know nothing?" But the library was his compensation. He was permitted to take one book at a time away to read in the after-dinner rest; and though the uncommunicative manner both of the master and Fritz chilled him, and the meals, which twice a week were rendered rather more appetising with additions to the usual fare, would have soon frightened or disgusted a more fastidious palate, yet when Norman found that no one fared better than himself, and that his own health and that of the two old men was perfect, he soon grew used to it.

At the end of a month thus spent in which Norman had made many long walks in the forest, he began secretly to lament over his worn boots and clothes, out of which he had so grown that he was again a scarecrow, when one morning he was summoned to an outbuilding near the entrance-door by Fritz, saying, in his sententious way, "You're wanted. Give your orders."

Two men were there, a tailor and bootmaker, who, with half-frightened looks, quickly took Norman's measure and left, both refusing to touch the lock or handle of the outside door as they went, saying to Fritz, "No thank ye, we've heard of people having their arms nearly shook off afore now in this place;" which the man answered by his grim smile and assent, "Ja! they rang the bell in sport," by which Norman understood, as, indeed, he had before conjectured, that the electrical battery was in use to punish mischief.

At dinner that day the Professor broke silence by saying—"I have heard from Griesbach. He asks of you."

"I am obliged to him," said Norman, to whom the interview with the friendly physician seemed now like a dream.

"Yes: he says Mr. Driftwood's begging-letter friends followed his example, and decamped."

"They were not my friends!" said Norman, indignantly. "They were liars and impostors. I am neither."

"Hem! I think not."

"Thank you, sir, thank you. I came to you a stranger, with no recommendations; I'm glad you don't believe me the friend of such people."

"Dr. Griesbach recommended you in his way. I gave you a week; that's enough with the young gormandizers I've had, and more than enough with most. You've been three—"

"A month, sir."

"Aha! a month; and are you tired?"

"No," said Norman stoutly; though many gloomy hours and sad misgivings came to mind.

"No? then we go on again. There's something for you." He counted ten shillings on the table, and pushed them towards Norman, who—as he took them very thankfully, looking at the first honest earnings with the interest in the very aspect of the money which a novice feels—adding, in a moment, apprehensively—

"I shall be in debt, sir, to the tailor and shoemaker."

"Not while you stay in my house. Fritz has orders to pay them. If you get in debt, fail to to keep time at the laboratory, or chatter in the village—you go."

Norman was beginning to assure his strange master of his avoidance of all these errors, but the old man checked him with, "Enough said," and relapsed into a silence that the youth understood was not to be disturbed.

So, clothed and kept with a trifle of money to call his own, that afternoon Norman was light-hearted; the breath of the coming spring was stirring his pulses, and hope and energy revived. He