

A Rise in Values

(Zelia M. Walters, in 'Christian Standard.')

Rob thrust his book in his pocket as he approached the field where his brother was ploughing. Then, with an air of irritation, he drew it out again, and carried it in his hand.

'He thinks I'm lazy and worthless because I like to study. But let him—I'll show him some day. No one but a dolt would have such an opinion of brains.'

The boys on the Thorp farm had been separated almost from their cradle by the difference in their tastes. Rob learned to read when he was three, and loved his books with a devotion equalled only by his love for the wild creatures of the wood and field.

Ralph was a typical farmer. He loved the farm, and seemed to grasp the details of the work without effort. His ambition was to be a country gentleman.

'Lord of broad acres and himself beside.' He had perfect health and great physical strength, and rather despised his brother for his lesser power of endurance.

Both were well-bred, good-natured lads, and should have more patience with each other, but a slight coldness, which had begun several years back, was growing greater. The parents, fortunately, were broad enough to see good in both boys, so the home was a happy one.

When Rob reached home he went to his room and spent an hour arranging his specimens, copying his notes and making drawings. Then the supper-bell rang and he went downstairs. It was a pleasant hour that which was spent at the table. The boys were encouraged to talk of their concerns, the father always had a good joke to tell, and the mother some interesting story she had read and saved for this time. The hour after supper was the distasteful one to Rob. The boys had to do the evening chores together, and as Rob was the slower, there was plenty of opportunity for Ralph to grumble.

'Come on, now,' said Ralph, as he took the milk-pails, and started out of the door, 'see if you can get your share done for once.'

'Well, I won't ask any help from you,' said Rob, shortly.

As usual, Rob was not through in time, but he indignantly refused Ralph's offer of assistance.

'Tell mother I'm going down to the old orchard to look for moths,' he called, as Ralph started to the house. 'I'll not be in very early.'

Ralph found his parents talking to a stranger. After he was introduced he sat down and listened, and then opened his eyes in amazement. The stranger was a college professor who had been called upon to examine some papers on nature study in a magazine contest. The paper that took first prize was of such unusual merit, and showed such sympathetic interest and close study, that he wished to see the writer. Mr. and Mrs. Thorp listened in pleased surprise. Rob had not told any one that he intended to enter a contest. Ralph began to feed distinctly uncomfortable. Rob had achieved a great success, and in the very thing that Ralph had always called rubbish. He wished he had not expressed his opinion so often, and in such

forcible language. He comprehended that there were things of worth in the world removed from his own line of thought and action. And this is a wholesome revelation to any one.

'I will go and tell Rob,' he said, rising.

He wanted to be the first to tell him the good news.

'Yes, do,' said his mother, 'he may be out half the night, if some one doesn't go after him.'

As he opened the door to go a sharp flash of lightning startled him. One of the sudden storms of spring had gathered while they had been talking. Already the trees were tossing and moaning, and the thunder growled ominously.

'I should think he would have come home when he saw the storm coming up,' said Mrs. Thorp, a little anxiously.

'Oh, don't worry,' said the father. 'Most likely he's over to Harris's. He'd be so busy looking after the bugs that he would not notice the storm, until it was too late to come home.'

So the professor was conducted to his room, and the family went to bed. Ralph fell into a doze, but was soon aroused by the fury of the storm. He lay there getting wider awake every moment. When there was a lull in the storm, he arose and dressed himself. He would not admit that he shared his mother's anxiety, and scorned the thought that Rob would not know enough to take care of himself. Nevertheless, he remembered that Rob made it an absolute rule never to stay away unless the family knew his whereabouts. Neither of the boys would have willingly caused their mother a moment's uneasiness.

The old orchard was at the other end of the farm, almost a quarter of a mile away. Ralph hurried across the wet meadows. He looked with misgivings at the brook, which the late rains had swollen into a river. It was within a foot of the bridge. How easy it would be for some one to slip on the crumbling bank, and fall into the raging torrent. He reflected with a shudder that Rob was but an indifferent swimmer. He went on across the ploughed ground, where he had seen Rob that afternoon. His half-defined fear taught him how dear his brother was.

He began to call aloud, but there was no answer until he reached the edge of the orchard. Then a faint cry turned him cold with fear.

'Where are you?' he shouted.

'Here, here,' was the answer.

He found him a moment later. A fallen apple-tree was lying across his body.

'Oh, Rob, old fellow, are you hurt very much?' gasped Ralph, groping about to see where the tree had bruised him. He knew too well how fatal such accidents usually are.

'No, not much, I guess. But it's mighty uncomfortable. It fell when the wind came up just before the storm. You'd better run and get some one to help you. I can't stand it much longer.'

His voice sounded faint and hollow, and Ralph arose, saying determinedly, 'I'm going to lift it off myself.'

And, straining his sturdy muscles to all their endurance, he did lift it off.

But Rob was too weak to rise, and Ralph had to run to the house for help.

'Keep up your courage, old fellow,' he said, 'you got the first prize.'

'The first prize! How did you know? Oh, it can't be the first. I didn't expect that.'

'Can't stop to explain. Look for full particulars later,' and he was off, running at the top of his speed. Rob, lying alone in the dark, almost forgot the pain and cold until Ralph returned with his father.

Rob had to stay in bed two weeks. Before the professor left it was agreed that Rob should go to college the next fall. Ralph was devoted during his brother's sickness, and Rob was overflowing with gratitude. In this new impulse of affection each found much to admire in the other. The old differences were forgotten, and were never raised again.

A Fortune Lost Through a Fib

A Harrow boy, returning one day to his school, fun-loving and thoughtless, was, however, of a gentlemanly sort; and, seeing a stout farmer on horseback fumbling in vain with a gate-lock, he politely asked if he might open the gate for him. The farmer thanked the boy and rode on, the boy holding back the gate until he had passed. Then a thought suddenly struck the farmer, and, wheeling round his horse, he said to the boy, 'This is very kind of you, my lad: what's your name?'

The boy thought it would be fun to give a false name, and said 'Jones.' 'Jones!' repeated the farmer; 'and where does your father live? And what does he do?' Again the lad, laughing inwardly at his own supposed wit, answered, 'Oh! my father is a cheesemonger, and keeps a small shop in Theobald's Road, London. You can't miss it; it goes down with two steps from the road.' 'Thank you,' said the farmer; 'you are a smart lad, and I won't forget you.' 'Thank you,' retorted the boy, 'I hope you won't. Remember Jones, cheesemonger, Theobald's Road.' He closed the gate, and walked on, hardly able to restrain his laughter until the farmer was out of ear-shot.

Ten years passed, and the event had almost faded out of everybody's memory—it was but a schoolboy's joke! The lad, now a young man, was, however, painfully reminded of it when his eye fell upon an advertisement in the daily papers, which ran thus: 'Wanted, a young gentleman of the name of Jones, whose father once kept a shop in Theobald's Road, London, and who, in return for politely opening a gate at Harrow in 18—, has been left a large legacy by a wealthy farmer, lately deceased.'

Of course, the lad 'Jones' could nowhere be found; he had no means of establishing his identity, and so, in consequence of an untruth told in thoughtless fun, he lost a fortune! From that hour, however, he never allowed himself to swerve a single hair's-breadth from the truth.—'Christian Herald.'

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