

relative positions marked on his paper. By this means he came to know their places and motions.

It was not to be expected that such a lad would continue at farm work, and he tried various things in his endeavours to rise. He practised drawing, and got on so as to be able to turn it to account in drawing patterns for ladies' dresses, and copying pictures and prints with pen and ink. This copying led him to try portrait-painting, and by it he supported himself and his parents. In time he succeeded very well as portrait-painter, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards in London. His heart however was so set on astronomy and mechanics that all his leisure time was devoted to them, and at length he began to lecture on these subjects, and with great success, and gave up portrait-painting altogether. He got the acknowledgment which his talents merited from George III., and closed his career with honour. He published various works which were and are a testimony to his diligence, perseverance, and attainments; and his history is an encouragement to cultivate the talents which God has given, and, trusting in Him, not to be disheartened at difficulties, but to keep with steady resolution to the object aimed at, and to use all lawful means for reaching it. Would you like to know his name? If so, it was JAMES FERGUSON.

AFRAID OF A LAUGH.

"Please, Aunt Eleanor, I can't do it," said Norman Hale, "the boys would laugh and tease me so; indeed, I cannot."

"So my little nephew is afraid of a laugh, is he?" asked Mrs. Place, looking quietly at the boy by her side; "he is going to be like the weather-vane, is he? turning with every shade of public opinion, afraid to do what is right and proper, because, forsooth, some of his companions may raise a laugh at his expense."

Norman did not reply, and his aunt continued: "Let me tell you a story of two boys I knew years ago. I will call them Moses and Giles, lest you should recognise the men before my story is begun. One of their playmates had received a box of valuable presents, and in imitation of his elders, thought he would treat all his young friends. His father furnished him with a decanter of reduced alcohol (just right for boys, he said); a bowl of sugar, several glasses and spoons. This boy, whose name was Silas, arranged them nicely on a table, feeling quite proud of the display, and invited all in the village to come and take a drink. A large number soon flocked around him, quite elated at the prospect before them—free drinks and plenty of sugar.

"Sitting at my own window, I heard Moses and Giles conversing. Neither relished the idea much, but Moses said it would look odd not to go through the motions. 'We needn't taste only the tiniest drop, you know,' while Giles thought best to abstain from any appearance of evil, and not go near temptation. 'But everybody will laugh at us, and say we're terribly afraid of becoming drunkards,' said Moses. 'Let them laugh, then,' replied Giles. 'If I never taste, I know I shall never be one. For my part, when I know a thing is right, I mean to do it, be the consequences what they may.' Poor Moses could not follow Giles' example, for he was not one to stay away while dozens were going.

"I don't know that the villagers perceived any immediate ill effects of Silas' treat, but Moses and Giles are now men, and which, Norman, do you think you would prefer to be?"

"I don't know," replied Norman, "I don't know who they are."

"Very well, I can tell you, then. You remember the man who lectured to us so earnestly and eloquently the other evening?"

"Of course I do; papa said he was the richest man in Buford, and the most be-