

Then his mind reverted to those dark days, when summoned from pursuing his art in London, he had found his father broken hearted at the sight of his favorite though headstrong son.

Harold recollected how when this brother of his had seen him off the last time he went to London, he put his dark handsome head into the window of the railway carriage and said, "You can't think how dull it will be when you are gone, old fellow, and there's only me to bear the brunt of all the governor's breezes. Really sometimes when he treats me still as a child, I feel I must go to Australia, or somewhere, and have my own way a bit."

"But you know," said Harold as he laid his artistic looking hand on the brown sun-burnt one of his brother, "the governor thinks there's no one like you, and in the farming you are quite indispensable to him."

"Don't you believe it!" the elder young man had returned, "I'm sure he cares for nothing but his money, and since that scrape I got into at College, I sometimes think he is rather suspicious of me; now mark my word, if ever he casts a slur on my honesty, I bolt at once, for I won't stand it. And he tries to dictate to me whom I am to associate with."

"Well I wish," said Harold "that you would fight shy of that Davison, I know that he is no good."

"That's like your stuck up ideas," replied Charlie, "he is every bit as good as any of us. But I say, old boy, the train is off so 'ta ta,' old fellow. Paint a lot of pictures and make a mint of money," and laughingly waving his stick as the train moved out of the station, he departed from his brother not to meet for many a weary month.

Whilst Harold is thinking over these reminiscences, we will briefly state the facts which led to him being recalled from London.

From the conversation between the brothers at the station, it may be seen that Charles was wayward and headstrong, not easily giving up his own opinion where his own way was concerned.

In the question of his intimacy with Davison, the village schoolmaster's son, he showed all the obstinacy of his character, unheeding his father's advice, he made the young man his constant companion in shooting, riding, and other occupations.

This Davison was a fellow, to whom all sentiments of honor and good feeling seemed unknown. Whilst chafing at the pettiness of a village life, he made no attempt to obtain any occupation to release his father of the burthen of his maintenance. Although Charles was somewhat wild and headstrong, he would never do anything mean or underhand, as he could not be made an accomplice in any of the bad designs of his companion, but his open ways and manner of speech made him an easy prey to the wickedness of the latter.

After administering a little artfully worded sympathy as to the Squire's strict treatment of his son, Davison soon drew from Charles his grievances about the little cash allowed, the hard work imposed on him, and the early hours kept at his home.

From this there was but one step for Davison to take in order to learn where the old man kept his money, and once having obtained the knowledge of that secret, the young man put no restraint on his desire to possess some of the much coveted gold. Once provided with cash, he would be able to exchange the small pleasures of country life for the dissipations of a town career.

Then one day, the old Squire found that his cash box had been opened, and a large sum of money taken. Charlie was the only one who had known where the keys were kept, so he was summoned to explain the robbery. The father, trembling with passion, was in no humour to be conciliatory to his suspected son. Angry and bitter words were spoken on both sides, and the young man parted from the Squire determining never to pass another day under his roof.

The night brought the old man softer thoughts towards his motherless son. Would it not perhaps have been better to have reasoned with the willful youth so as to bring him to a sense of his sin, instead of letting his anger frighten him into an insolent denial of his guilt? And so the weary hours passed, and as the early light of morning broke into his room, it seemed to bring the Squire some ray of hope that perhaps his son might yet be able to exculpate himself from the dreadful charge against him.

With a heart full of yearning affection for his boy, the father went down to breakfast, trusting that there might yet be an explanation of the robbery. But hope again gave place to anxiety as the lad's place still remained vacant. Unable to eat anything, the anxious father at last went up to Charlie's bedroom. There the untouched bed, and the open drawers all testified to the young man's departure the previous night.

Feeling quite unable to meet his father's suspicious looks, and being powerless to prove his innocence, the poor fellow in his hot and hasty way left his home, to face the world with a friend, who was about to start for Australia from London.

Before sailing, however, Charles sent a letter to Davison, at Hersdon, telling him what had taken place, and begging hard of him to inform the Squire of the course he had taken, and to ask him to write if he ever had reason to relent.

This message, however, never reached the father, for Davison never received the letter, as he was in London, spending the fruits of his treacherous dishonesty, for he it was who had robbed the squire's cash-box.

Poor Charles, receiving no answer to his appeal, concluded that it was no use communicating with his father; so, without hearing a word from his home, he sailed for his life of sheep-farming in the New World.

In the meanwhile the Squire could not get over the blow of his son's departure. He seemed half dazed with sorrow and suspense as day after day went by, bringing no news of the absent one. This sudden flight and subsequent silence, confirming the old man in his suspicions, the sting of disgrace made the pain of his loneliness almost more than he could bear.

(To be continued.)

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