

time, much to his own satisfaction and the comfort and improvement of his pupils.

The old housekeeper did not like having Rushton for a patient as well as she had Frank. Unaccustomed to confinement, he fretted and grumbled all day long, thereby retarding his own recovery, and tiring out those who had to wait upon him. Howard frequently went to sit with him, for he really liked Rushton, and was sorry to see him suffer. Several of the other boys paid him a brief visit now and then, more out of pity than from any affection they had for him. Rushton had no real friends. Those who were the first to laugh with him were also the first to laugh at him, and kept away from his sick chamber as if they had forgotten his very existence.

'How is it that Frank Netherton never comes to see me?' asked Rushton one day of Howard. 'He is generally so fond of playing the good Samaritan. There is no fear of my running away now, let him preach as he will.'

'Frank has not forgotten you. He always inquires about you most kindly and would have come to you long since, only he did not like; that is, he did not know whether you would like it, after what you said. But perhaps it was the pain that made you speak so crossly.'

'Frank Netherton is not the boy I imagine him to be if he stays away for a cross word,' said Rushton.

'Then he may come? He will be so glad; and I am glad too.'

'Why!'

'Perhaps I better not tell you.'

'Nonsense; why should you not tell me?'

'You will be vexed.'

'That is no new thing.'

'Well, then, I am glad because I hope that he will do you good, as he did me. I do not mean that he will make the pain less, but teach you, perhaps, to bear it better. Do you understand?'

'Yes, I understand well enough.'

'I wish you would try and like Frank Netherton,' continued Howard, encouraged by Rushton's manner.

'We seldom like those whom we have injured,' said Rushton, in a low voice, as if he were speaking to himself.

Howard looked surprised, but he did not reply; he did not know what to say.

'Well, go along now,' continued Rushton, after a pause. 'I dare say you have a thousand things to do, and it takes you as long

again to do anything as it does other people. You are very kind to come to me so often. Go away, send Netherton.'

'I will ask him to come when he is able.'

'Ay! you are so busy working for the prize, I suppose, while I am obliged to be here doing nothing. But it serves me right;' and he buried his face in the clothes and wept.

Frank laid aside what he was about, and went as soon as Howard asked him. Rushton was still weeping, and did not notice his entrance until he stood by the bedside, inquiring kindly and gently how he felt. 'I am afraid you are in great pain,' said he.

'Yes, I am in pain, but I do not care so much about that. I can bear my punishment. Why do you not begin to moralize, Netherton? You cannot possibly have a better subject.'

'Time enough when you are well,' said Frank. 'I would rather pity and sympathize with you now, if you will let me.'

Rushton turned away his head. 'I did not send for you in order to gain your pity,' said he, after a pause, 'but to tell you something that has long lain heavy on my heart. Perhaps you did not think I had a heart.'

'Yes I did,' replied Frank, soothingly; 'and a kind one, if you would only follow its better feelings. But you must not excite yourself.'

'Very well; I will be calm. You will judge me differently when I have told you all. You remember the peaches which Mr. Campbell lost?'

'To be sure I do. I have reason to remember them.'

'Should you like to know who stole them?'

'Yes, I should very much,' exclaimed Frank, eagerly; and then checking himself all of a sudden, as his glance rested on the crimson brow of his companion, he added, 'but it does not signify now; it is all past and gone.'

'I stole those peaches,' said Rushton.

'You?'

'Yes. It was a bright moonlight night; we crept into the garden after every one had gone to rest, and I stood under the wall and gathered them, handing them to my companions. After we had eaten them, we buried the stones in the ground. There were six of us. Of course, I do not mean to betray them, for we promised not to tell of one another; but I may inform against myself. They were all sorry for it afterwards, and wanted to confess everything, but I would not consent. It was my fault that you suffered as long as you did.'

'But the pencil-case,' said Frank: 'I want to know how the pencil-case came to be found where it was?'

'That is the worst part of the story; but I have made up my mind to tell you everything. I had found it on the previous day, and put it in my waistcoat pocket, intending to return it to you the first opportunity; but somehow I forgot to do so, and while I was reaching up to gather the peaches it fell out.'

'I understand it all now,' said Frank. 'Of course you did not notice it in the dark.'

'It was a bright moonlight night, I tell you; so bright that one might have seen to pick up a pin. I did notice it.'

'Then you forgot it again, I suppose, in your hurry.'

'No; I went away and left it there purposely.'

'O Rushton! how could you do that?'

'Because I disliked and was jealous of you. It gave me pleasure to think that the boy who was always preaching to others, and whom everybody praised, would be suspected at least of a theft which others had committed and enjoyed—although we did not enjoy it very much, for we were obliged to eat them in a hurry. It seemed a capital joke; but I never thought, I never meant that it should end so seriously; and I wanted courage to undo what I had done. I could not rest any longer without telling you this. But I do not want—'

'I do not expect you to forgive me.'

'Rushton,' said Frank in a low voice, 'if I did not forgive you with my whole heart, I could not pray to my heavenly Father to-night. I could not say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us." Shake hands, Rushton.'

The boys shook hands in silence.

'Frank,' said Rushton, after a pause, during which he had been weeping bitterly, 'it is not the pain in my foot, it is your kindness that makes me cry. You have not said a single harsh word to me.'

'And I will not, if I can help it; but I have a great many words that I should like to say to you when you are stronger, and better able to hear them.'

'Say them now, Frank.'

'No, you must rest. I will come up again presently.'

'I never came to see you when you were ill,' said Rushton.

'Never mind; neither should I, perhaps, if you had not sent for me.'

Frank returned to the school-room, with his