

DARING.

HE'S afraid of cows! He's afraid of cows!"

Six boys shouted this statement at least six times at the top of their voices. The seventh boy, Walter Rand, was not shouting. His face was red, and anybody could see that he was uncomfortable. He waited until the boys were tired of shouting, and then he said, "Maybe you would be, too, if you'd never met one till you were fourteen years old."

"There's something in that," said Sam Boardman, a big fellow with a fat, good-natured face; "but all the same, you needn't act so girly about it. Why, it's enough to make a smart cow want to hook you, just the way you look at them!"

"He's afraid of dogs, too," said little Jimmy Wister. "I saw him run like a kildee, yesterday, from Squire Thomas' old Bounce, just because Bounce tried to play with him!"

There was another shout of laughter, and it was some time before Walter could make himself heard.

"It'll be time enough for you all to cackle like this," he said, "when you see me let it make any difference in anything I ought to do. I can't help being afraid of cows and dogs, just yet, because I never lived in the country till this summer, and I'm not used to them, and I can't see why a cow shouldn't hook you, or a dog bite you, when they're not tied up, if they want to. But my father says being brave, really, is going ahead and doing what you know you ought to do, no matter how much afraid you are."

One or two of the boys said yes, that was so; but the rest kept on teasing him and laughing at Walter until their roads parted, and he could no longer hear them.

They had no idea how deeply he felt their laughter and ridicule. Some of them, at least, would have spared him if they had known how unhappy he was made by their jokes and teasing. He said nothing about the matter at home; because he had an idea that it would be dishonorable to do so, but he thought the more because of his silence, and to his genuine fear of the "untied" animals along the road was added a dread of meeting his schoolmates.

Squire Thomas, as everybody called him, lived in a large old-fashioned house just outside the village, and his apple orchard, which came next to his garden, lay along the road by which several of the boys, Walter among them, went daily to and from school. He was a kind-hearted, pleasant old man, who liked boys, and lamented very much the fact that his children and grandchildren lived too far away to be with him often. And the boys liked him, for he found many opportunities to give them pleas-

ure, and one of these had come to be an "annual custom," eagerly looked forward to. His orchard was large, and stocked with a great variety of apples, and as soon as the "early blushes" were ripe, and beginning to fall, he stood at his gate, as the boys went by to school, and told them they might go through the orchard and help themselves to all they found on the ground, if they would not shake the trees, nor do any other mischief. The promise was always gladly given, and almost always kept, for they agreed that it would be quite too mean to play any tricks on such a man as Squire Thomas.

Although this was the first year that Walter had spent in the village, and the Squire's bounty was a new thing to him, he had, perhaps, a warmer feeling of gratitude than had many of the other boys, for it seemed to him such a very generous and liberal thing for any one to do. His life, so far, had been spent in a large city, and the pleasant country ways were all new to him.

"Why, mother," he said, on the day when the Squire had given the annual invitation, "it's just as if the people in the markets should ask you to help yourself as you went along! I think Squire Thomas is the very kindest old gentleman I ever heard of!"

It was about a week after the attack upon Walter just mentioned, when he reached the schoolroom door, breathless from running, and only just in time to escape a tardy mark. As the flush of heat passed away from his face, one or two of the boys nearest him noticed that he was very pale, and Jimmy Wister held up his slate, with this legend boldly printed on it:

"He Has Seen A Cow!"

The roll had just been called, when there was a knock on the schoolroom door, and Squire Thomas came in. This was nothing unusual; he often stopped and asked permission to listen to a recitation or two, and "see how they were coming on." But the expression of his face was unusual. He looked grave and stern, and, after a brief "Good-morning," he said to Mr. Winter:

"I beg your pardon for interrupting the work, but I wanted to see the boys all together, and tell them that until the mischief that has been done in my orchard is at least acknowledged and apologized for, I must take back the permission which it has been my pleasure to give them every summer for the last few years. One of my best young trees has been badly broken, in a way which could only have been done by some one who had climbed it, and I am even more sorry for the breach of good faith than I am for the broken tree."

Before Mr. Winter could reply, Walter Rand rose from his seat, and advanced to the space in front of the desk. He was very pale, and his hands were trembling, and when he spoke