

to become of John, but I can't for the life of me see why a boy must always take things in such a desperate way, or why all their friends should be expected to stand round and play the agreeable to them just for fear that they will go to the bad."

Aunt Annie turned away with a heavy heart, feeling that the angels might sweep over a household, disunited and inharmonious, into which the element of discord had come with the evident intention of making a long stay. On her way home she met John Henry, who greeted her with a pleasant smile and a frank and cordial manner.

"I am glad to see you, my boy," she said as she returned his kindly greeting. "How are you getting along?"

The old, dejected look crept over his face as he replied, "Worse and worse, Aunt Annie; I have about come to the conclusion that it is no use trying to be good. Hang it! if it wasn't for father and you I believe I would clear out altogether."

"That was hardly spoken like my brave and manly nephew," replied Aunt Annie. "No one ever redeems his character by running away, except where one flees from temptation. Make a brave and steady stand for the right, and you will be sure to come off victorious. How your poor mother would feel if you should run away."

"You think so, do you?" said John, with something like a sneer. "Well, let me tell you she wouldn't care a straw. I threatened to run away the last row we had, and she told me to go and welcome, the sooner the better."

"I am sorry to hear you speak so, John," his aunt replied. "You try your mother's patience sorely, and she speaks without thinking. I am sure she loves you dearly, and if anything should happen to you she would be greatly distressed."

"Yes, I think I have heard you say something very like that before," John replied with an incredulous air.

With a hasty "good-bye," John hurried away, leaving his aunt by no means reassured by her conversation with her nephew.

The next morning at breakfast no John Henry made his appearance. The breakfast bell was rung twice with considerable energy.

"Do let the boy sleep, Mary," said Mr. Palmer; "he is probably tired. He did considerable running about for me yesterday."

"That's no reason why he shouldn't get up this morning," Mrs. Palmer replied; "and if he doesn't come soon he'll lose his breakfast."

Eight, nine o'clock came, and no John appeared.

"That boy is enough to try the patience of a saint!" exclaimed his mother. "Here he is late for school. Step up stairs, Helen, and insist upon his getting up."

Helen went up stairs as directed, but her knock at John's door received no response. With a vague sense of impending trouble she opened the door, and was startled to find the room vacant and the bed undisturbed. She hastily called her mother, who looked about the room with a troubled air, but said:

"Ah! this is a new trick; he threatened to run away the other day, and this is to frighten us a little."

Just then Helen spied a note upon the cushion on the bureau. It was