

boating-party next week. Change your mind, like a good fellow, and come with us."

"No, no, I couldn't leave the business while your father's ill. But you're so much in debt already, I fear no one will lend you again."

"My friends are more good-natured than you give them credit for; at all events, I'll see what I can do for you, so keep up your heart."

And thus the two youths parted, Robert to walk slowly towards his uncle's house, while Harry set off to keep an appointment with a set of companions wild and thoughtless as himself. The cousins had been much attached since their school-days, and it was owing to this friendship that Robert had obtained the situation of assistant in his uncle's establishment when the death of his father rendered it necessary for him to seek employment.

Harry was a warm-hearted, good-natured lad, but lacking the steady principle which a good mother's precept and example had early instilled into Robert's mind.

A week passed since the foregoing conversation. Harry was in high spirits about the boating-party which was to come off next day. He had just gone out to give the finishing touch to the arrangements, and Robert was engaged at his business, when Mr. Bunker put his head in at the door, requested him to step up-stairs and speak with old Mr. Manvers, who wished him to explain something in the accounts. Robert remarked, as he prepared to obey the summons, "I did not think my uncle was able to attend business yet."

"So it appears," replied the clerk drily; "however, it's well for him he has some one to look after his interests while he's ill;" and he glanced meaningly into the young man's face, who, puzzled by his words and manner, followed in silence to the door of his uncle's bedroom.

Mr. Bunker knocked softly, and being desired to enter,