

# Weekly



# Visitor.

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## FRANK NETHERTON, OR THE TALISMAN. CHAPTER XXI.

### RETRIBUTION.

MANY of the boys, as we have before mentioned, were sorry for the way in which they had behaved to Frank, and came and told him so with tears. One or two appeared to long to say something more, but stammered, and remained silent. 'We dare not confess,' argued they, among themselves, 'but we may atone.'

Frank was careful to seize the moment when their hearts were softened towards him, to urge upon them the importance of the religion of Christ. Some wept; all listened. The little missionary forgot the prize for which he had been working so hard. He forgot everything in his zeal for the cause of God. Claude Hamilton smiled at his enthusiasm, and wondered at his occasional eloquence.

'You are right, Netherton,' said he, 'in wishing to be a missionary; and I hope to see you one yet, if we both live.'

'I hope so!' exclaimed Frank.

By-and-by, however, the sorrow, or repentance, or whatever the impression was, wore off. The boys returned to their sports and occupations, and Frank's hearers dwindled gradually away, until none remained but Doyle, Herbert, and Howard, and another boy named Donaldson, who seemed to think that he could never do enough for Frank, and was always following him about, to the evident annoyance of Rushton. Who can tell what good seed may have been sown in those few days?

It may be that some of our readers will feel

inclined to smile at our little missionary, and say, What good can a mere school-boy like Frank Netherton ever hope to do? If there be any such, we will answer them in the words of Dr. Chalmers: 'Little things, and little people, have often brought great things to pass.' The largest world in which we exist is made up of little particles, as small as the sands on the sea-shore. The vast sea is composed of small drops of water. The little busy bees, how much honey they gather! Do not be discouraged because you are little. A little star shines brightly in the sky, in a dark night, and may be the means of saving many a poor sailor from shipwreck; and a little Christian may do a great deal of good, if he or she will try. There is nothing like trying.'

Every Saturday the boys had a half-holiday, which was eagerly looked forward to through the week. When weather permitted, they generally took a long country walk, under the superintendence of Mr. Barlow, who, it must be confessed, had enough to do to look after them. Sometimes Mr. Campbell himself accompanied them, and his presence was never felt as a restraint. He never played the schoolmaster out of school, but was the kind friend and intelligent companion of his pupils. Mr. Barlow had no influence over them, because he had no sympathy with them. He felt this without understanding the cause, and it made him still more harsh and unbending. He had a habit, however, of falling into what the boys called 'a brown study,' in which he seemed to forget them and everything else in the world. At these times they did pretty much as they pleased, buying fruit and pastry, which was contrary to the rules, and eating it under his very eyes.

'I wonder what he can be thinking about,' said Frank, during one of their walks, and glancing as he spoke from his noisy companions, into the stern, thoughtful countenance of the usher.

'I wonder what he can think at all,' exclaimed Doyle, who was walking along with a book in his hand, which he had closed at length in despair.

'That is right,' said Frank, 'do not read any more; it seems a shame this glorious day. How blue the sky is! And do look at yonder cherry-tree, with its scarlet and yellow leaves, and the elder-berries.'

'Elder wine is a nice thing,' said Doyle.

'I wish I had some now!' exclaimed a boy who was swinging his arms to and fro in order to keep himself warm; for it was a chill autumn day, notwithstanding its brightness.

'I wish I had some of those delicious-looking apples!' said Rushton, directing the attention of his school-fellows to a neighbouring orchard, where a few had been suffered to remain thus late in the season, and shone out temptingly above the high wall.

'They do indeed look delicious,' repeated Howard.

'I dare say they are sour,' observed Claude Hamilton, turning away with a smile.

'They do not look so, at any rate.'

'Nonsense,' said Howard; Hamilton was only alluding to the fable of the fox and the grapes.'

'As if every dunce did not know that,' replied Rushton. But, at any rate I am determined to try.'

'Why you would not steal them, surely!' said Howard, turning pale.

'Pshaw! lord Nelson himself, when he was