

kept his hand by his side, and looked about in gathering dismay.

'Oh, you needn't change your mind,' said Rasmus. 'I'll take him away; this ain't no place for him.'

'It is a very good place,' retorted the man of bottles, taking something of the measure of Rasmus, and perceiving he was no in to the pretty lad. 'It shall never be said I turned my flesh and blood on the street; and as soon as he got in trouble, I'd be responsible. You're welcome, my boy. I've always wanted a son, and haven't any. So take your duds up-stairs, and I'll do well by you and make a man of you in the business.'

'That's not what he's come for!' cried Rasmus. 'He don't aim to go into business, and especially not this business. He expected you'd send him to college for a matter of five or six years.'

'Hang college! I never set up for learned myself,' said the saloon-keeper, who was aiding his two assistants in compounding juleps and Tom-and-Jerry. 'I'll teach him to mix first-class drinks, and that's education enough for him.'

'Then I sha'n't leave him,' said Rasmus, violently.

'And who are you to meddle, I wish to know?'

'I'm his gardeen, and I mean to do my jooty right up to the handle. Didn't I pick him up out of the Ohio River, floatin' round like a drowned rat, and didn't I bring him clear to New York? I'm his gardeen, and I don't allow him round no liquor-shops. Come, Rod.'

'I've only your word for it that he's my nephew; but as such I take him, and here he stays. I won't have him idle round the streets with such as you. You leave him.'

'Not much. Mr. Llewellyn would be down on me if I left Rod, a temperance teetotaler, in a saloon.'

'Who's Mr. Llewellyn?'

'He's his other gardeen; a book-learned man he is, and stopped over in Jersey to a meetin'; but he'll be here in two days, and he would raise trouble if I'd done wrong by Rod.'

'The boy seems well provided with guardians,' laughed one of the numerous customers, who had been listening to the discussion with great interest.

'You bet he has gardeens,' said Rasmus, perceiving that he had fallen upon a potent word, and resolved to handle it vigorously; 'and Mr. H——, the publisher, is his gardeen, too. I'm a gardeen of muscle, and I'll lay any man flat who interferes,' and Rasmus struck out his brawny arm with an egregious pride in its construction and capabilities. 'Mr. Llewellyn is a gardeen with brains; he has the headpiece; 'tends to baby corpys and post mortuums and Alfer Davits, and that kind; and Mr. H——, he is the gardeen with money in his pocket, and he'll back us to look out for the boy. Wake up, Rod, and come along, or I'll have to thrash you or somebody; I'm risin'.'

'Better let them go, Waldon. You know you said he was no nephew of yours to begin with,' said a customer.

'But I've thought better of it.'

'Or worse. If the boy don't choose to stay, and there are three or four to make a fuss if you insisted, better drop it. A boy of that age that didn't choose to help you might be very balky.'

'I could break the rascal's neck,' said Waldon, sulkily.

'You'd break mine first, I think,' interposed Rasmus.

'And neck-breaking is apt to be interfered with by process of law,' said the customer, laughing.

Rodney roused himself.

'If you are my uncle,' he said to Waldon, 'it makes no difference. I won't stay; we should never get on well. I had no right to ask anything, and now—I don't want anything. I couldn't stay where liquor was sold, for I think it is wicked.'

Then with one of those bows full of natural grace which always won hearts for him, Rodney turned from the saloon, and Rasmus, looking twice as big as usual, ostentatiously covered his retreat. They went a few paces in silence, when a voice cried: 'Ho, there! Stop a moment.'

They turned, and saw the most gentleman-

ly of the Waldon customers, the one who had interfered most in the discussion.

'How did you come to think he was your uncle?' asked the gentleman, overtaking them.

'From the name,' said Rodney. 'I looked him up in the Directory. I lived in Ohio, but all my friends there are dead, and my house was swept away in the April flood, and I had a letter signed by Peter Waldon, my uncle, who seemed to be a good man, and well-off, and I came here to look him up. I thought he might take care of me; but I can help myself. From the letter, I thought he was lonesome, and all his folks were dead. He was not my uncle, but my mother's.'

'Oh, an elderly man, then?'

'I suppose so.'

'Not this man at all. This man is only about forty, and he has a wife and several daughters. If you only went by the Directory there may be other Peter Waldons, it is not such an unusual name.'

Rodney had searched out his note-book, and now proffered the letter. The stranger read it.

'Never written by this Peter Waldon,' he said. 'Let us try the Directory again. Step in this stationer's store. Here, now, let us look over the list. Here are Peter M. and Peter G., but your man signs no middle letter. Here, now, I guess we have him; plain Peter Waldon, broker. I would not be surprised if that was right, and I'll write the address on this card.'

'We'll go there right off,' said Rasmus.

'It will do no good. It is nearly five. I see his house is way out of the city—up the river. He will be gone from his office by now. Your plan will be to go there in the morning by half-past ten; by that time he will be in from his house, and not started in to Wall Street. Try him in the morning.'

They went back to the sidewalk.

'I hope you'll have better luck next time,' said the stranger.

'If it's another liquor place, I won't go in,' said Rodney.

'No? Suppose you found a rich uncle ready to make you his heir and send you to college and all that—only a liquor-dealer—you wouldn't object?'

'Yes, I would,' said Rodney, earnestly. 'I don't want anything to do with it. I don't believe any good would come of money that was made in such a way.'

'God lots of sand in him,' said Rasmus, anxious to explain lucidly to the stranger the phenomenon—'Rodney.'

'I wish I had as much,' said the stranger, with a laugh and a sigh. 'I fancy my mother would be glad of it.'

'A mother, says you, brother!' cried Rasmus. 'A mother! an' you a-hangin' round a saloon? That beats my time. I had a mother—she's dead, poor soul! Died of misery and trouble 'casioned by drinking—but not by hers or mine, I do assure you. Do you s'pose, brother, if she was 'live now I'd leave her sittin' alone aggrawatin' herself 'cause I was in bad company?'

'I wish she had a better son in me, I'm sure.'

'Why not, then? Where's your sand? What are you made of? What's to hinder your going home to her, to make her heart glad, and makin' it gladder an' gladder every day you live? I tell you, brother, if you'd had life like as I have—no mother, only a poor, wore-out dead one, in a potter's field—no home, no friends, nobody to care a rap for you, you'd know what a chance you've got, with your mother sittin' at home, ready to welcome you!'

'Good-bye to you both, and good luck,' said the gentleman, shaking them heartily by the hand. 'I'll tell my mother all about you, and she may see cause to be glad of the day you picked out the wrong uncle.'

Rasmus and Rodney returned to their lodging-house for supper, and in the evening Rasmus took Rodney out, and showed him some of the glories of the city—splendid buildings, wide avenues, electric lights, store windows blazing with jewellery, flowers, confectionery in a hundred seductive forms, pictures, book-stores, stores full of all manner of fantastic elegances, of which Rodney did not even know the name or guess the use. The streets were crowded with well-dressed people, with carriages, cars, stages—all was bustle and lavish display.

'I didn't know the city was so splendid!' cried Rodney.

(To be continued.)

Read This Aloud.

Betty Botter bought some butter;
'But,' she said, 'this butter's bitter;
If I put it in my batter,
It will make my batter bitter;
But a bit of better butter
Will but make my batter better,'
So she bought a bit of butter,
Better than the bitter butter,
And made her bitter batter better.
So 'twas better Betty Botter
Bought a bit of better butter.

Before the Days of Black Beauty.

(By Mrs. E. B. Gittings, in the New York 'Observer'.)

Among the characters of my native town which are indelibly impressed upon my memory is that of a tailoress, familiarly known to the townspeople as 'Old Maid Pierce.' My acquaintance with her dates back to that hazy, fragmentary period known as 'Earliest recollections.' In company with some half-dozen cats she lived in a cheerless room in a half-finished building known as the 'Old Castle.' There were traditions about the old building, which have receded into the realm of the 'scarce remembered.' Stories of how this structure, evidently designed for an imposing residence, came to be left in its incomplete state to crumble into decay. And these traditions, whatever they were, invested the place with the same sort of uncanniness which might attach to a 'haunted' house. I can almost feel again the fierce beating of my heart as my childish feet ascended the shaky outside stairway which led to 'old Maid Pierce's' room. For I was often sent thither with portions of Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners, and generous samples of baking-day products.

Twice a year this lonely woman became a temporary member of our household and overhauled the wardrobes of father and brothers—mending, cleaning and 'making over' for the small boys. I can see her now as she sat shivering by the nursery fire with her coarse, well-worn shoes upon the fender. She seemed always to be cold and the hand that held her needle always trembled. The faded purple ribbons on her rusty black lace cap trembled also, and her small grey eyes—restless as the cap ribbons—roved incessantly from one object in the room to another and back again to her work. Her skin was dark and wrinkled and upon it the freckles of her youth seemed to have persisted as desiccated scales. Her thin reddish yellow hair was streaked with grey, and while she was probably at this time not over fifty years old she seemed to me a centenarian.

She was devotedly attached to my mother, and when the moon hour of rest came she would follow her about the house and read to her from some religious periodical of the day. Her high-pitched quavering voice and monotonous inflection, together with a halting and imperfect pronunciation must have been unbearable to anyone less patient than my mother.

Her sole recreation, aside from the reading of religious papers, was attendance upon religious meetings. She and a white-haired old negro woman were conspicuous figures on the 'free seat' directly in front of the pulpit of the old First Church. Prayer meetings of all kinds were sure of her presence. Perhaps the proudest day of her life was when some students, partly in jest and partly in return for favors received, bought her a ticket to a neighboring city where the 'association' of churches was in session. No regularly elected delegate could have taken more genuine interest in the proceedings of the august body, and certainly no one present cherished the memory of the meetings with greater reverence and constancy.

Little seemed to be known of her early history. If she had living relatives she never spoke of them. Most people thought her not quite sound in mind; yet in many ways she was exceedingly shrewd. I remember how she got even with a smart young clerk who thought to play upon her credulity. It was in the days of paper collars, and she had solicited washing and mending of the clerks in a certain store. This facetious youth gave