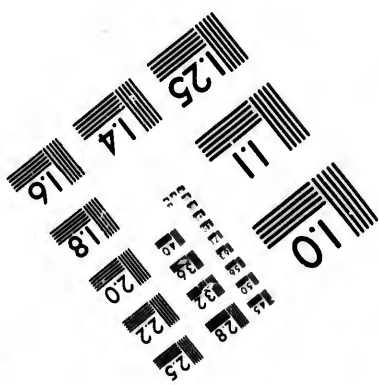
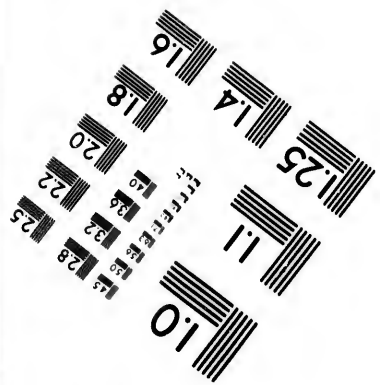
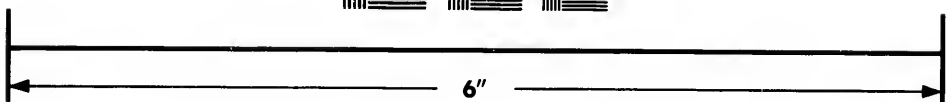
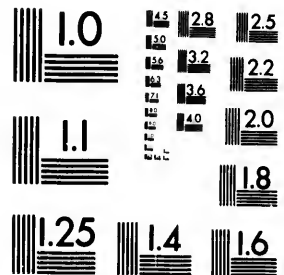


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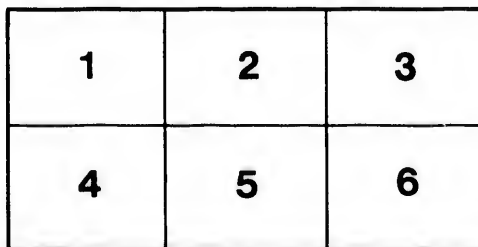
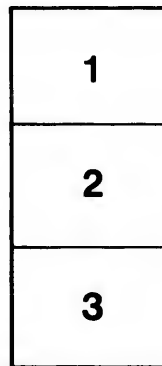
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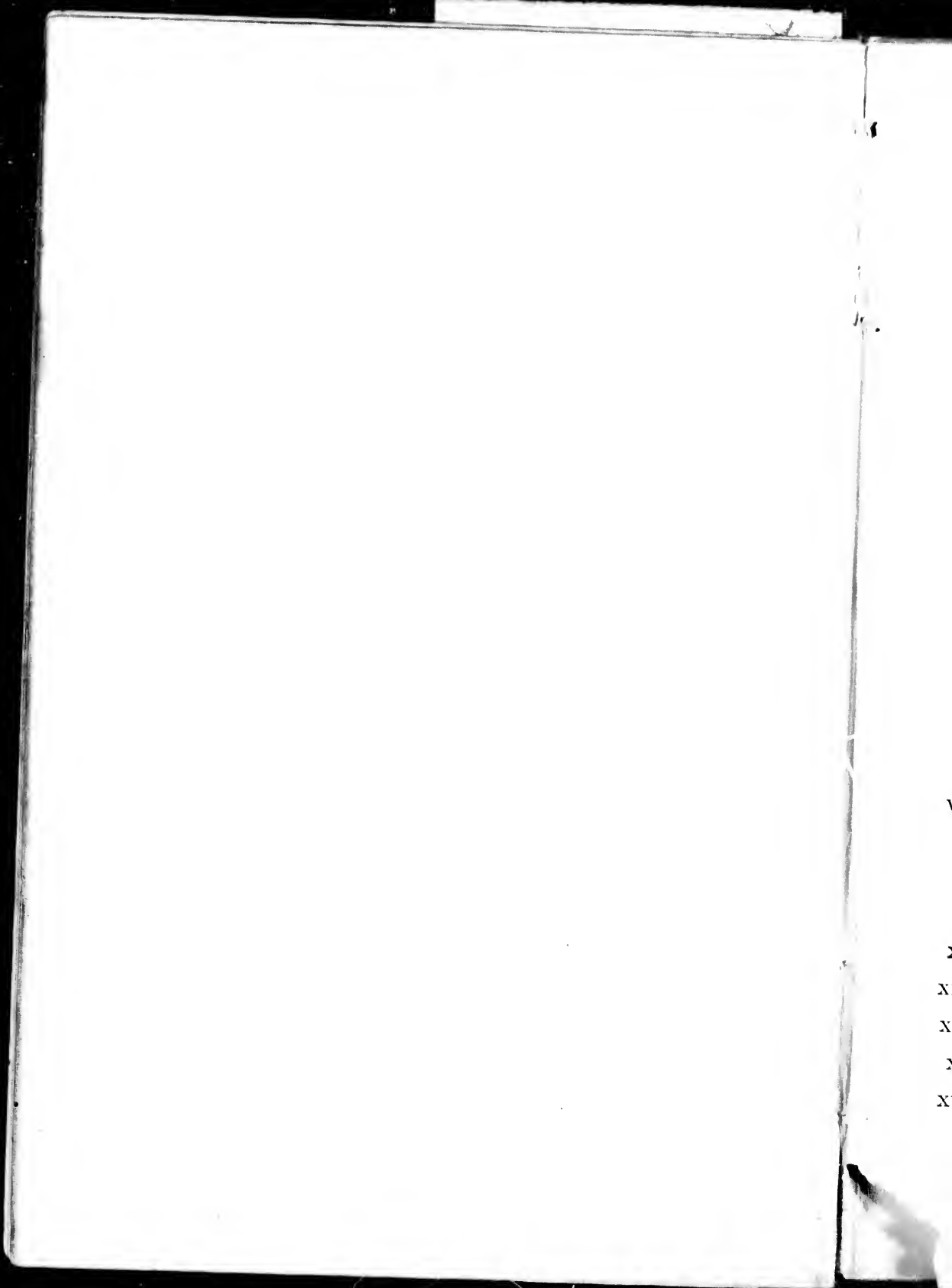
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I.

*WAZES.*

**A** DRIVING storm prevailed. It came from the north-east with a gale, and the rain descended in torrents. The streets of the village were deserted, and traveller and labourer alike sought shelter beneath friendly roofs.

The village pastor was hard at work in his study. It was past ten o'clock in the morning, and he felt secure against intrusion. "No one would venture out in such a storm." The thought had scarcely passed through his mind, when a hurried ring of the door-bell brought him to his feet. "Some urgent necessity," he thought, and hastened to answer the bell.

"I have come for you to attend a funeral in the North District," said the caller.

"Who is dead?" inquired the pastor.

"Mrs. Rogers; and the funeral ought to be held at once, as the children are to be sent to an institution for the poor."

The North District was two miles away, and Mrs. Rogers was an intemperate woman, whose husband was in the House of Correction as a common



drunkard. A more miserable family never dwelt in that town. Charity had often rendered its members material aid, and effort after effort had been made to reclaim the degraded parents, but in vain. And now intemperance had added another ruined household to its catalogue of crimes.

"I will take you over and bring you back," promised the caller. "The storm is severe, but my carriage will protect you."

Within ten minutes, the pastor was on his way to the funeral. He had never ridden in such a storm before. Sudden gusts of wind almost lifted the carriage from the earth. The fearfulness of the storm was exceeded only by the wretchedness of the scene in the house of death, where the woman had been suddenly called away after drinking to excess. On arriving at the house, the pastor found two women and three men neighbours, who had kindly left their homes to render assistance in that dreadful hour. The house stood on a hillside, and was destitute of every comfort. The fierce winds roared through the naked branches of the trees around it, and the dilapidated old dwelling trembled and creaked under their power.

As the pastor announced that he was ready for the service, one of the women led two little children into the room, a girl of five years, and a boy scarcely three; and seating them in front of the minister, remarked, "These are all the mourners."

No words were necessary to deepen the impression produced by those two emaciated, sickly-looking

children, whom drink had robbed even of a mother's love. They were mute preachers, none the less effective because unconscious of their ministry. The pastor was well-nigh overcome, as he rose with Bible in hand, remarking, "Let God speak and man keep silence." He proceeded to read appropriate selections from Scripture, followed by fervent prayer, that God would care for the little waifs now thrust out upon the world. Tears ran down the face of the pastor during this prayer, and when he closed, all were weeping except the two little "mourners," who were too young to appreciate the sadness of their condition.

A kind neighbour took charge of the children after the dead mother was borne away. A few days later they were removed to a benevolent institution in the city of Boston, where their names were recorded with no mention of their sad history.

## II.

### GOSSIP.

“POOR little waifs!” said Mrs. Ellis, in real sympathy for the worse than orphans. “They will never know what troubles they are saved from.”

“I should never want to have them,” responded Mrs. Snow. “It is in mercy that their mother was taken away. To be motherless is not so bad an experience as to have *such* a mother.”

“Especially when the father is as bad, if not far worse,” added Mrs. Ellis. “I suspect Rogers has been one of the worst of bad men, and I daresay his wife has often drunk to intoxication to drown her sorrows.”

“I should think he might have some serious thoughts now, if he has a spark of manhood left,” responded Mrs. Snow. “He will find no wife, no children, and no home, when he gets out of confinement.”

“And I daresay he’ll be all the better pleased,” said Mrs. Ellis. “He never treated his wife and children to much but abuse. It must have been a relief to them when the authorities interposed and put him where he belongs.”

Mrs. Ellis was a kind-hearted woman, and really was not severe in her judgment. For Rogers, when under the influence of strong drink—and he was seldom sober—was a dangerous man, and often caused anxiety to the whole neighbourhood. This was not the first time that he had been in the House of Correction. Twice, at least, he had been there before, and for a season he appeared to be benefited by the punishment. But his old habits had soon prevailed, obliterating alike the recollection of his incarceration and his promise of reform, and he had settled down to his cups again with utter recklessness. He was a man of considerable intelligence, and had once possessed an estate of several thousand dollars in value. In early manhood he bid fair to make an efficient man of business, and many said that his tact in that direction was quite remarkable. In this respect he ranked among the first class of young business men before he was twenty-five years of age. But soon after intemperance destroyed his ambition, corrupted his character, blasted his hopes, wasted his property, and left him the wreck of a man, penniless, friendless, and worthless.

The sudden death of Mrs. Rogers and the final breaking up of the family caused much talk throughout the town. On the Sabbath following the funeral the minister made mention of it in his sermon. He described the scene in the desolate abode, where two little children were "the only mourners," and earnestly denounced the cause of that wretchedness. He closed his sermon—throughout which he ex-

hibited more fire and feeling than was usual—with the following appeal :

“Brethren, what a scene to occur in a Christian community! With all the religious privileges of this nineteenth century, and in this enlightened Christian commonwealth, a whole family sacrificed to the merciless demon of drink! We shudder at the thought of men, women, and children, being crushed to death before the bloody car of Juggernaut, and say, ‘That is one of the fearful fruits of heathenism.’ But here, within sound of our church-bell, a whole family is sacrificed to intemperance! Here children are robbed of father and mother, and cast out of a ruined home upon the cold charities of the world—a scene that is unsurpassed in cruelty and woe in the heathen cities of India. In the name of our common Father; in the name of suffering families; in the name of religion and Christian duty, I call upon the authorities of this town to apply the law and close every dramshop; and I call upon this Church to arise in the name of the Master and fight this curse until it shall not be possible for another such scene to occur among this people. Less than this is neglect of duty and a shame to our profession!”

The sermon caused not a little excitement. A few criticised it as too severe. Some thought it “was not in good taste to carry family affairs into the pulpit.” A large part of the hearers, however, upheld the pastor in his fidelity to truth and duty. With the thoughtful, Christian people, who under-

stood what the preacher's mission is, the pastor stood higher than ever for his rebuke of the prevailing indifference and apathy in regard to this evil.

The women of the congregation were awakened to earnest activity against intemperance by the sermon. At the female prayer-meeting it was the theme of remark and supplication. Very earnest were the words of exhortation and prayer among the participants. The motherless and worse than fatherless children were interceded for with tender interest. It was known how they had been provided for.

"How much better off they are now than they ever were at home," said Mrs. Lacey. "They may yet be introduced into the best homes, where they will be fitted for usefulness."

"I suppose the institution is conducted upon Christian principles, is it not?" responded Mrs. Kirk. "Such institutions usually are."

"Oh, yes," answered Mrs. Lacey; "it would not be of much use were it not so conducted. The object is not only to bring the children under good influence there, but also to provide them with good homes. The managers put them into such homes as soon as they can."

"I didn't know that they took such young children," observed another lady.

"They receive younger children still," Mrs. Lacey replied. "It is not unusual for them to receive infants. I have been told that more children one or two years old are applied for than can be provided.

Many mothers who lose their own infants desire to adopt others."

"I read an almost incredible story in our paper," said Mrs. Kirk, "about a poor little street-boy picked up in New York city and sent to a home in the West, where he became a Christian, and finally a minister of the gospel."

"I don't see that such a story is incredible," remarked Mrs. Snow; "for it looks to me like the most natural thing in the world for such children, under new and better influences, to become good men and women. I think that one can hardly do a greater good than to take such a child to bring up. Make a good man of one such child, and he may be an agent of good to others as long as he lives."

"Well, that is a hopeful view to take of such cases," interrupted Mrs. Kirk. "If such expectations can be realized, the breaking up of a family is not so much of a calamity, after all. I should prefer, however, to save the family from such bitterness, rather than undertake to make a preacher of one of its beggared children."

"That may be," replied Mrs. Snow; "no doubt that is the first duty. But when you fail there, the next best thing is to make something of the children, if possible."

"If possible!" repeated Mrs. Kirk. "That was well put in. I think there is good and bad stock in families; and you can't make much out of bad stock."

"Do you think the Rogers stock is bad?" inquired Mrs. Snow, with a smile.

"I should think it came as near that as anything," Mrs. Kirk replied.

"It is said that Mr. Rogers's father was a Christian man of position and influence," continued Mrs. Snow. "If that is so, the son might have been like his father, but for intoxicating drinks. The lure of the cup often draws good stock into evil ways. I think that the Prodigal Son belonged to good stock, and no doubt that and his early training account in part for his return to his father's house. But when he was living on husks in a strange land, a dirty, ragged, forsaken vagabond, he appeared to be of bad stock. Good stock is very likely to come to repentance, while bad stock often wanders farther and farther into the 'far country.' But even the knowledge that in any given case the stock is bad should not cause us to withhold our efforts for its improvement; for the great Husbandman can graft a good branch on a bad stock."

The foregoing affords a glimpse of the excitement and discussion occasioned by the shocking death of Mrs. Rogers. In the meanwhile the "waifs" were not forgotten by Him Who cares for the sparrow in its fall.



### III.

#### *SHELTER.*

THE children were safe at last. Too young to understand the perils from which they had been delivered, they were not too young to observe and enjoy the change that had befallen them. As the quiet, peaceful harbour receives the tempest-tossed and shattered barques that have been driven hither and thither upon an angry sea, so the Home welcomed these little strangers to its safe and friendly port. The waifs were glad to find a covert from the storm, and soon lost their emaciated and dejected appearance.

The scenes which now surrounded them were entirely new. In comparison with the wretched abode of want and woe from which they had escaped, the building in which they found themselves was grand and imposing. Three stories high, ample enough to accommodate a family of fifty or more, every room neatly and comfortably furnished, with schoolroom and dining-hall on the same floor, and a small yard in front protected by an iron fence, it was an attractive and charming place to children gathered from homes of abject poverty and distress.

And then such kindness and tender care, as the institution lavished upon the little ones. Few, if any of them, before their arrival there had ever known the meaning of real love, for vice and crime had made desolate the hearthstones where their young lives had budded. They never dreamed that the world that had abused them contained such loving women as those who greeted them and made every day in the home a glad one.

To be made cleanly in person, to wear neat and comfortable clothes, to have enough to eat each day, to witness no fearful outbursts of temper, to hear words and tones of kindness, and to be pointed with persuasive tenderness to Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not"—what a contrast to their previous experience!

From thirty to forty little children, too—all waifs together—welcomed each new-comer with true childish delight, introducing them to pastimes just as pleasurable as those that the children of the wealthy enjoy. All seemed to forget past miseries in present enjoyments, and a happier and brighter group of little ones was rarely seen.

And here, let us hope, the hearts of our two waifs will warm in the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and nurture the good seed sown into thrifty life, as the glad earth yields the tender blade at the reviving breath of spring.

#### IV.

##### *TOSSED.*

“**B**E kind enough to direct a stranger to Bunker Hill,” said a man of middle age to a police officer on Washington Street.

“Certainly, sir,” answered the policeman, and he proceeded to comply with the stranger’s request. The officer was one of the few Christian gentlemen found among the police of Boston, and his response to those who claimed his assistance was prompt and hearty. In this case, too, there was something about the appearance of the stranger that at once awakened his interest ; as he was just released from duty and on his way to dinner he felt free to engage in a little talk with him, and accordingly asked, “May I be so bold as to inquire where you are from ?”

“From Maine. I follow the seas for a livelihood, and came into Boston this morning, after fifteen months’ absence. I go down on the boat to-night, and having a little time, I thought I’d improve it by taking a view of Bunker Hill Monument.”

“A great sight to those who never saw it,” responded the policeman, as they walked along to-

gether. "In what part of Maine is your home? I am a Down-easter too."

"My home is on the banks of the Penobscot," answered the stranger; "and a pleasant place it is too. I have visited many different parts of the earth, and I can say from the bottom of my heart, 'There is no place like home.'"

"Of course not; where our wives and children are is the most sacred spot to us all," replied the officer.

"But I have no children, I am sorry to say," rejoined the stranger. "I have as good a wife as God ever gave to a man, an intelligent Christian woman. I am but a rough seafaring man, but I try to prove myself worthy of her."

"I should think your wife would feel lonely in your absence. You can't be at home much of the time," added the policeman.

"About two years of the last fifteen, I should think," the stranger replied. "She thinks my mission is on the sea, and she never complains. In hard storms she has much anxiety; and she tries to keep herself prepared for the worst, though she says that God can take care of me on the sea as well as on the land."

The police officer became still more interested in the stranger. He saw a true heart hidden behind that rough exterior. There was a mind, too, of considerable intelligence under that weather-beaten brow; and the sailor was evidently a keen observer.

"What may I call your name?" the officer continued

"My name is Robson—John Robson. None of my ancestors were ever President of the United States, and I don't think any of them were ever hanged."

The police officer smiled at this, and said, "It may be true, though, that some of them deserved to be President, and possibly some of them deserved to be hanged. All persons do not get their deserts in this world."

"They will in the next," responded Robson; "and that is enough for thoughtful persons to know."

"You are a Christian man, I take it," said the officer.

"I trust I am. I have been through enough to make me one. I have been wrecked at sea on three different voyages, and how in the world my life was saved each time I can scarcely tell. One other time I have seen the vessel dismasted, and to all appearance doomed to go under; and then eternity seemed to be very near. I have often said that, of all classes, seamen ought to be Christian men; and yet they are the most thoughtless and godless as a class."

"They are something like the police of cities," responded the officer dryly. "The police ought to be composed of Christian men, prepared to render their account to God at a moment's warning; for they are liable to be sent into eternity almost any day."

The two men walked on still conversing until at

last Robson said, "Well, I am glad to have met you, and I trust we shall meet again. But unless I go soon I shall not have much of a look at Bunker Hill."

"Hold on a moment longer," answered the policeman earnestly. "You could scarcely guess, although you are a Yankee, what I have been thinking of. I have been thinking that you are just the man to adopt one of the little waifs we pick up in this great city. Who knows but that our meeting this morning was arranged by Providence to that very end?"

"Perhaps so; if it is my duty I am ready for it," answered Mr. Robson. "We have often thought of adopting a child; but have never fallen in with one. We did not think of looking for one in a large city, especially among the class you name."

"Here is just the place for charity to work," responded the officer. "Children should be adopted as a means of doing good, and not simply to soothe grief or please the fancy."

"Do you know what you are getting when you take a child from the class you name?" asked Robson.

"Not exactly," replied the officer; "and you don't want to know. If you get an angel unawares, so much the better, for then 'ignorance is bliss.'"

"Not much danger of that, in my opinion," interrupted Robson.

"Why, my dear sir, you don't understand it at all," continued the officer. "There is no more danger of being cheated in adopting one of these

children than there is in taking one of your nearest neighbour's. You would be astonished, if I had time to tell you what positions some of these outcasts, who have been taken into good families, fill to-day. The lives of many of them are marvellous. Hardly ever one gets into a good family who does not become a good man or woman. It depends on the family into which the waif goes, more than on the family from which he comes, whether he makes a good man or not."

"I see," responded Robson, "and I believe you are right. I know my wife would appreciate such a work as you suggest."

"I know she would, too," rejoined the officer, "if she is the woman I take her to be. Women always become interested in this method of benevolence. We have a society for providing homes for this class, and women are its chief support. It is but a few years since public attention was called to this work, and already hundreds of poor children from this city, and thousands from New York, have been put into good homes; and the majority of these children would probably have become paupers and criminals for life but for this noble enterprise."

The police officer grew more and more enthusiastic as he proceeded. He had been deeply interested in finding homes for this class from the commencement of the enterprise. His wife was an officer in one of the city institutions for friendless children, and he visited the place nearly every day. He was constantly on the lookout for good men and

women to adopt poor children. The first thought that arose in his mind on meeting strangers was, "I wonder if here is not another chance for a homeless girl or boy." No doubt he raised this inquiry within himself as soon as he discovered that a Christian heart beat beneath that sailor's jacket.

"Any boys or girls on hand now?" inquired Robson.

"Yes, several dozens of them, from babies of six weeks to children of fifteen years; and I have just thought why you were saved from shipwreck. A moment ago you did not seem to know how it was that you escaped with your life when others perished. I think I understand it. God saved you to adopt one of these waifs. I think that is the reason why we have met this morning. God means that you shall carry one of these little creatures home to your wife."

"What! to-day?" exclaimed Robson, just beginning to understand the enthusiasm and impetuosity of the policeman.

"Yes, to-day," replied the officer. "Better to-day than a month hence. Just think what a present for your wife—a real, live, flesh and bone, Yankee baby! She never had such a present as that. A gold necklace from Europe or a fur suit from the North Pole wouldn't please her half so much."

Robson laughed at the officer's way of putting the case.

The policeman continued: "I can show you the prettiest little boy, not three years old quite, that



you ever laid your eyes upon. He has scarcely been in the institution a month. He is a perfect beauty, and bright as he is handsome. Your wife would be delighted with him."

"Where did he come from?" inquired Robson.

"I don't know or care. I only want to know where he goes to. If he goes to your house I shall be satisfied. At the institution we do not trouble ourselves about where the waifs come from; it is our chief duty to know where they go to."

"I would prefer a boy to a girl, and I think my wife would," remarked Robson; "and a child two or three years old I know would please her best."

"That is it; I am more and more satisfied that you escaped from the wreck to adopt this boy," answered the officer. "It will prove the best investment you ever made, I have no doubt."

"What is his name?" asked Robson.

"Name! I don't know that he has any, really. You can give him your own name—John Robson, Jr., if you adopt him. And the little fellow need never know but that he was born under your roof. What he was called in the past is of no account whatever. Blot out the whole past, and strike for a grand future."

"Don't you know anything of the history of this child?" still urged Robson, becoming much interested in the matter.

"Nothing; and what is more, we don't care to know, as I have already said. It is better for the person who adopts the boy, and better for the boy

himself, that his past life should remain a blank. God's blessing will rest upon those who are true fathers and mothers to such children ; and that is enough."

The result of this interview was that Robson concluded to take the child home with him. He could not, however, be persuaded to go to the institution to see the boy.

"I have entire confidence in your judgment," he said to the policeman. "You know more about children than I do, and——"

"I ought to," interrupted the officer, laughing ; "I have six of my own. But the more I have, the more I feel for these fatherless and motherless ones."

So it was arranged that the police officer should take the child to the police headquarters, where Robson would meet him at four o'clock, in the meantime carrying out his plan of visiting Bunker Hill Monument.

Both were at the police office in time, the officer arriving a few moments in advance.

"Look here, Mr. Robson," exclaimed the officer, holding up the boy as Robson entered ; "Bunker Hill never sacrificed a nobler man than this chap will make. What do you think of him? Did I exaggerate?"

"He is a noble fellow, surely," answered Robson heartily, and with evident pleasure.

"I knew you couldn't help admiring him," continued the officer. "The best bargain you ever

made ; but it is a solemn trust too. You will sign that document, and the child is yours," passing a paper to him.

Mr. Robson hastily read the printed form committing the waif to his care and love, and exacting on his part the interest and tender offices of a father. He signed the paper and returned it to the officer.

"You are a happy father now," said the officer, "a dignity to which you did not aspire in the morning. I think you will never regret the day that you voluntarily became a father to the fatherless."

"How important was our apparently accidental meeting this morning," remarked Robson.

"There are no accidents in this world," responded the policeman. "Our meeting was, I believe, in the Divine plan to bring you into the path of duty, and to provide a father and mother for this little fellow. Twenty-five years from now, if this new-found son of yours should become a preacher or missionary, an honoured merchant or successful author, you will see more clearly that our meeting was providential and not accidental."

"What if he should seriously disappoint your expectations?" suggested Robson.

"There is not the least danger of that under such discipline as I am sure you and your wife are qualified to use—if God adds His blessing, and I think we may trust that He will do that. We will not indulge in uncomfortable forebodings. I prefer to hope for the best."

"And so do I," said Robson, receiving his new

trust with manifest pleasure, and leaving the office with the hearty good wishes of all the witnesses.

The method of transferring this child from the institution to a new home was exceptional. The rules of the Home in regard to the adoption of children had been departed from in some particulars at the urgent request of the policeman, who possessed the entire confidence of all the authorities at the institution, and whose wife, as we have already stated, was one of its managers. Accustomed, in his calling, to the rapid reading of character, he had taken an unusual liking to the honest sailor, and was exceedingly desirous that the boy, in whom both himself and his wife were much interested, should find a home with him. Therefore, as Robson preferred to leave the matter in his hands, without visiting the Home, the policeman had arranged the meeting at the police office, where were competent witnesses to the transaction. By application in the meantime to a responsible merchant with whom Robson had had some business dealings and to whom he had referred the policeman, the latter had ascertained that the sailor was indeed, as he seemed, a reliable man; and without any doubts in regard to the future well-being of the child, he gladly committed him to his new foster-father. By a strange oversight the blank left for the name of the child adopted had not been filled up. This the policeman did not notice until he handed the document to Robson for his signature, and then, as the omission fell in with his own notions as to the desirableness

of burying the past of the little waifs in oblivion, he did not deem it necessary to call the sailor's attention to the circumstance ; nor did Robson observe it himself.

In most cases, of course, such an omission could have been remedied by an appeal to the child itself ; but it so happened that the boy in question had, in his wretched home, been familiar only with the terms " Baby " and " Brat," alternately bestowed according to the moods of those who addressed him. Yet the sequel will show that this " nameless waif," tossed in its infancy upon the waves of woe and change, was tenderly cared for and guided by God.

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## V.

### *HOME.*

**H**OME! Sweet word to express the sum of earthly joys. What memories cluster around it! What bright anticipations are awakened by it! A child without a home is poorest of the poor.

The home which our little waif was now to find nestled in one of the most charming spots that nature has provided. The beautiful Penobscot wound its way in front, and towering hills, covered with oak and pine, lifted their craggy brows behind. The house which Mr. Robson and his charge reached on the day following that on which the events recorded in the last chapter took place, was a small cottage, the very picture of neatness and comfort. Well-painted, in good repair, with a tiny lawn in front, it suggested thrift, peace, and purity within.

Mrs. Robson was upstairs when her husband arrived. Hearing some one enter, she came down just as Mr. Robson had seated his adopted son in an arm-chair. After joyfully greeting her husband, Mrs. Robson discovered the little urchin in the chair, and exclaimed,—

"What upon earth have you got there?"

"A present for you. I thought I would bring you something you never had."

"Where in the world did you get him, and what does it all mean?" she continued.

"Don't he look as if he came from the Cannibal Islands?" her husband inquired banteringly. "I thought you would prefer him to a young alligator or baboon."

"Well, I am surprised," Mrs. Robson exclaimed. Then turning to the child, "Come, my little fellow, let me look at you," she said, taking him up in her arms and giving him a hearty kiss.

"You dear little creature," she continued, "what's your name?"

"Name!" responded her husband, as the child shyly hid his face on Mrs. Robson's shoulder, "he has no name."

"No name?" she answered with surprise. "Where did he come from?"

"He didn't come from anywhere that I know of. Take him all in all, he is the most mysterious character I ever got acquainted with. It will take your whole lifetime to find out his history, and then it will be shrouded in mystery."

"You are too bad, John, to keep me so in suspense," his wife rejoined. "Is this child for us?"

"Of course he is, every ounce of him. That is John Robson, Jr. Not to tease you any more, my dear, I am his father by adoption. I was solemnly

invested with all the rights and titles of father yesterday."

"Where?" asked his wife.

"In Boston; and any father may well be proud of such a son. Isn't he a noble boy?"

"He is indeed," answered Mrs. Robson, imprinting another kiss upon the cheek of the child, who, undecided at first whether to laugh or cry, had finally, as it seemed, made up his mind that he had fallen into good hands. "Come, now, and tell me all about it."

Mr. Robson proceeded to give an account of his adventure in Boston and his interview with the police officer, the great number of homeless children in the city, the work of charity in providing them with homes, the manner of adopting the child at the police office, and other details.

"What is the name of the institution from which the child was taken?" inquired Mrs. Robson.

"Really, I didn't notice. I believe it was on the paper I signed. I know there was a fanciful heading to that, in old English, or something, and flourished, but I didn't bother about reading it."

"You were not very particular in making inquiries, it seems to me," remarked Mrs. Robson.

"My inquiries were more particular than the answers," replied Mr. Robson. "The officer did not know much about his history, nor did any one else, so far as I could learn. They do not make a point of inquiring into these matters. Their chief concern is to get good homes for the children."

"Then you did not visit the institution?"



"No ; I didn't care to do that ; and I shouldn't have been any wiser if I had."

"Do you really mean that this child has no name ?"

"I mean that I don't know what his name is. No doubt his parents had a name for him ; but the police officer knew nothing about it ; and he said that we should give him our name if we adopted him, and never let him know but what he was born under our roof."

"And so you will call him John—John Robson? recalling what her husband had said a few moments before.

"No ; that was what the officer suggested. Anything but John—I don't like the name, and never did. I always thought that my parents were destitute of originality, or they never would have given me so common a name."

"I like it," replied Mrs. Robson, with emphasis. "It is a good, substantial name, and it has a good meaning. But I am not set on giving it to the child, as I have one John now. Call him what you please."

"I'll call him Royal, then ; he's a royal fellow. Royal Robson—that jingles like a string of bells."

"Well," said Mrs. Robson, "that name will suit me ; it belong'd to one of the best men I ever knew. And then it will be nice to call the little fellow Roy."

In the surprise and excitement of the occasion Mrs. Robson scarcely thought of anything but the

little stranger. Her joy in welcoming her husband home was well nigh absorbed in her astonishment and pleasure at finding his companion. Soon, however, she recovered her equanimity, and busied herself in removing "Roy's" little hat and cloak and in providing some bread and milk for him.

"By the way, how old is he?" Mrs. Robson inquired, as Roy finished his last spoonful. "Do you know that?"

"No; only he is not supposed to be three years old yet. He certainly is not more than three."

"Didn't the officer know how old he was?"

"He said that he was 'scarcely three,' and I never thought to enquire further. Possibly they have the date of his birth at the institution; but I doubt it, for the officer said they knew nothing about his parents or family, and didn't want to know."

"So we don't know where or when he was born?" observed Mrs. Robson, with a puzzled air. "No name, no birthplace, no age, you little mysterious midget!" and she left another and more ardent kiss upon the child's round cheek.

"Well, he *was* born; there is no question about that," responded Mr. Robson. "That is one fact settled, and the most important one. And he has a name now—Royal Robson; there is another fact settled."

"Yes," returned his wife.

"It is rather inconvenient," answered Mr. Robson, "but it might be worse. A good many things

are worse than not knowing when or where you were born."

"That is a comfortable view of the case to take," responded his wife; "but it does not remove my difficulty in the least."

"Well," replied Mr. Robson, "I have thought of this: evidently he is about three years old, and to-day is the 27th day of May, 1854; go back three years, and in honour of the day he came to our dwelling and found a home, let us fix on May 27th, 1851, as his birthday. How is that? Is not that getting a birthday as easily as we did a name?"

Mrs. Robson laughed, and admitted that this arrangement was the best possible under the circumstances.

Continued Mr. Robson, "I think we ought to commemorate in some such way the little fellow's arrival in this port. He has been at sea three years, tossed hither and thither by wind and wave, out in all weathers, and wrecked into the bargain; and now that the little craft is safe in this quiet port, we ought to commemorate the event in some such way. We sailors call it a great day when we can find a good port to sail into."

"I agree with you perfectly," responded his wife. "Call his birthday, May 27th, 1851. So that is settled. How about his *birthplace*?"

"My Yankee ingenuity is not equal to that. I confess that I am puzzled there. He was born somewhere, but where? Who knows?"

"I don't; but I would like to know," said his wife.

"I think we shall be obliged to leave that," continued Mr. Robson. "Perhaps I can look it up when I am in Boston some time. If I can find the police officer, or in some other way find the institution where the boy was, I may learn his birth-place."

We may say just here that Mr. Robson never did "look up" that birthplace.

"Another thing occurs to me," added Mrs. Robson. "Do you know whether he has any brothers and sisters?"

"The officer said nothing about any. I don't think he has any, or the officer would have said so."

"Then you did not inquire?"

"Never once. You see, it was new business for me to be bargaining for a baby, and I didn't think of many things that a father of a half-dozen children might have thought of. I am more convinced than ever that the best way is to have babies born and named and labelled in one's own house. Then you know what's what."

Mrs. Robson laughed; then with sudden gravity she proceeded,—

"It is not a trifling matter, John, to receive this child to our care and keeping. A grave responsibility comes with it. He must be trained for God."

"All that is very true, and you are equal to it," responded Mr. Robson, who entertained the highest opinion of his wife's ability and Christian character. He would often say, on his ship, in a storm, when

danger threatened, "There is one good woman praying for us," meaning his wife.

"We are equal to it if God gives us wisdom and patience; but not without," she replied. "Mere human wisdom is inadequate to the task, as I regard it."

"Judging from what I see," answered Mr. Robson, "most parents think it needs a little less wisdom to rear children than it does to raise chickens and colts. There is old Merriweather, with his family of ten boys and girls; he is studying half his time to know how to raise colts; but I doubt if he ever read a page or spent an hour to learn how to train his sons and daughters."

"Yes; and his faithful dog Towser is more obedient to him than any of the boys," said his wife. "The dog always obeys him; his boys never, with real pleasure."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mr. Robson, "for he doesn't talk as he means. I once heard him say to one of his boys, 'If you do that again I will cut your ears off.' The boy knew from past experience that his father would never lay a finger on him, however disobedient he might be. Parents should say what they mean, and never use empty threats."

"And yet many parents do it," said his wife. "Even some mothers will say, 'I'll break your head,' 'I'll shake the life out of you,' 'I'll whip you to death'—just what they never intend to do. Parents need Divine grace to assist them. With a deep sense of their accountability to God for the trust

committed to them, they could never speak thus, or indulge in the temper such language implies. 'My strength is sufficient for thee,' is true everywhere and at all times. My prayer shall be for wisdom and grace to train this new gift for the Master. Even hasty words may distort the character and blight the soul. I often think of that passage, 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Words, as truly as acts, show what the heart is."

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## VI.

### *BEDTIME.*

SO absorbed were Mr. and Mrs. Robson in their new experience that they took no note of time ; and the evening hour drew nigh while yet they were discussing and admiring and amusing the boy.

Supper was disposed of in rather a hurried manner, that the promising "son," tired and nervous from his journey, might be put to bed.

"Where in the world will he sleep?" asked Mr. Robson.

"Sure enough, where will he?" responded his wife; "I never thought of that. The little fellow has no bed."

"If he is not badly off, then no child ever was," remarked Mr. Robson. "No name, no birthday, no birthplace, no parents, no brothers and sisters, no home, and no bed!"

"Of course," continued Mrs. Robson, "he must sleep in the room with us."

"Just as you please," answered her husband. "Make a bed on the floor to-night. To-morrow I can borrow or buy neighbour Farmer's trundle-bed,

I guess, as his children have all outgrown it. It don't take long for young birds to feather and spread their wings."

So the new-comer was disposed of by laying him in an extemporized bed in one corner of the room. Tender words and kisses soothed his restlessness, the effect of fatigue and excitement, and he was soon sleeping soundly. Earnest were the prayers that his foster-parents offered that night, that the blessing of God might rest upon the boy, and that they might be enabled to train him aright.

There was new and strange music in the cottage on the banks of the Penobscot the next day. Roy awoke refreshed and feeling more at home, and his little pattering feet and merry prattle and laughter echoed through the rooms, to the great delight of his foster-parents. He seemed delighted with all he saw, and appeared as content in his new home as if he had been born under its roof. He was evidently strongly drawn to his new mother, and she fondled him as only a mother can. His new father, too, apparently held a high place in his childish affections; and he climbed into his lap, and looked up into his great blue eyes, with their shaggy brows, wonderingly and confidingly.

"Do you suppose it seems as strange to him as it does to us?" said Mr. Robson to his wife.

"I was just thinking that I would like to know what his thoughts are," answered Mrs. Robson. "Pleasant ones, no doubt, by his actions."

"Auntie!"

It was the call of Roy.



"Auntie!"

"I am your mother, my dear," answered Mrs. Robson. "Call me mamma."

"And I am your father," added Mr. Robson. "Call me papa."

And so they set about teaching their "son" his new relation. If the child had been born under their roof, these two words would have been the first to be spoken, doubtless. They were the first to be taught now.

"No doubt some one has had charge of him, whom he called 'auntie,'" remarked Mrs. Robson. "It will take him some time to forget it, and learn to say 'mamma' and 'papa.'"

But it did not take him long to learn to say these. We do not suppose that he understood just what their meaning was; and yet it seemed as if his child-heart did take in their real significance, and that it yielded him a genuine satisfaction. His nature responded to the loving care and caresses bestowed upon him, and he clung to his benefactors as if he had been their own child.

Mr. Robson did not forget the trundle-bed. Before noon on the day after his arrival, he was at neighbour Farmer's, who had not heard of his return.

"Why, my good neighbour Robson, when did you get home?" exclaimed Mr. Farmer, giving him a hearty shake of the hand. "Well, I suppose!"

And Mrs. Farmer and the children gave him a cordial welcome.

"I guess your wife was glad to see you," said Mrs. Farmer.

"Why, yes, more so than ever, I think," Mr. Robson replied, in a tone that his good neighbours could not quite understand.

A half hour had been spent in conversation about his voyage and other matters, when Mr. Robson said,—

"I called to see if I could buy or borrow your trundle-bed. I knew that you had one."

"Why, yes, either buy or borrow, as you please," answered Mr. Farmer; "but may I ask what you want with it?"

"You didn't know that we have a son, then?" Mr. Robson said; "a real, live boy," he continued, "three years old, and I want your trundle-bed for him."

Mrs. Farmer, with much surprise and interest, inquired, "Where did you get him?"

"In Boston; just the noblest little curly-head you ever saw."

"Now, really, is that so?" asked Mr. Farmer, comprehending the matter. "Do you mean to say that you have adopted a child and brought him home to your house?"

"Yes; I mean to say just that; and if you don't believe it, come over and see him; Royal Robson, we call him."

"What was his real name?" asked Mrs. Farmer.

"I can't tell you. I know very little about him except what I see."

Mr. Robson proceeded to give an account of his

arrival in the city, his interview with the police officer, and the way in which he had come in possession of the child.

"I am delighted," ejaculated Mrs. Farmer, when he had completed the account, "I shall come over as soon as possible to see your son."

"And now," said Mr. Farmer, "as you have borrowed a baby, you may borrow, and not buy, the trundle-bed; and I will bring it along before night, as I am going to visit your house with my team."

The trundle-bed was there in due time, and dedicated to the sacred purpose of holding the little waif. Not more than eight or ten neighbours dwelt within three-fourths of a mile from Mr. Robson's; but it was soon noised abroad among them that Mr. Robson had come home again and brought home a child; and there was rejoicing among them all. The tidings spread beyond these immediate neighbours through the town; and some queer stories were told by the time the news reached the outskirts. One man said that the child was brought from South America. A child heard that he was a "young Turkey," meaning Turk. One old lady heard "straight" that he was a "young cannibal," and feared that "some day he would be eating folks." The facts, however, as far as known to the foster-parents, became established after a time; and Roy was known as Mr. Robson's "adopted son." Not one of the neighbours was satisfied until he or she had seen the mysterious child.

A word more, at this point, about Roy's home.

It was in a sparsely-populated section of Maine, more than a mile from the centre of the township, where there was but one church. Mr. and Mrs. Robson were members of that church, of which the Rev. Theophilus Rycier had been pastor for several years. The schoolhouse was not quite as far from the cottage as the church was. The people were chiefly farmers—a moral, industrious, frugal, as well as religious class of people. Mrs. Robson was one of the most intelligent and active members of the church. She was a woman, also, of decided executive ability. Her husband's absence from home during the greater part of the time put a responsibility upon her that called forth all her energies. Mr. Robson's calling had never proved very lucrative, but she managed their small income to the best advantage, and kept their home, as we have seen, neat and comfortable. The child found a true mother in this Christian woman.

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## VII.

*J.E.D.*

“A little child shall lead them.”

**I**T is true. It was true in the Robson family. If God had commissioned a veritable angel in heaven to fly to earth to lead and bless them, they could not have been more effectually led. This was especially true of the foster-mother. The waif's coming was a real means of grace to her. The work of her Master became grander and dearer. Her Christian aims assumed definiteness and character. It seemed as if she had a new object to live for, as indeed she had. A new impulse was plainly given to her soul. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me,” she often repeated to herself; and Christ seemed nearer to her as she cared for His little one. Her experience became like that of the disciples on their way to Emmaus, when their hearts “burned” from more familiar intercourse with Jesus. Her thoughts and purposes became higher and nobler. And yet, while her heart took the little wayfarer in, soul, body, and all, she was not foolishly

indulgent to him or blind to his faults. He was a "darling boy ;" but he might be better, and it was her earnest desire and prayer that he might be renewed in heart—a true child of God.

"What was that you said ?" inquired her husband one day, thinking that she spoke to him from the pantry.

"I was repeating that passage, 'And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' I just begin to understand it. To be childlike in spirit, trusting and confiding in Christ, as Roy does in us, *that is* to be a real disciple. He believes everything you say to him ; and so we ought to believe everything the Lord says to us."

"I was thinking," said her husband, "that we ought to be very careful what we say to him, if he believes all we say."

"Of course we ought ; and already I find myself more watchful over my words than I was before he came."

"Very few fathers and mothers think of that, or else they don't practise as they believe," added Mr. Robson.

"Very true," continued Mrs. Robson ; "and when the parents have deceived a few times, the child doubts whether they are telling the truth afterwards. But I was speaking of our relations with God. He never deceives or exaggerates ; so that we have good

reason for believing, as Paul said, that all things shall be even as they are told us."

The Rev. Theophilus Ryder, the Robsons' pastor, remarked one day to Mrs. Robson, as he sat in her pleasant little parlour, "I am glad that you were willing to engage in the noble work of charity that provides good homes for such children."

"It is indeed a noble work to care for homeless ones," she replied; "and for those who can perform it, it is a duty that brings its blessing with it. When my husband first brought Roy home, four months ago, I asked myself whether it was not my *duty* to care for him. And no sooner was *duty* made plain, than I esteemed it a *privilege*. That child is God's child. He committed him to parents who perhaps betrayed the trust and proved unfaithful. So he has transferred the trust to me, and I accept it, and pray daily for grace to make me true and faithful. I am to educate him for God. 'Train up a child *in the way he should go*'—that is not *my* way; it is *God's* way. Many parents construe it to mean the way their own pleasure dictates—the path their own judgment marks out, and their children go to ruin. They never dream of looking into the Bible to learn how and for whom their children are to be educated. The promise is made on the conditions that the child is trained as God directs; then he will be true to his training and to God."

Here, as Mr. Ryder gave his assent to these remarks, Mrs. Robson started up for her Bible, and

turning to Ephesians vi. 4, she said, "It is implied that, unless children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they will go astray. And I do not understand by this 'nurture and admonition' any mere formal way of educating them; sending them to church and Sunday-school, teaching them to say their prayers and read the Bible, to be honest, industrious, and moral. These things are all necessary; but a child may be taught all this, and not be reared for God. What is required is to teach the child that he stands in a close personal relation to God; that Jesus died for *him*, and wants *his* love and service as child and man. When I look at Roy I often think of the parable of the talents. They were God's. To one servant He gave ten, to another five, to another two, and to another one; and these talents may answer to so many children. He has given but one to me: and now, if at His coming I can give Him back only the same child, no better, no worse (if that were possible), I am but an 'unprofitable servant.' But if I can give Him back a son with a new heart and a godly life, a co-worker with Christ in His vineyard, full of faith and the Holy Spirit and good works, I know that He will say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

She paused to take breath, and the pause afforded opportunity for her pastor to say, "You are certainly right in your views; and if all parents believed as you do, and would act accordingly, the world would be advanced wonderfully."

"It appears to me," continued Mrs. Robson,



“ though I scarcely stopped to think of it until Roy came to us, that most parents expect God will interpose in some way to bring their children into His service without much help from them. And I suppose that God might do it ; but that is not His way. He might provide them with food, I suppose, as He did the Israelites in the wilderness, without the plans and efforts of parents ; but He does not do it. Unless parents toil to feed their children, they will starve to death. And so, unless they employ every means in their power to develop their moral and spiritual nature, they cannot expect them to become good men and women.”

“ Nothing can be more evident than that,” remarked her pastor.

“ You see I take God at His word,” she continued. “ The Bible is a new book to me since Roy came to us. It seems, when I read it, as if God was speaking to me ; and it is so adapted to my wants. I find in it just the counsel I need. And prayer—why, I scarcely knew how to pray ; so it seems now. I feel that God is near me, and I go to Him for direction in my daily duties as naturally as a child runs to his parent for help. I had such a sense of unfitness, such a sense of my ignorance and inability, as soon as I realised that I had a mother’s duties to perform, that I was driven to God at once. Nobody else could teach me, and I sought Him as I never did before ; and He has blessed me wonderfully. It seems to me that I never really knew before what it is to trust Him.”

Mrs. Robson's interview with her pastor closed with a fervent prayer by him—a prayer which evidenced that his heart had been stirred to make his pastoral relation more helpful to parents. If every mother in the parish entertained such views of personal duty and family government, he thought, what a change would be wrought! It appeared to him now as if mothers were meant to be the main source of all morality and religion in the community. He meant to unfold the Scriptures to his people upon that point thereafter; and he did. The new impulse given to him in this direction appeared to give him an impulse in every other. Unfolding the parental relation in the light of Divine truth proved the golden key that unlocked other treasures of spiritual knowledge. He grew more earnest and direct, more clear and searching in his preaching, so that the change was remarked by most of his people. They did not understand the cause of it, but the fact was patent, and they experienced the effects of it. Larger attendance upon public worship, closer attention to the preaching by an interested congregation, deepening interest in the Sabbath-school, nearly twice the number at the weekly prayer-meeting, and the revival of the languishing "Maternal Association," which now became a living power, were among the fruits of the pastor's prayerful efforts.

It should be told here that Mrs. Robson had never attended the Maternal Association. Not being a mother, she did not consider that she had a

right there. But no sooner was Roy fairly constituted a member of her family, than she resolved to respond to the Sunday notice of the meeting of the Maternal Association at Mrs. Sedgwick's on Thursday afternoon, at 2 o'clock P.M.

"I'm glad you are now qualified to become a member of this society," remarked Mrs. Sedgwick, as Mrs. Robson entered the house.

"Thank you," answered Mrs. Robson. "I hope I shall prove a worthy member. I regard this as the most important organisation within our church."

"Perhaps none of us value it as highly as we ought," responded Mrs. Sedgwick. "It would be more prosperous and more effective if we did."

One by one the mothers came, each congratulating Mrs. Robson upon the accession to her family. The president called the meeting to order, and invited Mrs. Robson to lead in prayer. The fervency of her petition was far removed from the dull and formal spirit that had pervaded the meetings for a long period. It proved the keynote to an earnest meeting. Every one saw that Mrs. Robson had not joined them as a formality, but that a deep sense of responsibility pervaded her soul. The subject for consideration was the conversion of children. The president introduced it by the following remarks:

"Parents ordinarily do not make the conversion of their children a definite and constant aim. They desire to see them converted, and perhaps expect that God will bring this about some time in His own way, but perhaps not until they become men and women."

"I think that the trouble lies just there," said Mrs. Robson, when the president ceased. "If my husband goes out fishing, he expects to catch fish and bring them home with him. He would not go if he did not expect to be successful at this particular time ; or if he went with little hope of success, he would be apt to work with a listlessness that would tend to failure. But inspired by the expectation of success, he bends all his judgment and energies to the accomplishment of his desire, and commonly does accomplish it. When parents expect the early conversion of their children, and wisely and heartily work and pray for it now, believing that God's Spirit is sent in answer to faithful prayer accompanied by faithful effort, they will oftener see their children become Christians."

"Don't you believe in waiting God's time?" inquired Mrs. Trafton.

"*Now* is God's time," Mrs. Robson answered. "'Behold, *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.' Of course we cannot *force* our children's choice ; they themselves are responsible, voluntary agents ; but we can do much—much more than parents ordinarily do—to *persuade* them to follow Christ now."

"Well, perhaps the language of Scripture, literally interpreted, may mean that," responded Mrs. Trafton ; "but we do not see their conversion now ; and that looks as if we put too literal an interpretation upon such passages."

"By no means," replied Mrs. Robson. "The

trouble is not with the promise of God, or His fulfilment, but with the faith and acts of man. I believe it is true in most cases that we do not see the early conversion of children because we do not expect it and labour for it. And we need to realise it more than we do. I confess that as a Sunday-school teacher I have not felt my personal responsibility as I ought. We must not let the truth that God gives the increase make us negligent in planting and watering. That would be poor husbandry."

Mrs. Robson paused for a moment; then, as no one spoke, she continued, "I never experienced such a sense of my own unworthiness as I have during the last week. I am ashamed of my own ingratitude when I think what a miserable pittance of my time, thoughts, and attention, I have given to my Master. The Lord forgive the past and help me to be more faithful in future."

We will not pursue the conversation of that afternoon farther. Suffice it to say that the interest awakened by this meeting spread. Other mothers joined the association, and the new impulse given to it was felt throughout the town.

At the following annual meeting Mrs. Robson was elected president; and under her efficient management the society became a signal power in the community, its fruits being manifest in the more earnest and consistent lives of its members, and the conversion of many who were connected with them. Thus the impulse given to Mrs. Robson's spiritual nature by Roy's coming was communicated

to many around her. God used the boy to lead her in a way she knew not. In blessing the boy, she was doubly blessed herself, and became a willing instrument in God's hands for the blessing of others besides.

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## VIII.

### *A QUESTION RAISED AND SETTLED.*

“**F**OR Roy,” said Mr. Robson, on returning from a trip to Bangor, at the same time exhibiting a toy-cart.

“For Roy? I am glad you remembered him,” answered his wife. “How strange it seems,” she continued, “to have a child in the house. He is so much company that I should scarcely know how to live without him now.”

“If we had never had him we should never have known the difference,” replied her husband.

“Very true; and we should never have been taught, as the Lord is teaching us now,” answered Mrs. Robson. “It is a school such as I never dreamed of that I am in now. God is teaching me through that child as He never could teach me in any other way, and I grow more thankful every day for this new experience.”

“I wonder,” said Mr. Robson, “that the little fellow has never referred to anybody who had charge of him at the institution or anywhere else.”

“It is singular,” responded Mrs. Robson; “but I am thankful for it. He seems to be perfectly con-

tented. I want him to forget any home he has had but this one. The police officer was right when he told you that it would be better for the child never to know but that he was born under our roof. It can do him no good to know that he was not."

"But he will find it out fast enough by-and-by."

"How?"

"When he begins to go to school and to associate with other children there will surely be some one to tell him."

"Do you really think so?"

"Of course I do. In my opinion it will not be possible to keep him ignorant of it. Everybody knows that he is not ours; and there are always inconsiderate persons who wouldn't be happy unless they could tell all they know."

"Perhaps so," added Mrs. Robson musingly, as if the thoughts suggested were rather painful to her. The fact was, the good woman had found considerable enjoyment in the thought that Roy would never know that he was not their child. She did not want to think otherwise. There was music to her in his childish call, "Mamma," "Papa," many times a day; and she feared to spoil that music. There couldn't be half the satisfaction in being called "Mamma" by one who knew that she was not really his mother. And then it could be of no possible advantage to him to know the facts.

But at length, after some moments' silence, during which her thoughts were busy, she said, with a brightening face,—



" Providence will direct."

" Suppose Providence should direct a schoolmate to tell him, ' You are not Mrs. Robson's son ; you came from a Home in Boston ' ? " suggested Mr. Robson mischievously.

" It will be all right," she answered. " ' A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. ' "

" All right any way, then, if I understand your doctrine," remarked Mr. Robson. " All right if he is told of it, and all right if he is not told of it ; that is a very accommodating doctrine," he added, with a roguish twinkle of the eye.

" I agree with you," she responded. " It is accommodating and comforting. It is easy to be contented and satisfied when we know that God orders events, for then we know that they are well ordered. So, if some naughty boy tells Roy that he is not our son, I shall think that God intends some greater good to come of that, than could arise from his ignorance of the fact, and I shall be satisfied."

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## IX.

### *TRIAL.*

**M**R. ROBSON remained at home from five to six months—much longer than usual. The real reason for this prolonged stay was Roy. Additional cares and duties engrossed his time, and his home was invested with a new interest and charm. But the need for another voyage called him away, to the no small grief of Roy, who had become very much attached to his father. We will leave the old sailor at sea.

That Mrs. Robson now felt increased solicitude was natural. That she sought counsel from above with a deeper sense of her dependence was true. God was her helper. Prayer was her source of wisdom and strength.

About this time the Maternal Association tried a new plan. Each mother was to relate one day's experience with her children. The design was to show the trials of mothers and their methods of meeting them. Mrs. Robson's account of one day's experience was as follows :

" Roy awoke at five o'clock in the morning, singing. A bird could not be happier than he was. ' Will

papa come to-day?' was his first question. How many questions he asked during the day I will not pretend to tell."

"Do you answer all his questions?" interrupted a mother.

"Yes; I answer them, because he seems to ask them in good faith. If he should ask questions without sincerity, as I have known older children to do, I should not answer them. I should always encourage children to ask as many questions as they please, honestly.

"Did Dod keep papa last night?' he continued.

"Yes, God kept papa and Roy, too,' I answered. By this time his arms were around my neck, and he was kissing me.

"Going to be a good boy to-day?' I asked.

"Yes; Roy'll be a dood boy to-day,' he answered, jumping up and down.

"Who helps boys to be good?'

"Dod. Does Dod ever help boys to be bad?' he inquired.

"Oh, no, never; Satan helps them to be bad,' I replied.

"Can't Dod stop Satan helping boys be bad?' he asked more earnestly. Not wishing to enter upon the discussion of that question then, I turned his attention to another subject by saying, 'Does Roy want some breakfast?' I find that it is usually safe to talk about common things when children draw us too deep into theology, as they often do. His decided approval of having breakfast caused

him to forget Satan and bad boys, and he was soon dressed and about his play.

"I must not spend time on unimportant incidents, because there is one of which I wish to speak at length. It is a new experience altogether with me, and I scarcely know how to account for it. I have told you how full of life and joy Roy was all the morning; but the scene suddenly changed just before noon. Nothing at all like it ever occurred before. He left his toy-cart in the way, and I trod on it when getting dinner.

"'Roy,' said I, 'put your cart away; don't leave it under my feet.'

"He did not move. 'Do you hear me, Roy? Put your cart away.'

"He looked at me, but stood still, not offering to pick up the cart. I was so surprised at this demonstration that I stopped my work, sat down, and called to him, 'Roy, come to me.' But he did not move. He looked at me with a sullen expression, such as I never saw on his face before. I could not understand it. A moment's reflection, however, satisfied me that the boy must be made to mind, and pick up the cart.

"'Roy,' I repeated kindly but firmly, 'pick up the cart, or mother will have to punish you.' He never moved. His face grew more sullen and defiant. I sent up a silent petition to God for help and guidance. Then I went to Roy, took hold of his arm, and pulled him along to the cart.

"'Roy! pick up that cart,' I said. He stood

motionless as a statue, and did not show the least disposition to obey. I drew up my chair to him and sat down. I appealed to his love for his mother, and assured him that God was displeased with his conduct. But he still maintained his obstinate resistance. The evil that was in his eye seemed more evil. It grew fierce. I burst into tears, and for a moment was completely overcome. That my dear precious Roy should be so suddenly transformed into a little rebel—I could not endure the thought. Even my tears did not move him.

“Drawing him closer to me, I dropped upon my knees, beside the chair, and sought relief in prayer. I felt that God only could help me, and pleaded with Him to touch the child’s heart and help him to obey. Then I said, ‘Will Roy pick up the cart?’

“‘Roy won’t,’ he answered defiantly.

“It was the first time that he ever said ‘won’t,’ and it went like a sword to my heart. I went to my bedroom, and pleaded with God to subdue the child. I prayed for patience and courage to carry me through the struggle, realising that his stubborn will must be conquered then and there. And I believe that God answered my prayer. Peace came into my heart, and I felt that God would conquer the child. Rising from my knees, I sat for some moments pondering what to do next. Although from ten to fifteen minutes had elapsed since I left Roy, he still stood like a statue with his eyes fastened upon the floor, no sign of relenting in face or posture.

“‘Is Roy ready to pick up the cart?’ I said.

"Lifting his eye towards me, he answered, 'Roy wants dinner.'

"'Roy can have no dinner until he picks up the cart,' I said. Turning away, I proceeded to remove everything from the table that I had spread for dinner, keeping my eye on him to discover, if possible, any trace of yielding. His tone and look when he last spoke seemed to show a slight but favourable change. More than one hour had passed since the conflict began, and still he was not conquered. I was more determined than ever not to yield, and I sat down to sew and to wait. Roy sat down on the floor in silence. I did not discover that he even glanced towards me. There was something in his manner that seemed to say, 'I sha'n't pick up the cart, dinner or no dinner.' Something said to me 'Wait ;' and I waited. Ten minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes passed, and both were silent, and the situation unchanged.

"'Roy!' said I. He did not even turn his head.

"'Roy,' I repeated, with more emphasis. Not a muscle of his face moved.

"Another fifteen minutes passed, and still no sign of yielding.

"'Roy!' I said again. No answer was returned.

"'Roy can have some dinner when he picks up the cart,' I continued. I saw his eyes glance at me, and then they were fastened upon the floor.

"'Mother wants to kiss you, and she wants you to kiss her, but not till you pick up the cart,' I continued.

"No response; and another fifteen or twenty minutes elapsed without a word spoken.

"Just then a tin-pedlar drove into the yard, and I arose, went to the door, and said, 'I sha'n't want anything to-day.' Roy rose at the same time and looked out of the window.

"Closing the door, I turned to Roy and said, 'Won't my little boy pick up the cart for his mother now?'

"He looked at me; his lip quivered; he picked up the cart, and as I sat down he rushed to me, bursting into a hearty cry. I lifted him into my lap, and he flung his arms around my neck, laid his face on my cheek, and sobbed as if his heart would break. I cried too, and then thanked God that He had helped Roy and me, and asked Him to forgive the little boy and to subdue the sin in his heart. I believe it was the happiest moment of my life. He was my dear little, affectionate, obedient Roy again."

"And it was the most profitable morning's work that you ever did," remarked one of the mothers who had listened to the recital.

"I dare say," responded Mrs. Robson; "and what seems strange to me is, that I love the child more than ever, and I really believe that he loves me more."

"You have probably conquered him for his lifetime," said Mrs. Stewart. "You will never, I think, have to go through such a scene as that again. And some day Roy will yield to God's

will more readily for yielding to yours that morning."

Mrs. Robson always felt that the trial of that day had much to do with Roy's subsequent life. From that time the most perfect harmony and tender affection were established between them. And she always felt that God permitted that sudden outburst of evil in Roy as a necessary school for her. She was a better mother for it, because she understood better the strength of sin in a child's heart, and the need for Divine grace to overcome it.

Space will allow the record of but one other incident before Roy was seven years old. It occurred during Mr. Robson's second voyage after the child was adopted. He was suddenly stricken down by what proved to be typhoid fever. The attack was so violent in the outset, that medical aid was summoned at once. The doctor called it a malignant type of fever, and expressed little hope of his recovery. If Mrs. Robson had been Roy's own mother, her grief could hardly have been greater than it was. Night and day she sat by him, watching every symptom, and devotedly ministering to his wants. Neighbours kindly offered to relieve her, and insisted that she must have rest; but she persistently watched by his side for more than two weeks without laying off her apparel for a single night.

"Let me stay with you to-night and keep you company," said a neighbour, when the child was sickest; "it must be fearful for you to be alone with



him ; and what if he should be taken away before morning ?”

“ I am much obliged for your kind offer,” replied Mrs. Robson ; “ but I am not lonely. My Saviour was never so near to me as He is now. He is light in darkness, joy in sorrow, and help in my helplessness. If Roy should be taken away to-night, I trust that the Saviour will take him to His bosom ; and if all the neighbours I have were here, their presence could not be a source of so much comfort to me as this gracious assurance. I sit and watch, and pray, and read the Bible ; and wait and hope and trust.”

And so night after night she sat by the little sufferer, sometimes expecting that death would close the scene before the break of day. Alone she waited for the Lord to do His will. A listener to her fervent prayers, beside the child, would have thought sometimes that she was unreconciled to the trying experience, her pleadings for that little life were so importunate. And yet this was not the case. With all her importunity she felt a willingness that God should do what would be most for His glory and the true blessing of the child and those who loved him. Only she laid Roy at God's feet ; she begged and pleaded as one who must have help from above, or none at all. In this way she lived through these days and nights of intense solicitude ; and the more neighbours said, “ No hope,” and the more the doctor shook his head and said nothing, the more earnest were her prayers.

When at last the disease was rebuked, and the child was convalescent, and neighbours said of the doctor, "Very skilful," the doctor said, "Nothing but a mother's prayers saved that child. All the doctors in creation are mocked by such a sickness."

Roy was almost as one who had come back from his grave. Dearer than ever to his mother, because he was given back to her, as she thought for some great purpose, she tended him in his weakness and fretfulness with the utmost devotion. It was three months before he recovered his old playfulness and made the house ring with his laughter.

"The doctor says that your prayers and not his medicine saved Roy," remarked Mrs. Sedgwick to Mrs. Robson, at the Maternal meeting.

"I believe," said Mrs. Robson, "that the doctor had his part to do in the restoration of Roy, and I had my part to do. I could not prescribe for him, but I could pray; so I did what I could. I do not believe that he would have been restored without the doctor's medicine, and at the same time it may be true that he would not have been restored without prayer. God works by means, and there is a great variety of them. The farmer must plough, sow, weed, and harvest, if he would have abundant crops. He could not leave out any of these, and gather a harvest; nor, using the whole, could he have a harvest without the blessing of God. God gives the harvest after all. God restored my Roy to health, and I praise Him for it.

X.

*SCHOOLDAYS.*

ROY was nearly eight years old before he attended school. Yet he was in advance of most of the pupils of his own age, for his mother had taught him with much care at home. Various reasons influenced her to pursue this course with him. The schoolhouse was half a mile away, and there were no scholars to accompany him on that road. She feared, too, that the influence of associates might prove unfavourable. We strongly suspect, however, that if the secrets of her heart could have been divulged, a chief reason would have been found to be a fear that Roy might learn that he was not her own child.

Roy was a fine reader and speller for a boy of his age, and well qualified to enter a class in arithmetic and geography. Hence, he started off quite in advance of new-comers generally.

The school itself was not a model. In that section of Maine, and at this time, district schools were of a poor type. This school was no better than the building in which it was kept. The schoolhouse

was small, old, out of repair, and innocent of paint. The inside was in keeping with the outside. About forty desks for as many scholars stood on the east and west sides. They had been uncomely and rough in the outset, but were made more so by the pocket-knives of the occupants from year to year. Those on the "boys' side" were ornamented with initial letters, and even with whole names and faces, which the youthful sculptors had carved with their jack-knives. The edges of the desks were cut and hacked in every part, as if whittling had been a prominent branch of study in that primitive institution of learning. The teacher's desk was raised upon a platform at the north end of the house, high enough to enable the teacher to observe every urchin in the room. It served a double purpose also ; for refractory boys and girls were often set upon it, or put under it, as a punishment.

Roy's first term at school was in the summer, and his teacher was a young lady from a neighbouring town, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who had spent money enough upon her education to fit her to teach such a school. She was rather a pretty girl, bright and pleasant, and so familiar with her scholars that she became popular at once. Roy was quite charmed with her.

Everything was new to Roy in the schoolroom. Never having been there before, the novelty alone would have interested him. So many children, so much that was new and strange, together with the attraction of books and study, absorbed his whole

mind ; and each day he had many things to report to his mother.

Reading and spelling were the chief branches taught in the school—that is, the teacher said, “Be good readers and spellers first of all.” The parents were very much of her opinion. Arithmetic, geography, and grammar were important, but if any of them must be neglected, let it be the last named. In spelling Roy found no difficulty in keeping at the head of his class. They spelled for places—that is, the scholar who spelled a word that was missed by the pupil above him, passed up. To Roy there was much pleasure in this. It aroused his ambition, and enlisted both his brightness and his perseverance.

“How many of the class can study the lesson at home?” inquired the teacher, when her patience had been sorely tried by a very poor lesson on the part of most of them.

Only one of the number besides Roy raised a hand.

“What!” exclaimed the teacher, “only two that can get any time to study the spelling-lesson at home? How many of you have work to do that hinders studying the lesson?”

Not one raised the hand.

“So then it is want of interest that prevents study at home,” remarked the teacher. “If you should study but one hour, and play the remainder of the time, you could have good lessons every day. Here is Roy, who never attended school until this term ; he is a good speller because he has studied at home.

He is in advance of some of you who have attended school two or three years. Now, carry your spellers home to-night, resolve to have a good lesson to-morrow, and then tell me if you do not like it." Only the two who raised their hands carried their spelling-books home.

The fact was that school was of comparatively little importance to most of the people in the district. To a few it was of great value, even with its limited advantages. Some parents valued it as a comfortable resort for their very small children, where they would be out of the way six hours in a day. Quite a number of children too young to know their letters were sent to this school. Some of them, indeed, were mere babes, not three years old. Often the teacher would have one of them in her lap while a class was reciting. She played the part of nurse as well as of teacher; and the men and women of the district seemed to think it was all well, with the exception of Mrs. Robson. She believed that mothers should take care of their babes at home. She thought, too, that there was a censurable lack of interest in the school, and that many of the parents had no just appreciation of mental improvement. Within six weeks after Roy began to attend school, she had created quite a sensation upon the subject throughout the district. Some of the citizens criticised her, and others commended her efforts highly.

"It belongs to us to bring about a change," she said to the members of the Maternal Association at one of their meetings. "The better schooling children

have, the more intelligent and useful Christians they may become, and the more encouragement there is to train them up for God and their country."

"Is it true," questioned Mrs. King, "that the best educated communities are the most moral?"

"I would not put it exactly in that way," answered Mrs. Robson, "although I believe that is true. The reverse is certainly true—that the most ignorant communities are the most immoral. The tendency of education is to refine the mind and elevate the tastes. And it is very important to start well. The place to begin is in the district school. It is true of the mind as well as of the heart, that it is most easily moulded at the start. 'The way the twig is bent the tree's inclined.'"

Just then the pastor of the church called for a few minutes, to show his interest in the society.

"We were speaking of our district schools," remarked Mrs. Robson, addressing her pastor. "It is high time that we had better schools. I did not think that our school advantages were so small until Roy began to attend."

"They are very meagre, I think," responded the pastor; "but as good as could be expected for the money. The town must grant more money."

"And put the schoolhouses in as good a condition as the barns," added Mrs. Robson. "There is not an attractive schoolhouse in the town. Judging from their appearance, the value set upon education is small indeed."

"Very true," responded the pastor; "an attractive

schoolroom has great influence in arousing children's enthusiasm. That our schoolhouses are wretched buildings is conceded by all, and usually the schools are little better than the houses in which they are kept."

"How can a change be brought about?" inquired Mrs. Sedgwick.

"The idea of reform has originated in the right place," answered the pastor. "The members of this Association, whose children are in these schools, are the persons to work up an interest on the subject. I will give them my support."

"If a reform can be brought about that will prevent our district from having such an ignoramus for a teacher as we had last winter, I shall be glad," remarked Mrs. King.

"It was altogether a mistake to employ such a teacher," responded the pastor. "I hope it will never be repeated."

The pastor was chairman of the school committee of the town; but sub-committees elected by each district engaged the teachers for their respective districts. Usually these sub-committees had not the proper qualifications for selecting teachers. But if the town committee refused to approve a teacher thus appointed, it made trouble in the district. In the case in question, the pastor had opposed the engagement of the incompetent teacher as far as he thought was judicious.

"He could not have taught the school if the town committee had not approbated him," remarked Mrs.



King, designing to put a part of the responsibility where it belonged.

"The committee will never do it again, I trust," said the pastor. "He was engaged as a stroke of economy. The district committee wanted ten weeks of schooling instead of six, and he was the only man they could obtain with their small appropriation. For this reason I say that the town must appropriate more money in order to have better schools. A higher grade of teachers must be employed."

The discussion of that afternoon inaugurated a movement that resulted in better schools. The pastor delivered a lecture, one week-day evening, on "Religion and Education." He showed that the secret of New England's prosperity was to be found in the church and the schoolhouse combined—that too much importance cannot be attached to these institutions by intelligent citizens. He appealed earnestly to the citizens before him to do more than ever for their schools. While he commended them for a generous support of the gospel, he pointed out defects in their schools that ought to be remedied. He made it appear clearly to most of his hearers that knowledge is better than money, and that so-called economy that provides poor schools is not economy at all. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," he repeated. "There is such a thing as being penny wise and pound foolish," he said "and people are that who believe

that inferior schools are economical. It is extravagance and waste to spend just enough money to furnish poor schools, and not enough to furnish good ones. In some respects inferior schools are worse than none. I think that a community may sink about as low with miserable schools as it will with none at all. Your schools are better than those that some towns possess ; but they can be materially improved by a little larger outlay. It will not subtract from the comforts of home, but will add to home comforts, to spend a few hundred dollars more for school privileges. There is solid satisfaction in mental and moral advantages, if they be of high order. Even the value of houses and lands is augmented thereby. Your dwelling-houses and farms will be worth more with a higher class of schools. The reputation of the town will be fairer, and every industrial interest will receive an impulse by so wise an improvement.

“And, to put the matter upon a higher platform, the better education your children receive, the better qualified will they be to perform their future duties as men and citizens ; the better will be their qualifications for the service of their God and Redeemer ; the greater will be their appreciation of the power and glory of God as manifest in nature, in the wonders of creation and providence ; of His justice and truth in His dealings with the nations ; of His love and of the truth of His Holy Word as evidenced in the history of His Church in all ages—and the more intelligent and hearty will be their purpose to work

with Him for the establishment of Christ's kingdom throughout the world."

One man only objected to the lecture; and he was a crotchety parishioner who was an adept at fault-finding. He said that "ministers were ordained to preach the gospel, and not to lecture on schools." The fact was, his stingy soul disliked anything that might increase his taxes or open his purse-strings. The most of the citizens, however, were pleased with the lecture, and admitted the need for it; and from that day there was a growing interest in the advancement of the schools.

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## XI.

### *THE SCHOOLMASTER.*

"**W**E need a teacher from college," said Mr. Robson to Mr. Edwards, chairman of the district committee, whose business it was to provide teachers for the school which Roy attended. "It will give character to our school to have a thoroughly educated schoolmaster."

"A schoolmaster needs something besides education," remarked Mr. Edwards; "he must have *tact* for his business. All the colleges in creation can't qualify some young men to manage a school."

"Very true," replied Mr. Robson, "nor will a college education disqualify a young man to teach. If he has *tact* for the business, the more education he has the better it will be for him; and you must grant that young men who go to college are at least as likely to possess *tact* as those who do not."

"It will cost considerably more to get a member of college," said Mr. Edwards.

"And be enough better to pay the difference," added Mr. Robson. "It will do our people good to have an educated teacher, whose learning and character they can respect, moving about among them,

to say nothing of his work in the schoolroom. Too many of our folks think that anybody can teach school ; and such an idea alone is enough to degrade our schools. We want to change and elevate public opinion, so that only educated teachers will be tolerated. That would cause our young people to attach greater importance to our public schools. If we expect ever to see any improvement in this matter, we must begin at the beginning—with the teacher. I hope the committee will consider this subject carefully, and confer with our pastor before they decide against the measure."

Mr. Robson knew exactly what Mr. Ryder's views upon the subject were, for he had conversed with him more than once in regard to it. He knew that he was in favour of employing collegians in two or three of the larger districts, and he felt that Mr. Edwards would be both enlightened and influenced by such an interview.

"Stop a moment," continued Mr. Robson, as Mr. Edwards was turning to go ; "we can easily provide for the extra expense. We should have but eight weeks' schooling any way, and twenty-five dollars raised by subscription and added to the appropriation of the town, will give us eight weeks' schooling with a college student for teacher. We can easily raise that amount."

"But it is not the business of the committee to go about begging," suggested Mr. Edwards.

"Of course not, although they would be in much better business in begging money to pay such a

teacher than they would be in putting their hands into the town treasury to pay incompetent ones," responded Mr. Robson. "I will do the begging, if no one else will."

"You will do it well," remarked Mr. Edwards, laughing.

"I should be as much ashamed to make a poor beggar, if I undertook the business for a good cause, as I should to be a poor seaman," retorted Mr. Robson. "Whatever I do I want to do well. It is easier, after all, to do things well than it is to half do them."

Mr. Robson was right in his closing remark. Most people think that it is easier to slight things than it is to be thorough. Hence there is much superficial doing of all kinds. It is a mistake, however. Once establish the habit of thoroughness, and it becomes pleasanter, and therefore easier than slackness, because it carries complete satisfaction along with it. The best we can is the Divine standard. God is thorough in all His works. The solitary flower that opens its petals on the mountaintop where human foot has rarely trod, is as delicate, fragrant, and beautiful as those which bloom in our gardens. God believes in doing things well—the least as well as the greatest; things that attract public notice, and those that will be hidden for ever from human eye. So He would have His children be thorough. The great English merchant, Samuel Budget, said, "In whatever calling a man is found, he ought to strive to be the best in his calling;

if only a shoeblick, he should try to be the best shoeblick in the neighbourhood." And our Saviour commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

One remark of Mr. Robson's, above mentioned, is worthy of special notice: "It will do our people good to have an educated teacher, whose learning and character they can respect, moving about among them." A high-minded, cultured man, if he is at the same time genial and communicative, is an uplifting power in a community. The celebrated Francis Horner declared of such men, "I cannot hesitate to decide that I have derived more intellectual improvement from them than from all the books that I have turned over."

The effort to secure a college student for schoolmaster resulted in the engagement, for two months, of Marcus Morton Fox, a member of the junior class of Bowdoin College. Mr. Robson collected the money necessary to pay him, over and above the appropriation of the town.

Mr. Fox was a young man of twenty-three years, looking forward to the work of the ministry. A pair of keen, piercing black eyes lit up his face, and his well-formed head indicated mental ability. He was poor, and taught school to pay his way through college. His experience as teacher was considerable, he having already taught five successive winters.

Mr. Fox arrived in town on Saturday evening, as school was to commence on Monday morning at nine o'clock. Sunday furnished a good opportunity for

the people to see the new teacher, and the citizens of District No. 2 were especially anxious to enjoy a view of the much-talked-of collegian. Mr. Robson took him in at one glance, and was perfectly satisfied. He was introduced to him at the close of the service, with quite a number of other people belonging to District No. 2, and at the close of the brief interview felt still more confident that for the next two months at least the school was an assured success.

"A very competent young man," said Mr. Ryder, who examined him on Saturday evening. "By far the best examination I have known since I have been on the committee." This was said to Mr. Edwards, who engaged the teacher; and Mr. Edwards was particularly pleased by the announcement. It was a happy thing for the town and district committees to agree, especially for the comfort of the minister.

"I like his appearance very much," answered Mr. Edwards; "but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We shall soon know whether he is a good teacher or not."

It was admitted by all concerned, before the next Saturday night, that Mr. Fox was the best teacher ever employed in District No. 2. The scholars, from Cephas Kimball, who was twenty-four, down to Roy and still younger children, solemnly averred this to be the fact; and their unprejudiced fathers and mothers acquiesced in the decision. One more week, and the town committee united their testimony with



that of the pupils to extol his abilities as a teacher, for they had visited the school. The schoolroom was crowded, too.

"Just as I expected," remarked Mrs. Robson; "Cephas Kimball, George Burton, and several others would not have thought of attending school this winter if we had not employed a master from Bowdoin College. Just think of the good it may do them to be thrown with such an intelligent Christian gentleman, to say nothing of what they learn in regular school lessons."

"Of great advantage, I have no doubt," answered Mr. Edwards, to whom the remark was addressed. "They have formed a class in philosophy now, and Mr. Fox hears them recite in the evening. He seems to think that all his time belongs to his school. I have never seen my Charles so interested in his school before. It is all he seems to think of."

"From what I can learn, that is the case with all the scholars," rejoined Mrs. Robson. "I am glad that the school is so full, and that the young men don't feel that they are too old to learn."

"Mr. Fox says that Tom Barton is a well-behaved boy, and this is the first winter that he ever was, I think," said Mr. Edwards. "Teachers have always had trouble with him."

"Mr. Fox knows how to manage him," remarked Mrs. Robson, "and has gained Tom's respect. I never thought Tom was so bad a boy as some people think. Under a suitable teacher he may

take a new start and make a good man. You will begin to think that I was correct in my views of this matter."

"I confess," responded Mr. Edwards, "my views have undergone a decided change. I never dreamed that a good school, of a high order, was of so great value to a district. It seems to make everybody happy, children and all. I never knew such harmony to exist in the district. Last winter everybody was cross. Go into almost any family, and you would hear them scold about the teacher. The scholars scolded, and their parents scolded. No one was in a happy mood. It is so different now that I am surprised; and we owe the change to Mr. Robson and you more than to any one else."

"Not to us, but to Roy," said Mrs. Robson. "We never should have thought of it if God had not sent him to us."

"I don't know about that," answered Mr. Edwards; "all I know is, that I should not have thought of having a college student if it had not been for you."

Roy was captivated with his teacher, and his teacher was captivated with him. The intelligence and industry of the lad won the admiration of Mr. Fox, while his good behaviour and manly bearing increased his interest in him. Roy's progress in his studies was rapid. No pupil of his age was his equal for talent and scholarship.

"He ought to be thoroughly educated," said Mr. Fox to Mr. Robson; "he is no ordinary boy; and

my opinion is, that three years hence he will appear more remarkable than he does now. He develops fast."

"To educate him thoroughly will be beyond our means," answered Mr. Robson.

"A resolute, active young man can pay his own way through college," said Mr. Fox. "Quite a number of our students at Bowdoin have paid every dollar of their expenses thus far."

"It must be a hard struggle, I should think," responded Mr. Robson.

"Not very. I am in my third year in college, and so far I have paid my own way," said Mr. Fox. "On the whole, I think it is better for me, and I think it is better for most young men. I have noticed that the students in college who have the most help are the poorest scholars. There are exceptions, but that is the rule. A young man is more self-reliant who is thrown upon his own resources. He is obliged to improve his time and be economical also. And more than that, a student who loves study so well, and desires an education so ardently that he will dare to undertake the task of working his own way through college, has energy and perseverance enough to insure success. 'Where there's a will there's a way.'"

"There is a good deal in that," answered Mr. Robson; "and if Roy ever inclines that way, I am sure I shall be only too glad to encourage him. I can see that he develops rapidly. He surprises me often by his intelligence upon subjects that do not

interest most children. Perhaps I am prejudiced in his favour."

"I am not, if you are," remarked Mr. Fox. "I have no reason to be prejudiced; and I am sincere in my opinion of him as a remarkable boy. I hope that he will be in Bowdoin College ten years from now."

"Providence will direct," remarked Mr. Robson. "'A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.' I love to repeat that."

That winter school closed, to the no small regret of parents and pupils. The praises of the schoolmaster from Bowdoin were on every lip. Not often does a teacher gain so much true respect and love from his patrons. Not often does a teacher leave behind an influence so great and lasting for good. His two months' successful teaching ushered in a new era for the school of that town. The interest spread into all of the six districts; and from that time the public schools made a "new departure." Tom Barton had become a different boy. The son of Mr. Edwards, with whom the teacher boarded, had resolved to prepare for college. Cephas Kimball and others of the older pupils had organised a "Literary Club," for debates, declamations, dialogues, reading, and composition, under the supervision of Mr. Fox; and his final counsel to them, on leaving, was, "Keep it up," which they did. The summary of results was an uplifting of public sentiment that promised growth of intelligence and virtue in the future.

## XII.

### *THE QUESTION RECURS.*

**I**N September following Mr. Robson returned from another voyage to receive a most hearty welcome from Roy. More and more, as he grew older, the boy missed his father during his absences from home. Yet those sea voyages furnished Roy with an exhaustless fund of enjoyment. The recital of scenes and experiences by his father filled many an evening with unalloyed pleasure. The child had scores of questions to ask concerning them. His curiosity never seemed to be wholly satisfied. Portions of his father's narratives appeared to oppress him with awe—as, for instance, the description of a storm at sea.

“Weren't you afraid, father?” he would say.

“No: God can take care of me in a storm as easily as He can in a calm,” answered his father. “Are you afraid in a storm, my son?”

“I am not afraid, because I am on the land. I think I should be afraid on the ocean,” the child replied.

“But God is on the sea as truly as He is on the land,” answered his father.

"There is more danger, if He is," responded Roy.  
"I like the land best."

"It makes but little difference whether we are on sea or land, if God takes care of us," remarked his father.

"But I don't see how God can save a ship in a great storm that breaks the masts and tears the sails to pieces," added Roy. "Why don't God save all the ships, if He can?"

"I suppose He does not think it is best," replied his father.

"Suppose God should not think it best to save your ship?" Roy suggested, with evident concern.

"Then I ought to be satisfied," answered his father. "What is God's will ought to be mine also."

Roy looked perplexed. He scarcely thought he could be satisfied were his father's vessel wrecked and his father lost. He did not think that his father ought to be satisfied. His mother could read these thoughts in his face.

"Roy," she said, "do you remember the text you learned for the Sabbath-school a few weeks since: 'Commit thy way to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass'?"

"What will He bring to pass?" asked Roy.

"What is most for the good of those who trust Him," answered his mother.

"But why does He save some ships and not others?" persisted Roy.

"I cannot tell you, child; there are many things we are not permitted to know," answered Mrs. Robson.

"Well, I should like to know," said Roy thoughtfully. "I could tell whether it is right or not."

"God is always right," quickly answered his mother. "All His works are done in wisdom and righteousness, and 'all things work together for good to those that love Him.' We can always take comfort in that thought, Roy, if we love Him."

Roy appeared to be troubled. He assumed a thoughtful look for a moment, then said,—

"Would it be right for God to save Uncle Damon's ship and not to save papa's?"

Uncle Damon was a seafaring man, his mother's youngest brother.

"Certainly it would," his mother replied without hesitation. "God has a right to do what He will with His own."

"Are the ships God's?" he asked.

"Everything in the world is His. God says, 'Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.'"

Roy mused, like one who had some objections to the statements made. His own selfishness arose to combat the Divine sovereignty, though he did not understand the nature of his feeling.

Roy's inquisitive and persistent mind was continually engaging his parents in discussions like this. Sometimes he led them so deep into theological inquiries, that they were a little puzzled as to how they should answer him.

Yet Roy was not unbelieving. He had too much

faith in his mother to doubt the things that she told him. He knew that she believed them thoroughly, and of course they must be true. But, if possible, he would comprehend the reason of them.

Jeremiah saw the prosperity of the wicked, while he and other true servants of God dwelt under a cloud, and he said, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee ; yet, let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are they happy that deal very treacherously ?" Jeremiah was not unbelieving. He had full faith in the righteousness of his God. But this thing troubled him ; he could not quite understand it. The earnest, pointed inquiry was no more proof of unbelief in Roy than it was in Jeremiah. In Roy it was the evidence of a thoughtful mind. It was one of the developments that caused Mrs. Robson to feel the responsibility of her charge, and the thought was a powerful stimulus to watchfulness, prayerfulness, and fidelity.

John Adams said, when teaching school in the city of Worcester, in his early manhood, that the greatest incitement in his work was derived from the thought that among his boys might be a future minister, judge, author, governor, or president. So Mrs. Robson's thoughts often dwelt upon the wide influence that Roy might exert upon his race and country thirty, forty, and fifty years hence.

To an inquiry from Roy similar to that made by Jeremiah, and suggested by one of Mr. Robson's narratives, Mrs. Robson replied,—



"Neither good nor bad men get their full recompense in this life. It is in the future world that they have their reward. Have you forgotten what I read to you last Sabbath about the rich bad man and Lazarus, the poor good man, from the sixteenth chapter of Luke—how the rich bad man lived grandly, faring sumptuously every day, while the poor good man was glad to beg the crumbs from his table? Well, they did not get their deserts here; but they did in the other world. The beggar was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, the abode of blissful rest; and 'in hell the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torments.' And so the poor good man was happy for ever, and the rich bad man was in misery for ever. Each had his reward at last. So it will be with all of us. The Bible says, 'God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness; every man according to his works.'"

Mr. Robson one day disclosed his deep interest in keeping Roy ignorant of his real origin, by inquiring whether he "had not been let into the secret at school." He really expected to hear, on his return from sea, that Roy had learned he was not a genuine Robson.

"No," said his wife; "and the more I think of it, the more strange it seems to me that some roguish boy has not informed him."

"Perhaps many of them do not know," suggested Mr. Robson.

"That is impossible, for every father and mother

in town must know that he is not our son ; and their children are likely to know," answered Mrs. Robson.

"Well, I am satisfied if they never tell him," remarked Mr. Robson. "He appears to be satisfied with the present state of affairs, and perhaps he will not be if he comes into possession of the whole truth."

"I left that to the Lord a long time ago," Mrs. Robson replied. "I was anxious for a time ; but the Lord bids us lay all burdens upon Him, and I have laid that on Him."

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### XIII.

#### *THE SECRET OUT.*

“ **M**OTHER, am I not your boy ? ”  
Mrs. Robson's heart leaped into her mouth when Roy put this question.

“ Why, yes, and nobody's else. But why do you ask that question ? ” she managed to say.

“ Because Mr. Nutter says I am not, ” Roy answered thoughtfully.

Mr. Nutter was a tin-pedlar with whom Mrs. Robson traded ; and Roy rode on his cart with him that day to a neighbour's, a half-mile away. His mother sent him there to do an errand. He made the inquiry on his return.

“ Did Mr. Nutter say that you are not my boy ? ”

“ Yes, mother. ”

“ How did he happen to tell you that ? ”

“ He asked me where I was born, and I told him *here*. Then he said that I was not born here, and that I was not your boy. ”

Mrs. Robson was prepared for this occasion. She had thought over the matter many times, and had resolved, if such an emergency ever arose, to tell Roy the real story of his life, as far as she knew it. The inquiries which she had just made were

simply to elicit the particulars of Roy's interview with the pedlar. She was satisfied that the secret was told, and that the time had come for a full disclosure to be made.

"Mr. Nutter meant that you are not my *son*; for you are my boy, as dear as you would have been if born under this roof," said Mrs. Robson in reply. "You are my adopted son, too."

"What is an *adopted* son?" inquired Roy.

"It is a child of another person taken as one's own."

"Am I such a son?"

"You are, and none the worse for that."

Mrs. Robson was much agitated by this conversation, although reconciled beforehand to such a revelation, which was not really unexpected to her.

Roy was now ten and a half years old, and no intimation had ever been made to him that he was not the real son of those whom he called father and mother, and loved as such. Still Mrs. Robson scarcely believed the secret could always be kept, and, as we have said, had settled in her own mind what to say and do when the crisis should come.

"Wasn't I born here?" continued Roy, with a troubled expression in his face.

"No, you were not born here."

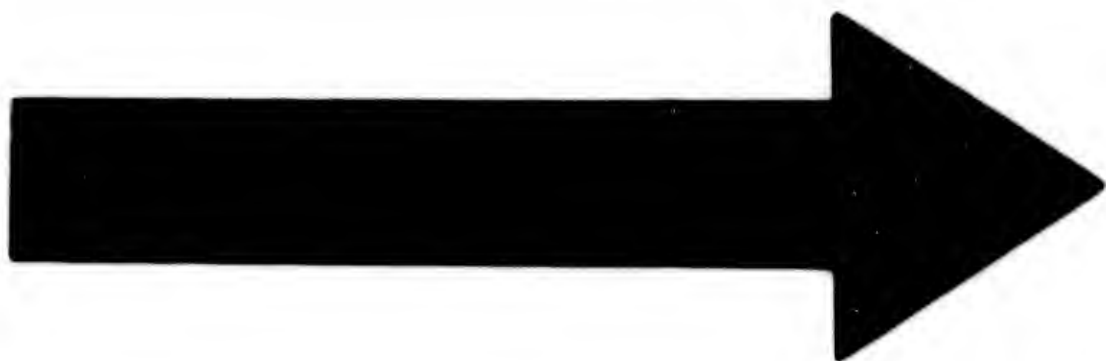
"Where was I born?"

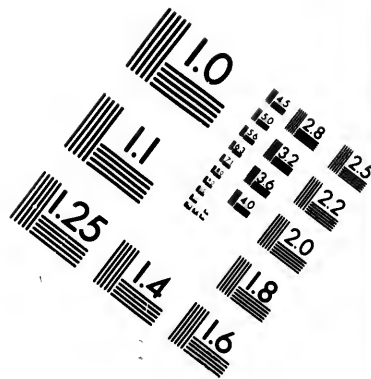
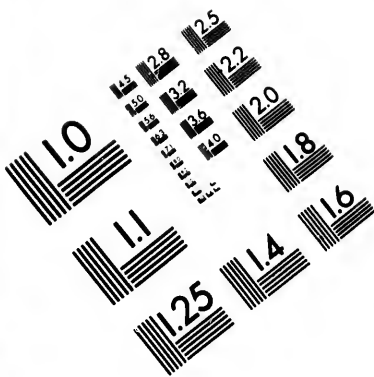
"I do not know."

"Then you are not my real mother?"

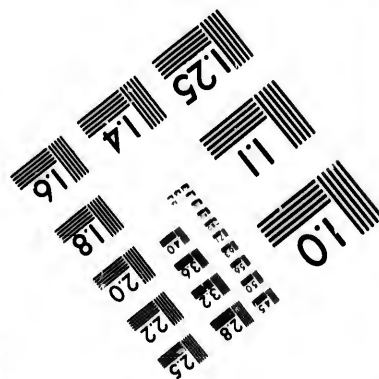
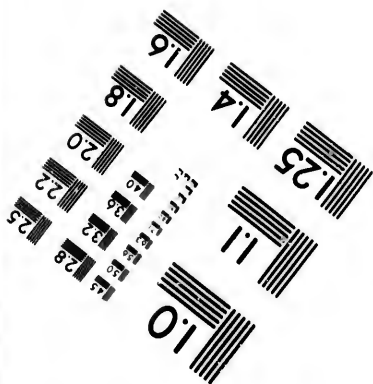
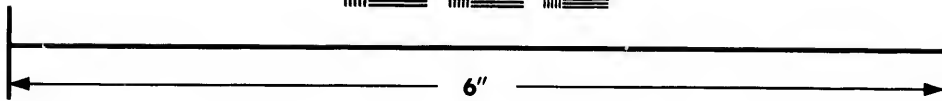
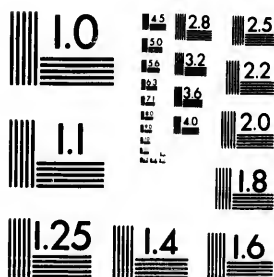
"I am not."

"Who is?" Roy continued.





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"I do not know."

Roy's face expressed wonder, perplexity, and sorrow, while he remained silent a few moments, as if trying to solve the mystery.

Mrs. Robson's heart was in her face. She sat mute and solicitous, waiting to see the effect of the disclosure upon the lad. Roy broke the silence by inquiring,—

"Where did I come from?"

"You came here from Boston."

"Was I born in Boston?"

"I think not."

"Who brought me here?"

Mrs. Robson proceeded from this point to tell him the story of his life as far as she could, assuring him that she would not withhold or conceal anything whatever. She began with her husband's visit to Boston, more than seven years before, rehearsing the incidents as they occurred until he was fairly established in her home as adopted son. Roy listened with an eagerness that can be better imagined than described. The history of himself was indeed stranger than fiction. No tale of the sea from the lips of his adopted father was half so fascinating. No sooner had Mrs. Robson closed the narrative than Roy asked,—

"Why didn't you tell me that before?" and with the inquiry he burst into tears, giving vent to his pent-up feelings in convulsive sobs. Mrs. Robson scarcely knew how to interpret his tears—whether the cause was vexation at not having heard this



singular story before, or regret that he was not her own real son.

"Why, my dear child," she answered, "it would have done you no good. It will do you no good now to understand your history."

"It won't do me any good *not* to know it," responded Roy.

"I hope that it won't do you any *harm*, either way," remarked Mrs. Robson. "Is not an adoptive mother just as good as a real mother, if she loves and treats her child as well?"

Roy hesitated to reply; and in that hesitancy Mrs. Robson thought she could read the answer, *No*. To a child of his age and affectionate nature there must be a difference between the adoptive and real mother. "Is that a true story?" he had often asked during the first few years of his life in the Robson family, when stories were read and told to him, as if a fictitious tale did not possess half the value of a true one. And now he had found that his mother was not really his mother. Who could say that deep, poignant regret was not the cause of those tears?

Mrs. Robson trembled at the possible consequences. Might she not lose her strong hold upon the thoughtful child by this disclosure? Could he regard his adoptive mother with the same love and tenderness as a real mother? She asked herself these questions, and fancied she could see a reserve and lack of confidence and affection toward herself in the future of her Roy.

"Have I not been as good to you as a real mother?" inquired Mrs. Robson.

"Yes, mother," answered Roy.

This answer brought relief to her. He pronounced that word, "mother," with his usual heartiness. There was no reserve or hesitation in that answer. She was reassured.

"Is it not better to have a good home with an adoptive mother than to have a poor one with a real mother?" Mrs. Robson continued.

"I think it is," answered Roy, who had brushed away the tears.

"And it is a great deal better to have a home with an adoptive mother than it is to have no home at all, is it not?"

Mrs. Robson had told him that he was carried to the benevolent institution in Boston because he was homeless.

"Yes, mother," Roy replied.

"And you would prefer to have a kind, good, adoptive father and mother rather than intemperate and vicious real ones, would you not?"

She had told him that his real parents were probably intemperate.

"I know I should," said Roy.

"You ought to think how good God is," continued Mrs. Robson, "to provide you with a good home when you had none, and with a father and mother who treat and love you as if you were their own son. Many boys who are cast out upon the world, as you were, fall into evil hands, and are led into vice and

crime, and finally come to prison. Boys who might become good men under better circumstances often become the very worst men when no home offers them shelter. Our prisons contain a great many of this class."

"Shall I never know where I was born and who my parents were?" inquired Roy.

"Probably not, though it is possible."

"Nor whether I have any brothers and sisters?"

"We think you have none," said Mrs. Robson.

Roy was silent for a moment, then added, "I should like to know where I came from."

Was it strange that such a thought was awakened in the mind of this waif? Who is so indifferent and cold-hearted as not to desire to know his parentage and birthplace, if ignorant of them?

Mr. Robson returned from a voyage about four weeks before the pedlar told the secret. He was not at home on that memorable day, however, but returned at night after Roy had retired.

"The secret is told," said Mrs. Robson to her husband.

"What secret?" responded Mr. Robson, not comprehending her remark.

"That Roy is not our child." And then, when Mr. Robson had expressed his surprise and pain, his wife gave him a full account of the affair, including her conversation with Roy.

"A very unfortunate thing," he remarked, when she concluded. "I should like to trounce Nutter. I was afraid some thoughtless boy or girl in school

might tell the secret, but I never dreamed that any man or woman would do such a thing. Nutter ought to have known better."

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord," repeated Mrs. Robson.

"Ah," said her husband, "I suppose you've found a bright side to it, as usual. But I confess I can't see it at present."

"I am more convinced than ever," Mrs. Robson replied, "that the knowledge conveyed to Roy by Mr. Nutter will do no harm. Indeed, I think I can see how it may result in good."

"I wish I could," interrupted Mr. Robson.

"I wish you could, too. My conversation with Roy convinced me that we have an opportunity to appeal to his gratitude now that we had not before. A boy who knows that he had no rightful home, or a miserable one if any, ought to be doubly grateful when he finds himself in a good one."

"Many things *ought* to be which are not," interrupted Mr. Robson. "I know that a child can never think so much of foster-parents as of real ones."

"Suppose he cannot; there are worse things than that," said Mrs. Robson. "He may still think enough of them to give them his deepest gratitude. But I am not going to fret myself over the affair, nor am I going to study up reasons why it may be better that Roy should know the truth; I am just going to accept the present state of affairs as according to the Divine will, and ordered by God.

'All things work together for good to them that love God,' and I know that this will be best for us all, whether I can see how it is done or not. Christian men and women have no business to complain and make themselves unhappy over anything they cannot alter. Time will prove whether it is best or not."

On the following day Mr. Robson closely observed Roy, to discover, if possible, what effect the unexpected revelation had upon him. He had a strong desire to speak with him upon the subject, but thought it was not best. He had an opportunity, however, for Roy stepped up to him, as he was piling wood, and said,—

"You are not my *real* father."

"I suppose I am not," replied Mr. Robson, "but what of that? Don't you think I am a good foster-father?"

"Yes, indeed I do; but I should like to know where I came from," said Roy.

"That is of little consequence," responded Mr. Robson; "it is much better to know where you are going to, I think."

"Wouldn't you want to know where you came from, if you were me?" Roy asked.

"Perhaps I should if I thought I came from a pretty good place," answered Mr. Robson. "If I thought it probable that I came from a poor one, the less I could know about it the better."

Roy was somewhat confounded by this reply. He scarcely knew whether his father was jesting or not; and the latter did not mean that he should.

That Mr. Robson was able to treat the subject so coolly was due to his conversation with his wife, which had done him good, as such conversations generally did. His answer was intended to set Roy's curiosity at rest.

Roy stood musing. Whether he thought his adoptive father was treating the matter too lightly, or whether he concluded that his way of meeting the case was unanswerable, he did not explain. He went to his play, however, and said no more about the matter.

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#### XIV.

##### CONVERSION.

SEVERAL weeks elapsed, and Roy did not refer to his discovery again. As he was sitting alone with his mother one afternoon, reading, she said,—

“Roy, God will be more than a *real* father to you, if you wish.”

Roy stopped reading ; but made no reply.

“No one can live as he ought to live without being a Christian,” Mrs. Robson continued. “I have often told you so, and my desire is stronger than ever now that you should give your heart to Christ. Have you no desire to be a Christian ?”

“Yes, mother.”

“What are you waiting for, then ?”

“I didn’t know that there was any hurry about it,” answered Roy.

“Behold, *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation,” repeated his mother.

“You said the other day that I must not do things without thinking ; I want to think about it,” responded Roy.

“But you have been thinking about it for five years past,” said his mother. “That is long enough,

I am sure. I am afraid you have thought more of your books and play than you have of God. Procrastination is a sin that God denounces."

"Is it wicked for me to live longer and not be a Christian?" inquired Roy.

"Certainly," replied his mother with emphasis; "if it is your duty to give your heart to Christ now, then you are wicked every day that you refuse to do it. God has the first claim on your heart, before parents, friends, books, or anything."

"I don't refuse to give my heart to Christ; I should like to be a Christian," said Roy.

"Everybody refuses to give the heart to Christ who does not become a Christian," remarked his mother. "You say that you want to think about it, and I want you to do so. The more you think, the more you will see that you are very guilty before God in withholding your affections from Him. You know the story, Roy; how sinful and lost we were, and how the Lord Jesus in His great pity and love bore our punishment for us, that we might be pardoned and received as the children of God, and made holy and happy for ever, if we take Christ as our Saviour and our King. Ought you not to trust and love and serve Him? Do you not want me to pray with you, for the pardon of your sins, and that you may thus receive Christ?"

"Yes, mother," replied Roy.

From the first week that Roy came to Mrs. Robson, she had been wont to pray with and for him daily. But now she longed for his conversion as



she had not before. The disclosure made to him concerning his origin seemed to deepen her sense of responsibility for his spiritual welfare. So now she knelt with Roy, and besought the Father of mercies for him. Her intense earnestness impressed Roy deeply, and when she closed, and asked him to pray for himself, he added his own childish but fervent supplication that God would make him a Christian boy.

Mrs. Robson lost no time in seeing her pastor, to express her intense longing for the conversion of her son. The interview terminated in a season of prayer for the conversion of the boy, in which Mrs. Robson, her pastor, and his wife joined. It was arranged that Mrs. Robson should send Roy to Mr. Ryder's study for religious conversation.

It is not necessary to record the results of that interview, except to say that while it was a new and doubtless a profitable experience to Roy, it did not appear to hasten a decision on his part. He was thoughtful, serious, and resolved to be a Christian—some time.

"You are too anxious," said Mr. Robson to his wife; "you must wait God's time; that is what I always tell you."

"God's time for us is always *now*, you know," replied she. "It may be now or never with Roy."

"I have no such feeling as that," responded Mr. Robson. "I believe that God hears and answers prayer, and that He will not suffer Roy to live on in sin and be lost."

"That may be true," replied Mrs. Robson ; "but there is a crisis in every person's experience, I believe ; and there is an importunity that God requires of you and me before He will convert Roy. I am confident of this. We cannot expect that He will give him a new heart if we have little or no interest in his having it. I feel glad that I am responsible, in a great measure, for his conversion, and the responsibility of it weighs heavily upon me at times."

About this time Roy was startled, while amusing himself one day in the hall, by an unusual sound in his mother's room. He listened, and found it was the voice of his mother wrestling with God for the conversion of her dear child, and evidently unconscious that she was groaning as one in mortal pain.

Roy trembled with excitement. He had never dreamed that any one could be in such anguish of soul for another. His first thought when he fully comprehended the situation was, "If my mother feels like that for me, it is time I felt for myself." His sins rose up before him like a mountain, and he longed for an interest in the great salvation. Yielding to the hallowed influence of the hour, he opened his mother's door, and in a moment dropped upon his knees beside her.

His mother, in turn, was startled. His sudden and unexpected entrance seemed an answer to her prayer while she was yet speaking. Throwing her arm around him and pressing him to her heart, she cried, "Here, Lord, he is Thine."

From that moment Roy seemed to be truly a

Christian. He learned from happy experience what the "new heart" is. His hard questions were all answered now. There was a light on his path of which he never dreamed, and a new life opened before him. New motives and aspirations took possession of his soul, and the joy of forgiven sin filled his heart.

That was the most memorable day in the history of the Robson family. It was a day never to be forgotten when the waif was first brought to that fireside; but far more joyful thoughts and hopes clustered about the day when he was "born again."

The news of Roy's conversion spread through the town. When Mr. Ryder, the pastor, heard of it, he remarked,—

"That is, under God, a result of home influence. The hope of the Church and State is in just such homes as Roy has had in the Robson family."

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XV.

*PLANS.*

**R**OY was thirteen years old—a consistent, earnest Christian boy ; not perfect, by any means, but daily giving proof that love to Christ was his ruling motive. The knowledge that Mr. and Mrs. Robson were only his foster-parents seemed to have made his gratitude and love for them more ardent, and a strong sense of God's goodness in placing him in so good a home had taken possession of his mind. He had developed rapidly in intelligence and true manliness since his conversion, and had continued to make the most of his limited and still meagre school advantages, so that Mr. Ryder said of him,—

“That boy gets more out of small advantages than any pupil I ever saw. He proves that, after all, pupils can derive great good from even tolerable schools, if they will.”

There was truth in the remark. The best schools are of less value to a certain class of boys than poor schools are to another class.

“A minister!” replied Mr. Robson to the suggestion of his pastor that Roy should be educated for

the ministry ; "nothing would please me more, if the boy should feel that the Spirit of God called him to that work ; and I have thought and prayed about it ; but still the way to give him such an education as he would need seems to be hedged up. It costs a good deal to send a boy to college and seminary ; and where is the money coming from ?"

"Roy can work his own way," replied Mr. Ryder ; "it will take him longer, and subject him to some hardships, but hardships are incitements to a boy of Roy's nature."

"He might work his own way when he is old enough to teach school ; but how can his way be paid before that time ?" responded Mr. Robson.

"I think we can devise some mode by which it can be done," replied Mr. Ryder. "A large number of those who have been leaders in all the departments of trade, mechanics, art, science, and theology, were born in poverty and obscurity. They achieved success in spite of obstacles. Roy can do what others have done."

"That is a very agreeable view to take," was Mr. Robson's only reply.

"I should hardly dare tell you all I believe in regard to this," continued Mr. Ryder. "I believe not only that poverty is no insurmountable obstacle to the highest education, but also that it is an actual means of success with thousands of students. If Roy is really in earnest about acquiring an education, poverty will not dampen his ardour. It will rather serve to sharpen his wits to devise ways and means

of accomplishing his object. Poverty lays necessity upon him, and 'necessity is the mother of invention,' you know."

Mr. Ryder spoke truly. "It is not ease, but effort: not facility, but difficulty, that makes men," says a certain writer. There would be few brave and efficient seamen if there were only sunshine and favouring winds on the ocean. Storms try the skill of mariners and make them heroic. Bravery does not come to soldiers through the drill and bivouac, but through battle.

So frequently have the great men of the world risen from penury and obscurity, that these seem to be sometimes stimulants, rather than hindrances, to success. Christopher Columbus was the son of a woolcomber, and could with difficulty procure the education that he desired. Hugh Miller, the geologist, was a stone-mason. James Ferguson, the astronomer, was the son of a day-labourer, and educated himself in the intervals of hard work. Michael Faraday, the chemist, was the son of a blacksmith, was apprenticed to a book-binder, and received little education in his youth. De Foe, Akenside, and Kirke White were the sons of butchers. Dr. Samuel Johnson rose to eminence in the midst of a long struggle with poverty. Samuel Drew, the eminent essayist, Bloomfield the poet, and Roger Sherman, the statesman, were shoemakers' apprentices. John Hunter, the physiologist, was early thrown on his own resources, being the youngest son of a poor Scottish laird. Opie, the

painter, was the son of a carpenter. John Gibson, the sculptor, was apprenticed successively to a cabinet-maker and a woodcarver. Inigo Jones, the architect, was a joiner's apprentice. Richard Arkwright, the youngest of thirteen children, was apprenticed by his father to a barber, and subsequently set up business for himself in a cellar, where he shaved for a penny. Sir Humphrey Davy, at twenty years of age, when he was in Dr. Beddoes' laboratory, wrote in his note-book, "I have neither riches nor power nor birth to recommend me ; yet, if I live, I trust I shall not be of less service to mankind and my friends than if I had been born with all these advantages." Henry Clay received his schooling in a log-cabin in Virginia ; and Abraham Lincoln's youth was passed in hard labour on his father's farm at the West. Henry Wilson, who became Vice-president of the United States, was a shoemaker, and was first introduced to the public as the "Natick Cobbler." Benjamin Franklin was the son of a tallow-chandler, and worked at the business himself in boyhood. Becoming dissatisfied with that, he learned the printer's trade, in which he earned his livelihood for years, cultivating his mind, meantime, by dint of great self-denial and unremitting energy and perseverance. Daniel Webster, the great American statesman, was the son of a farmer in narrow circumstances, and had to exert himself to the utmost to obtain his legal education. Nathaniel Bowditch, the renowned mathematician, was early withdrawn from school on account of the poverty of

his parents, and accomplished his own education in spare moments.

We might continue this enumeration still farther, but the foregoing examples are sufficient for our purpose.

Colleges and all the higher institutions of learning have their place, and it is a place of power and mighty influence in the elevation of a people by the equipment of able leaders and teachers of the masses. But let none despise the education of the shop and farm, the store and street ; if faithfully improved it also is an efficient means of qualifying youth for the practical duties of life. The intelligent young man who applies himself diligently to agriculture or some branch of manufactures acquires a knowledge of a hundred other practical things connected with his special pursuit, and at each step his active mind gathers power for the next.

The Duke of Argyle expressed his great surprise that Edmund Stone, the son of a poor, illiterate gardener, should be able to read Newton's "Principia" in Latin ; to which Stone replied, "One needs only to know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet in order to learn everything else that one wishes." The remark may be somewhat hyperbolic, and yet it contains a truth.

In this age of conflict between labour and capital this subject assumes greater importance. It is the most shiftless, the laziest portion of the labouring class who assail capital with such virulence—the men who never lift a finger to improve themselves



or society. The intelligent, industrious, and economical labourer is not often found waging a warfare against capital. He comprehends the mutual dependence of labour and capital, devotes himself with persevering efforts to his business, and improves his mental and moral condition at the same time. Such men do not labour wholly for wages; they labour for character also. Their manhood grows from year to year. Many of the distinguished men we have enumerated were for a time, as we have seen, labourers in other than intellectual fields; and many more might be added to the list. Such were Franklin, Ferguson, Arkwright, Bowditch, and a host of others like them; but they had in view something higher than bread and butter; they toiled to make themselves benefactors. They meant to leave the world better and wiser than they found it. Their physical, mental, and moral powers were all enlisted in the work of life.

It might have been four weeks after the interview with Mr. Ryder that Mr. Robson broached the subject to Roy.

"How would you like to be a minister?" he inquired.

"I would like it, if I could," answered Roy, in a tone that denoted a doubt as to the possibility of such a thing.

"You can," continued his father. He spoke in a manner that surprised Roy, and he looked up and replied with much animation,—

"How?"

"Providence will open the way if you are in earnest about it."

"I should be in earnest enough about it if I could see the way open," said Roy.

"Mr. Ryder will do all he can to help you."

"How do you know that?"

"I had a long talk with him about it. He wants you to get an education and be a minister."

"What can he do to help me?"

"He can let you have books to read and study, and he can hear you recite when your school is not keeping."

"I should like that," said Roy.

"When you are older, perhaps there will be an opportunity for you to attend school where you can pay your way by working," continued Mr. Robson. "But you can make a beginning now with Mr. Ryder. You have much time for study, and by close application you can accomplish a great deal."

"When can I begin to recite to Mr. Ryder?" asked Roy.

"I will see him very soon and decide."

Mr. Robson improved the first opportunity to confer with Mr. Ryder, and it was settled that Roy should commence reciting to him at once in arithmetic, English grammar, and Latin, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. At the same time Mr. Ryder would mark out a course of reading for him, so far as he could provide books from his own library. This would give Roy a good start, and was what Mrs. Robson called "a providential arrangement."

All the enthusiasm of Roy's heart was awakened by this plan, and he entered upon his course of study and reading with a strong purpose. It was September, and his winter school would not begin until the first Monday in December, giving him more than two months for close study with Mr. Ryder.

Among the books that his pastor furnished him for reading was Dr. Franklin's *Autobiography*, in which he became intensely interested. Once reading it did not satisfy him, and he read it a second time. The second reading sharpened his appetite for a third, by which time the whole thing was well nigh as familiar to him as the alphabet. There is no doubt that the reading of this volume had more influence to determine Roy's future career than all his other reading and studies together at that time. His thoughts were constantly labouring upon some plan whereby he might acquire an education, and this *autobiography* furnished a hopeful solution of the problem.

"I can go into a printing-office," he said to his mother, "and earn money to pay my way."

"What makes you think so?" replied his mother.

"Dr. Franklin did it," he answered, "and he saved money to start in business for himself. I can save money to pay my schooling at some academy."

"Perhaps so," responded his mother, rather doubtfully. "It is worth thinking about, at any rate. We can make inquiries about the business, and judge of the prospect."

"I could go into a printing-office in Boston, where I could have all the books I could read from

the public library," added Roy. "Then I could be learning all the time in the printing-office; for I should be setting type for useful books and papers all the while, and this would be the same as reading the books and papers after they were printed."

"There is something in that," said his mother, impressed by the thoughtfulness and sagacious planning of the boy.

"If I should go to Boston," Roy continued, "perhaps I could find out where I came from. I should like to know."

"Well, I have no objection to your making inquiry, if you have the opportunity," answered his mother. "I am quite willing that you should know all you can about yourself."

"I don't know but I have brothers and sisters somewhere," added Roy. "If I have, it would be very pleasant to know it and write to them."

"I don't believe you have any brothers and sisters," responded his mother; "if you had, the police officer would probably have spoken of them."

"I was only thinking how pleasant it would be if I had," added Roy.

"That is natural," replied his mother, with appreciation of his feelings.

Roy often made allusion to his mysterious history in conversation with his mother, though not in the presence of his father; and that the subject weighed upon his mind was evident. His mother did not encourage his inquiries in this direction, although she treated them with candour and kindness.

XVI.

*STEPPING FORTH.*

“ROY has hit upon a plan that may be practicable,” remarked Mrs. Robson to her pastor ; and she told him of Roy’s thought, adding, “At first I regarded it as rather a wild project for a boy, but the more I have thought of it, the more feasible it has seemed. The plan was suggested to him by reading the Autobiography of Dr. Franklin that you lent him.”

“Indeed !” exclaimed Mr. Ryder. “If the printer’s trade should serve him as good a purpose as it did Ben Franklin, he will never be sorry that he learned it.”

“Then you really think that the plan is practicable ?” added Mrs. Robson inquiringly.

“Certainly, provided the opening is one that you would think suitable for a lad like Roy. He can be learning all the time in a printing-office.”

“So he thinks,” responded Mrs. Robson, “and that idea has great weight with him. Of course, I should not think it wise for him to go at present ; he is not old enough.”

“Not quite, perhaps,” said Mr. Ryder : “but he

had better not wait too long. At fifteen he might go."

"That will be only about a year from now," remarked Mrs. Robson; "he would be rather young even then, it seems to me, to be exposed to the temptations of the city."

"It would be rather young for most boys," responded Mr. Ryder, "but I think we may trust Roy, for he has chosen the Bible for his guide, and he is, I believe, one of God's true children, whom He will strengthen with his Spirit. Some boys could never be put into such a position safely. It would be as wise to turn them loose into the streets of the city as to put them into one of its printing-offices. Every leisure hour would find them where they ought not to be; and every busy hour would be a burden to be dropped as soon as possible."

"You have more confidence in Roy's determination and ability to resist temptation than my husband has," said Mrs. Robson, turning towards Mr. Robson, who had listened to the conversation with deep interest, though he had not spoken. Mr. Robson had taken a voyage since Roy began to study with Mr. Ryder, but had returned a short time before the conversation just recorded.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Ryder.

"Substantially so," answered Mr. Robson. "Pretty rough sailing for boys in the city. The wrecks can be counted by hundreds."

"So they can be counted by hundreds along our coast; but for that reason you would not conclude

that all vessels should be withdrawn from the sea," answered Mr. Ryder. "We must have navigation whether there are wrecks or not."

"True," responded Mr. Robson; "but send only seaworthy craft on a voyage."

"The grace of God can make Roy seaworthy," answered Mr. Ryder earnestly, "and that grace is not limited by circumstances. The greater our need of it, the greater may be our portion of it. Not that I advocate an unnecessary running into temptation, but I honestly think that Roy's plan is a good one for him."

"Well," said Mr. Robson, "I believe that Roy can be trusted in the city, if any boy can be; and if you think well of the plan, I shall waive all my objections."

Mr. Robson committed the care of Roy almost entirely to his wife. He was absent so much of the time that it seemed to be absolutely necessary to lay the responsibility upon her. Then, too, he had implicit confidence in her wisdom and ability for the trust. When he found, on returning from his last voyage, that Mrs. Robson and Roy were entertaining the foregoing plan in regard to the boy's education, he was somewhat surprised. The measure did not commend itself to his judgment at first. He had seen much of the world. He had been in many cities, and he knew that all cities are more or less corrupt. His observation testified that multitudes of youth are destroyed, soul and body, in great cities; that even those apparently the most reliable

are sometimes lured to ruin. It was not strange that he did not favourably entertain the idea of sending Roy to Boston at first. It appeared to him like a needless exposure, involving too much risk for the possibility of good to be secured. His heart was bound up in Roy, and he could not bear to think of the boy's becoming less worthy of his love. His feelings, however, were modified by canvassing the subject, so that he came to feel that it was really best for Roy to go. One remark that Mr. Ryder made had great weight with him; it was the following :

"True Christian principle is a safeguard against temptation in city or country. And Roy, young as he is, has that."

Roy's school was again taught, during the following winter, by the student from Bowdoin College; and his interest in Roy was sincere and strong. His encouragement and counsel really settled the matter of Roy's going to Boston.

He knew many facts relating to students of his acquaintance who had overcome great difficulties in acquiring an education, and these facts he used to encourage Roy.

"Worse off than I am," remarked Roy, after listening to his teacher's account of one of the Bowdoin students who, having lost his parents at the age of six, had been brought up in the poorhouse of his native town until he was twelve years old, and after that had studied in every spare moment as farm-boy and doctor's boy, and had succeeded in



fitting himself for college by the time he was eighteen.

"He is not through his hardships yet," continued the teacher. "He has earned every dollar so far for college expenses, and will earn every dollar more to carry him through. He teaches school, saws wood, is sexton in the church, blows the organ, and would black boots, if necessary, to carry him through."

"Such enthusiasm will surmount every obstacle, if health does not fail," remarked Mrs. Robson, who was thoroughly interested in the narrative.

Accordingly the Boston plan was adopted, and the time was fixed when Roy would go out from the friendly roof that had sheltered him for twelve years, and strive to make his way through hardship to honourable distinction. It is a moment of solemn interest when a youth starts out from his home to enter upon his life-work. Well is it for the lad and for his parents if, like Roy, he has given his heart to the Saviour, and is humbly seeking to please Him, realizing his own sinfulness and weakness, and looking to Him for strength.

XVII.

*A PRINTER.*

“ DO you live in the city ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Where from ? ”

“ From Maine.”

“ Were you ever in a printing-office ? ”

“ Never. I want to learn the business.”

“ How old are you ? ”

“ Fifteen and a half.”

“ A good age to begin. Did you come to Boston alone ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Do you know anybody here ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Plucky boy—seeking your fortune ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Why do you want to be a printer, rather than a merchant ? ”

“ I can learn more ; and I can earn money sooner to pay for my schooling.”

“ Then you are going to school more yet ? ”

“ I want to.”

“ Well, that is good ; any friends to give you a lift ? ”

"None."

"Where are you going to school?"

"I want to go to college."

"And you propose to go through a printing-office to it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not a bad idea, my lad. You are not the first boy who has gone from a printing-office to college. Quite a job on your hands, though."

"I can do it."

"You can, eh? Did you ever study Latin?"

"Yes, sir, a little."

"You have a good English education, I suppose?"

"You can find out, sir, if you employ me."

"Well, I think I will take you, if we can agree upon the terms. I like plucky boys."

This colloquy occurred in a Boston printing-office, between the proprietor and our hero. The proprietor, Mr. Inman, was an inquisitive, stirring sort of man who had just advertised for three compositors. Roy was passing the office within three hours after he reached Boston, and observing the advertisement at the door, "Three Compositors Wanted," walked in and made application, when the foregoing dialogue occurred. He was very fortunate in finding an opening so soon; it was truly providential, and Roy's heart gratefully recognized in it the hand of his heavenly Father. Mr. Inman liked his appearance very much, and made him a liberal offer, which Roy thankfully accepted. The terms included board in Mr. Inman's family, which was another fortunate

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circumstance for Roy. On the following day, in his great joy, Roy despatched a letter to his parents announcing his safe arrival in Boston and his unexpected success.

Roy entered his new field of labour at once. His native tact and energy qualified him for the business, so that his employer soon found that he was not only faithful but very efficient. Apt to learn, quick to execute, and enthusiastic always, he soon became a valued helper in the office. His intelligence, love of books, and manifest talents won the admiration of his employer, and attracted the attention of his co-labourers. He always had a good book at hand, to which he turned in every leisure moment, always gaining a short time at noon to read a few pages. Most boys would think that ten or fifteen pages at noon would not amount to much, and the time might as well be wasted. Not so with Roy. He said to himself, "Ten or fifteen minutes at noon is so much real gain. Ten pages a day, at noon, is sixty pages in a week. At this rate a book of three hundred pages can be read in five weeks, and ten volumes of three hundred pages in a year." A pretty good account for time that many boys think might as well be wasted because it is so little. "Many a little makes a mickle" is just as true of time as it is of money. Nine out of ten persons waste time enough, little by little, to make them well-informed and intelligent, were that time devoted to careful reading and thinking. And when God gives us time and opportunity to become

intelligent, and thereby increase our capability for usefulness, it is sin to continue in ignorance. A wise man of old has declared, "He that contemns small things shall fall by little and little." And this saying has been fulfilled in the lives of multitudes. They fail of temporal good, mental improvement, or, worst of all, the salvation of their souls, by what they would term little neglects and little misdoings.

Roy's employer became more and more interested in him from day to day. He began to feel a strong desire to know more of his personal history, and his inquisitive nature promptèd him to inquiries. One evening at home, he said to Roy,—

"Where were you born?"

"I don't know," answered Roy laughing.

"Don't know!" exclaimed Mr. Inman, suspecting some roguery.

"No, honestly," replied Roy. "My history is a singular one. I don't know who my real father and mother were, nor whether I have any brothers and sisters. I know neither where I was born nor when I was born."

"Well, that's queer," said Mr. Inman. "Not know where you came from! Queer indeed." He said this musingly. "But you came from Maine here?"

"Yes, I was taken to Maine when I was about three years old, and adopted by Captain John Robson—a very fortunate circumstance for me."

"And you took his name?" inquired Mr. Inman.

"Yes; and I did not know that Mr. and Mrs.

Robson were not my real parents until I was ten years old."

"What was your real name?"

"I don't know any more than you do."

"Where did Mr. Robson find you?"

"In this city; he took me from some institution where homeless children are cared for."

"Don't you know what institution?"

"No; but I mean to find out while I am living in Boston."

"Find out at what institution you were, and you can learn your previous history, without doubt," remarked Mr. Inman.

"That is what I would like to know. You can't think what a longing I have for a knowledge of my parentage."

"I don't wonder," remarked Mr. Inman. "But you must tell me the particulars that you do know—how you got from Boston into the Robson family."

So Roy proceeded to give his employer a history of the whole affair, beginning with Mr. Robson's meeting with the police officer.

"You fell into good hands," remarked Mr. Inman, when Roy concluded the narrative.

"I could not have fallen into better. More could not have been done for me by real parents; and I don't think I could love real parents more. Indeed, I feel that they have a stronger claim upon my love than if I had been their real son, and they naturally bound to care for me."

"We must know before long where you came

from," interrupted Mr. Inman, becoming much interested in the affair. "If you are a Bostonian I want to know it."

"I don't expect to find that my parents were distinguished for wisdom or virtue," remarked Roy, smiling. "If they had been, I should not have been found in a home for the homeless. But I would like to know the facts, even if they are not pleasant ones, just to get rid of the mystery that surrounds me. I don't want to feel so much like a stranger to myself; I feel as if there's a part of myself that I don't know."

Several weeks passed away before Roy made any attempt to discover his origin. In the meantime Mr. Inman, almost unconsciously to himself, was becoming strongly attached to his new compositor. Roy's intelligence, his conscientiousness in and out of the printing-office, his gentleness and helpfulness at home, and even his singular history, all combined to attract his master's liking, and within three months the boy had become an important member of the Inman household. Mr. and Mrs. Inman saw that his influence upon their own children was of the right kind; the children liked him, and Roy considered himself extremely fortunate to find a home with people so excellent and kind.

At the printing-office business was king. Two more compositors besides Roy had been taken on, and the whole force of the establishment was taxed to its utmost to meet the demands of the hour. "We must make things hum," Mr. Inman would say

pleasantly ; and no one in the office enjoyed seeing them "hum" more than Roy. He did his part, too, towards it, devoting himself to the business as one who had resolved to master it.

One of the compositors called Roy "Our Ben Franklin," by which appellation he was generally known in the office hereafter. Doubtless it was suggested by his fondness for books, Roy always having one at hand for perusal in leisure moments, as Franklin did when he worked in a Boston printing-office. This appellation, bestowed as it was by one fellow-workman, and adopted by all, was one of the highest compliments that Roy could have had.

While he was free in his intercourse with his associates in the office, he was reticent about his own personal history. His silence in regard to this awakened the curiosity of his companions, who resorted to various expedients to draw him out. But he would not be drawn out.

"Where is your native place?" inquired Nason.

"I was brought up in Maine," replied Roy evasively.

"You may have been brought up there ; but were you *born* there?" continued Nason.

"I suppose I was not," answered Roy.

"Where were you born?" continued Nason.

Roy was silent for a moment.

"Ashamed of your birthplace, are you?" exclaimed Nason.

"More ashamed that I do not know it," said Roy frankly.



"Fudge! Don't know it? Pretty idea that you don't know where you were born!" responded Nason incredulously, really supposing that Roy was not in earnest.

"It is a long story," added Roy, "but a true one. Perhaps I may tell you some time."

Such a conversation was not calculated to diminish curiosity, but rather to increase it, and to invest Roy with a mysterious interest, and various conjectures about his history were made, none of which, however, came very near the truth.

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## XVIII.

### *CASTING ABOUT.*

**I**N accordance with Mr. Ryder's advice, one of the first places that Roy visited was the Young Men's Christian Association, of which he became a member. The city had not a more attractive place for a lad of Roy's tastes. Its well-selected and ample library, its reading-room, its social, literary, and religious meetings, afforded him an excellent opportunity to gratify his highest aspirations. The companionship that it afforded, too, was a source of great benefit and pleasure to him. Although for some time after his entrance the youngest member of the Association, he was kindly received by all, and several of the members, pitying his youth and apparent loneliness, and admiring his bright, frank face and the energy and self-reliance which he manifested without being disagreeably forward and obtrusive, took a special interest in him, and often made valuable suggestions as to his reading and various other matters. Thus he formed some friendships, which were profitable and lasting as well as pleasant, and his evenings at the Association rooms proved a valuable school to him.

Roy's regular attendance at the rooms attracted the particular notice of the secretary, who was ever on the alert to discover whether the frequent accession of new members was bringing the Society strength and honour. He thought Roy seemed to be very intelligent and promising, and he sought an interview with him.

"You have recently come to the city?" he said to Roy one evening inquiringly.

"Yes, sir; about four weeks since."

"Where from?"

"From Maine."

"Have you friends here?"

"No, sir, except those I have made since I came. I knew no one when I came."

"Were you ever in Boston before?"

Roy could not say no to this inquiry; and yet, under the circumstances, he could hardly say yes without an explanation. However, after a moment's hesitation, he answered, "Yes, sir."

"We think this institution offers great advantages as well as pleasure to young men situated as you are," continued the secretary.

"I think so," replied Roy.

"Are you a Christian?" asked the secretary.

"I hope so," answered Roy.

"Are your parents Christian people?"

"Yes, sir."

"I notice by the register that you are in a printing-office."

"I am learning the trade," responded Roy.

"A good trade," remarked the secretary, "affording better opportunity for mental improvement than clerkship in a store."

"I do not intend to make it a life-work," continued Roy. "I have chosen it as the best thing I could do at present to aid me in getting an education."

"Then you mean to have an education, at any rate?"

"Yes; that is what brought me to Boston."

"Are your parents able to assist you in acquiring an education?" pursued the secretary.

"Very little. I am obliged to work my own way."

"What occupation are you looking forward to?"

"The ministry."

"Indeed!" responded the secretary, much gratified at this announcement; "the most laudable ambition that can possess the heart of a young man. It a great undertaking for you, but it is a noble one. However, energy and perseverance, with God's blessing, will carry you through. I suppose you expect to go through college?"

"That is my purpose. I expect to earn money in the printing-office to defray my expenses at school while preparing for college. After that I can teach school."

"A well-conceived plan, I should think," added the secretary. "You will need friends to assist you, and I will be one of the number. My interest is always enlisted in young men who are struggling to acquire an education, as you are, and I shall

be most happy to render you any help in my power."

Roy thanked him heartily, and the interview closed. Roy realized that he had found a true friend in the secretary, and he said in his heart, "I will try hard to prove myself worthy of his kindness."

He returned to Mr. Inman's that evening in good spirits, really encouraged by the conversation. God, he thought, was evidently making his path straight and pleasant. He was somewhat troubled, however, because he had not told the secretary the story of his life. He had given him to understand that he had parents in Maine, and he must doubtless have thought that they were his real father and mother. "Perhaps I did wrong," he said to himself, and for several days the subject weighed upon his mind. At length, however, he settled the difficulty by deciding to disclose the whole matter to the secretary on the first favourable opportunity. Nor was he compelled to wait long.

"Is Maine your native state?" inquired the secretary one evening.

"No, sir," answered Roy.

"Which is, then?" continued the secretary.

"I suppose I was born in Massachusetts," replied Roy smiling, as he thought now was his opportunity to make the disclosure. "To tell you the truth, I don't know where I was born. My history is a strange one, and I want to tell you about it frankly."

"And I should like to hear it," responded the

secretary, with a look of curiosity depicted on his countenance.

Roy was assured by the encouraging words of the secretary that he might rehearse the story of his life with confidence, and he proceeded with the narrative. The secretary listened with much interest and no small surprise, occasionally interrupting Roy with a pertinent inquiry.

“Stranger than fiction,” he exclaimed, when Roy had finished his story. “God must have some good purpose to fulfil in your life, or you would not be here to-night. But you can learn more of your early life, I think.”

“That is what I want to,” responded Roy. “I have been thinking of visiting institutions for the homeless to see if I can discover where I came from.”

“I can imagine how strong your desire must be to know more about yourself,” the secretary replied, “and I should think it would be an easy matter to ascertain what institution you were in when the police officer sent you to Maine. Perhaps I can be of service to you,” he added kindly, noting Roy’s flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, “as I have some acquaintance with several institutions of the city that care for the homeless and destitute.”

“Thank you ; I shall be only too glad of any assistance you can give me,” responded Roy. “I judge from your remark that there are quite a number of such institutions in the city.”

“There are, and I scarcely know which one you

should visit first. There is the —— ; it has cared for hundreds and perhaps thousands of poor children. I think I should go there first. How many years is it since you were taken to Maine ?”

“About a dozen years,” replied Roy.

“That is not long. There can be no doubt about the result,” remarked the secretary. “I should lose no time in inquiring.”

Roy adopted the secretary's advice at once, and improved the first opportunity to call at the institution on —— street. He felt rather awkward in making his application, but earnest desire overcame his timidity, and he proceeded at once to business.

“When I was about three years old,” said he to the matron, “I was taken from some institution in Boston and taken to Maine. I want to know whether I went from this institution.”

“What is your name ?” inquired the matron.

“My name now is Robson. I do not know what my name was then.”

“How is that ?” asked the matron, with surprise.

Roy could not answer this question without rehearsing the details of his adoption by Mr. Robson.

“You did not go from this institution, I am sure,” said the matron, after listening to the strange tale. “We have never sent off a child in such a romantic way as that.”

“Were you the matron twelve years ago ?” inquired Roy.

“I was not ; but I am confident that no child ever went from the institution in that manner.”

"Is there any officer or other person connected with the institution now who was here twelve years ago?" continued Roy.

"Yes, I think there is; I will see," replied the matron, as she left the room to investigate. First she examined the books to see if there was any record of a child leaving the institution under the circumstances described, twelve years before. She found no mention of such a case. In the course of half an hour, however, she returned with an officer of the institution who had served more than twelve years.

"This is the young man," she said, addressing the officer. "You can hear his story."

Again Roy related the circumstances of his leaving Boston, to which the officer listened attentively, remarking at the close,—

"No, you did not go from here; we are very particular in sending children away, and keep a record of the circumstances and the names of the parties adopting them. I am confident that no such affair as you describe ever occurred here. But you fell into good hands, I conclude, from your appearance."

"I could not have fallen into better hands," responded Roy.

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"None that I know of," replied Roy. "I am alone in the world, so far as relatives are concerned, though I find good friends everywhere."

"That is a good sign," remarked the officer.



"The youth or man who does not find good friends wherever he goes is usually unworthy of such friends. I hope you will be more successful in your inquiries elsewhere."

"What institution would you advise me to visit next?" asked Roy.

"Were I in your place I should go to the —— on —— street," replied the officer.

Roy thanked both him and the matron for their kindness, and promised to report to them if he was successful in his search.

He was not all disheartened by the fruitlessness of his first attempt. The kindness and interest that he had met with rather emboldened him to prosecute his search, and the timidity and awkwardness that had at first oppressed him were dispelled by the generous welcome he received.

On reporting the result to his employer, Mr. Inman, the latter remarked,—

"You must not be discouraged. A boy who has lost his origin can't expect to find it in a day."

"I am not at all discouraged," said Roy; "I had such a pleasant time on this visit that I anticipate a good time on future visits to other places."

"That," said Mr. Inman, "is the spirit that wins, in the printing-office or anywhere else."

"I am going next to the —— on —— street," continued Roy. "One of the persons whom I saw advised me to try there next."

"Then I should go by all means, and lose no time about it, either," added Mr. Inman.

Roy also reported the result of his first visit to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, who suggested as Roy's next resort the institution to which he had already been directed.

We have not space for a detailed account of Roy's visits to different institutions in the course of a few months. It is sufficient to say that he called at several without success, and was much disappointed and perplexed at finding no evidence anywhere that he ever went from a Boston institution.

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## XIX.

### *SUDDEN CHANGE.*

IT must not be supposed that Roy's busy life and new friends had crowded his foster-parents out of his mind or heart. Every week he sent his mother a letter, written morsel-wise evening after evening, telling her of his progress in work and study, of his friends, and also of his unsuccessful search. Mrs. Robson, of course, missed her boy very much, and followed him in his life in Boston with many an earnest prayer that God would keep him unspotted from the world and fit him to be a wise and diligent labourer in His vineyard. She had gladly exercised much self-denial in procuring Roy a suitable outfit on leaving home, that for some time to come he might have no anxiety as to where-withal he should be clothed. Her weekly letters brought much help and cheer to Roy, and occasionally one would also contain a bank-bill of a few dollars' value, which Roy faithfully added to what he called his "education fund." Mr. Robson, who had been at sea when Roy left home, had not yet returned.

Roy also wrote sometimes to his kind friend Mr.

Ryder. That gentleman, mindful of the importance of a good church home to a lad in Roy's circumstances, had given him a letter of introduction to the Rev. Mr. Wilcox, a minister in Boston with whom Mr. Ryder was personally acquainted. On presenting the letter Roy was cordially received, and assured of Mr. Wilcox's readiness to afford him any help or counsel that might lie in his power. Roy connected himself with his church, and was also much interested in the Bible-class at his Sunday-school.

And so for a time all things seemed bright to our hero. He worked and studied, and wrote cheerful letters home, never dreaming that he was overtaxing his strength, and must sooner or later suffer for it. But when he had been nearly a year and a half in Boston, his close application to his trade, combined with too much reading and study at night, began to tell upon his health. He lost his appetite and grew pale and thin, though his courage and energy still kept him at his work. Mr. Inman watched him narrowly, and finally became quite alarmed about him.

"Too much night-work," he said to his wife. "Growing boys can't work all day and study half the night without paying the penalty."

"Weil, how will you prevent it?" responded Mrs. Inman. "If he can't read or study at night he will be the most miserable fellow that lives."

"That is so ; but he has more good sense and judgment than most boys of his age," replied Mr. Inman, "and he ought to listen to reason."

"I think he ought to consult a physician," added Mrs. Inman. "It will be too late if he don't look out. It is the part of wisdom to attend to such things in season."

"That is what I told him more than a week ago," said Mr. Inman; "but he didn't see the necessity of it. The fact is, he does not really understand that he is ill. He has so much energy that he will not see his danger so long as he can stand."

Mrs. Inman was a real mother to Roy in this emergency, and dosed him with herb-drinks until she became discouraged. Still he continued to grow worse, and the absolute need of more skilful medical treatment than she was competent to give was forced upon her.

Just at this time Mr. Inman's family physician called one evening on some business relating to the church with which they were both connected. Roy was at home, rather more unwell than usual, and before the doctor left Mrs. Inman said,—

"Roy hasn't been very well of late, doctor. I wish you would tell us what to do with him."

"I'm sorry to hear such a report about you, Roy," said the doctor, turning to the boy. "You do look somewhat puny; what is the matter?"

"Not much of anything; I shall be all right before long, I think," replied Roy.

"You will not be all right unless you take better care of yourself," answered the doctor, as he felt his pulse. "Overdone, young man—pretty well used up, I should say."

"I don't feel so," replied Roy.

"But you are so, or your pulse doesn't tell the truth," retorted the doctor. "Bad tongue, too. Any appetite?"

"He doesn't eat enough to keep a robin alive," Mrs. Inman replied, without waiting for Roy to answer. "He has been ailing several weeks, doctor."

"That is quite evident," replied the doctor. "Able to work?"

"He has worked every day and studied every night," answered Mr. Inman. "I have told him over and over to stop and rest awhile; but he will work as long as he can stand."

"A lad of your age ought to be strong and rosy-cheeked and broad-chested, and as hungry as a bear," continued the doctor. "You must stop right where you are, if you intend to get well. How is it, Mr. Inman; can't you spare him from the printing-office two or three weeks?"

"Yes, and longer if it is necessary," answered Mr. Inman.

"It is indispensable," returned the doctor, with emphasis. "Rest is absolutely necessary; and mind, Roy, I mean rest from study, as well as from work in the office. He needs medicine, too. If he had attended to himself a month ago he might have been all right now. But I won't answer for the consequences if he defies nature for a month longer."

The doctor rather alarmed Roy, and he meant to do it. He knew his patient better than the family thought, and he knew that nothing less than the

plain truth would force him to take the needful steps for the restoration of his health. Roy was not the first eager aspirant for learning and usefulness whom he had seen break down from undue stress of work and either sink into an early grave or drag out a wretched remainder of life in weakness and suffering; and the good doctor was determined to save Roy, if it were possible, from either fate. He prescribed not only rest, but medicine, and instructed Mrs Inman to see that he had nourishing food.

If Roy could have known on that evening that he would never do another day's work in the printing office he would scarcely have been reconciled to his condition. He never did perform another day's work for Mr. Inman, as the sequel will show. His employer watched him with the devotion of a father, doing everything possible for his restoration; and the physician attended to his case with his usual fidelity. Still, at the end of two weeks Roy was no better; in some respects he was not as well. A slight cough appeared, in addition to his other ailments, increasing the anxiety of his friends in Boston. To his mother Roy, with his habitual thoughtfulness for her, wrote only that he was not very well, but hoped soon to be better.

"He must leave the city," said the doctor to Mr. Inman. "He needs pure country air to brace him up. A farm is just the place for him, though he could not labour much for several weeks."

Mr. Inman lost no time in acting upon the doctor's suggestion. He was well acquainted with a farmer

in the town of C., Mass., and he despatched the following letter to him at once:—

“BOSTON, *May 10*, 1868.

“J. H. BENNET, ESQ.

“My dear Sir,—You may be surprised to receive this letter from me; but I know you so well that I am confident you will be interested in its contents. I write in behalf of a young man who has been in my employ about one year and a half—one of the best young men I ever knew. He is a Christian, working his way into the ministry, for which he seems to be admirably adapted by nature. His health has broken down, and the doctor says he must go into the country where he can breathe pure air and labour on a farm. He is now nearly seventeen years of age, but has more common sense and ability than most young men at twenty-one. His name is Royal Robson. Can you not take him into your family and employ him on your farm? I know that you and your wife will soon love him as we do, and that you will never regret giving the boy a hearty welcome to your pleasant home. Let me hear from you at once,

“Very truly yours,

“J. INMAN.”

The return mail brought the following answer:

“C., *May 11*, 1868.

“J. INMAN, ESQ.

“My dear Sir,—I was right glad to hear from you, especially as you had such a good proposition to



make. Tell Royal Robson to come to me as soon as possible ; I want just such a boy as he to take care of horses and cattle, and labour on the farm. He can breathe as pure air here as is ever vouchsafed to man. Mrs. B. and myself will make him heartily welcome, and between us, with God's blessing, we shall hope soon to have him as sound in body as you say he is in mind. When Royal is well settled here, then come yourself and bring your wife, and make us a long visit. We shall enjoy seeing you both at our country home.

“ Very truly yours,

“ J. H. BENNET.”

Mr. Bennet was deeply interested in every benevolent enterprise, especially in the education of young men for the ministry. He was well-to-do in the world, and his purse-strings were often loosed at the call of charity. If he had not wanted Roy on his farm, there is no doubt that he would still have written to him, “ Come.”

Two days after the receipt of this letter, Roy was in C. If he had been an old acquaintance of Mr. Bennet's family, he could not have received a more cordial welcome, and he felt at home at once. There was an air of thorough comfort about the residence, indoors and out, and Roy, so long confined to the city streets, felt inexpressibly glad to be surrounded by the verdure and beauty and melody of spring-time in the country.

From the day when Roy became an inmate of this

country home he began to improve. It was wonderful to witness the effect of the change upon his appetite, spirit, and strength. He began to realize at once the truth of his doctor's remark, "The country air will do him more good than my medicine." Within four weeks after his removal to C. he was able to do a full day's work. Roy was not happier in the consciousness of fast-returning health than Mr. and Mrs. Bennet were in watching his improvement.

A few days after Roy took up his abode at the farm, he wrote a letter to his mother, and handed it to Mr. Bennet, who was going to the post-office. Reading the superscription—Mrs. John Robson—Mr. Bennet, who knew nothing of Roy's history, remarked,—

"That is your mother?"

"My adoptive mother," answered Roy, "the only mother I can remember."

"Then your own mother is dead?" continued Mr. Bennet.

"I suppose so, though I do not know," replied Roy, somewhat to Mr. Bennet's surprise.

"Where were you born?"

"That old question again!" thought Roy; "I can never escape it."

"I do not know where I was born, Mr. Bennet, strange as it may seem to you."

"How is that, Roy?" asked Mr. Bennet; "you surprise me."

"It is a long story," repeated Roy, "too long to

tell now, as you are in a hurry. I will tell you when you have the leisure to hear it."

"That must be soon," remarked Mr. Bennet, as he hurried away to the office.

That same evening Roy, at the request of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, told them the story of his life as he had told it to others so many times, adding at the close,—

"I was determined to ascertain from what institution I was taken, that I might learn something more definite about my antecedents, if possible. It seemed to me an easy matter to learn as much as that. But I went from one institution to another without the least success; and to-day I am as ignorant as ever concerning my origin."

"Singular!" exclaimed Mr. Bennet. "There must have been some deception on the part of the police officer. He cannot have taken you from one of the Boston institutions."

"He was probably hired by some heartless wretch to find a home for you," suggested Mrs. Bennet.

"If you had ever been an inmate of one of the Boston homes, I think you would certainly have ascertained the fact in your search. The police officer took you from some other place, without doubt."

"Well," added Roy sadly, "if that is true, more mystery than ever surrounds me; but there is no help for it. I must be content with my ignorance."

"All things work together for good to them that love God," said Mr. Bennet. "Perhaps you would

never have thought of being a minister if you had not been a waif.

“ ‘God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.’ ”

“ I have thought of all that, over and over again,” answered Roy. “ But for the thought that God has ordered it, I could hardly endure this intense longing after a true knowledge of myself, which increases the older I grow.”

“ It could hardly be otherwise,” responded Mr. Bennet. “ Nor is it necessarily inconsistent with the genuine submission which ought always to characterize the Christian heart.”

From the moment that Mr. and Mrs. Bennet were made acquainted with Roy's history, they felt new and tender interest in his welfare, and manifested that interest in many ways.

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## XX.

### *STILL LED.*

MR. BENNET'S only son Frank was a member of the academy at A., about twenty miles distant. He was about Roy's age, and, like him, preparing for college and the ministry. He spent the Sabbath at home once a month, usually coming on Friday night and returning Monday morning. Roy had been at Mr. Bennet's three weeks when Frank came home to spend Sunday.

Of course Roy had been told all about him, and was prepared to give him a cordial greeting. The aspirations of the two boys were the same, and this circumstance was suited to make them good friends at once. Roy felt that the present was an excellent opportunity to learn about the expense of attending an academy, as well as the conditions of entering, and he made the requisite inquiries on Saturday evening.

"Are there any young men in the academy who are working their way?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Frank, "there are a few; and there are others who receive aid from charitable institutions or benevolent individuals. Some of our

best scholars have no one to depend upon for money but themselves."

"Must a scholar spend three years there in preparing for college?" continued Roy; "or can he prepare in a shorter time if he chooses to study hard enough?"

"There are cases where the time is shortened, though it is generally conceded that three years is short enough," answered Frank. "One has to study hard to be well prepared in three years."

"That may be; but poor fellows like me would come short of funds long before the three years had expired. It looks to me now like an impossibility for a young man to work his way through three years of preparation with no aid but his own hands. Since I broke down the prospect seems to me rather discouraging."

"Many students do it, nevertheless," replied Frank. "But, by the way, there are scholarships at A. which some poor students avail themselves of."

"What are they?" inquired Roy, who did not exactly comprehend the plan and advantages of "scholarships."

"Funds given to the institution to aid indigent and worthy students," answered Frank. "It is worth your while to think of it; perhaps there is a chance for you."

"There are not enough scholarships for all indigent students that come, are there?" asked Roy.

"By no means. The principal and trustees select from the applicants, having certain rules to guide

them. Dr. Tucker has the matter in charge ; at least, application is made to him."

This was good news to Roy, who had not heard before of any such provision for poor scholars. As the reader will have gathered from some of his remarks to Frank and Mr. Bennet, he was feeling somewhat despondent about his own ability to work himself through a preparatory course and college with the little help that his foster-parents were able to give him. Indeed, since his illness, he had at times found it difficult to be resigned to the will of his Heavenly Father, Who seemed to have suddenly closed up the way that had before appeared so plain before him. Notwithstanding his improvement on the farm, Mr. Inman's doctor, to whom he had written for advice, assured him that he could not go back to the printing-office, and work and study as he had done, with any prospect of retaining health. Must he, then, give up his cherished purpose? It might be God's will that he should serve Him in another walk of life, and yet he did earnestly desire to devote his whole time to the work of winning souls for Christ. He had laid the whole matter before God in prayer, asking that the right way might be shown him, and that he might receive grace to walk in it. And now Frank's mention of the scholarships seemed to shed a ray of light upon his path ; here might be a new opening for him. He decided at once what to do, though he did not announce his intentions.

He had thought it best not to keep his parents in

ignorance of the uncertainty which now hung about his future, and their tender sympathy was as usual ready for him. Mrs. Robson's own faith was now tried by present trouble and anxiety in regard to coming days, though she did not impart to Roy the full extent of either. Mr. Robson had returned about two months before with impaired health after a voyage of unusual hardship, and it was uncertain when, if ever, he would be able to resume the duties of his calling. In the meantime she must be a careful steward of their slender resources. In the midst of trouble her own heart clung to Him who in wisdom and love was sending it for her profiting, and that her faith might appear to His glory; and she encouraged Roy to put his whole trust in Him Who was now chastening him as a son, to work faithfully for Mr. Bennet, and to still hope that a way to the fulfilment of what was the most cherished desire of both herself and her adopted son might be opened, if it was indeed the will of God that Roy should enter the ministry.

A few weeks after Roy's interview with Frank, he said to Mr. Bennet,—

“Can you spare me for one day within a few weeks?”

“I think so,” replied Mr. Bennet, “but what is going to happen on that day?”

“I want to go to A., to see whether there is any chance for me in the academy,” answered Roy.

“Ah! you and Frank have been hatching up something,” remarked Mr. Bennet; “but if it is a



conspiracy about acquiring an education, it is all right."

"Frank said that there are scholarships at A. for indigent students," answered Roy. "There may be one for me. I can hardly see how I can be prepared for college at present unless it is in some such way."

"A good idea to look after it," remarked Mr. Bennet. "But you may need more than one day to attend to the matter."

"No ; one day is sufficient," replied Roy. "It is twenty miles there, and I can walk that distance in one day and return, if I make a long day."

"What ! you propose to walk ?"

"Certainly ; why not ? That is the cheapest way," answered Roy. "Starting early, I can reach there easily at eleven o'clock. I can stay five hours, and then reach home at nine o'clock in the evening."

"Pretty well used up, no doubt," added Mr. Bennet.

"No ; not more so than I am after some hard days' work on the farm," said Roy. "Such a trip will do me good ; it will be a sort of recreation."

"And if you find a scholarship, you'll be well satisfied with your day's work, I suppose," continued Mr. Bennet. "I hope you will find one all ready for you."

"I scarcely expect it," said Roy, "though what Frank told me gave me much encouragement."

It was settled that Roy should visit A. at such time as he thought would be most favourable for

his errand. He started at half-past five o'clock one morning, taking with him a letter of recommendation from Mr. Bennet to the principal of the academy.

We need not enter into the particulars of Roy's interview with Dr. Tucker. It is sufficient to state that he was received with the utmost kindness, and his story was listened to with close attention. At the close of the interview, Dr. Tucker was so favourably impressed with Roy as to assure him that he could depend upon a scholarship—one being vacant at this time—and enter upon a course of study at the beginning of the academic year in September. It would be necessary for the trustees to act upon his application; but there was no doubt that they would be guided by Dr. Tucker's recommendation. When official action was taken, Roy would be notified by mail.

The summer vacation had not yet commenced, and Roy spent several hours with Frank, who took him into the library, reading-room, and other places of interest, that he might become acquainted with the institution. He introduced him to several students, and took him over the extensive and pleasant grounds, which Roy pronounced the "most charming he ever saw." It would have been a very profitable and enjoyable day to Roy, even if he had been unsuccessful in his errand.

It was not many minutes past nine o'clock when Roy reached home again. Mr. Bennet and his wife were waiting for him, anxious to hear whether he was successful, and Roy was only too glad to tell

them. He gave a full account of his interview with the principal, his good time with Frank, and his exploration of the grounds and interior of the institution.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet rejoiced with him in the prospect of a course of study to be entered upon so soon, and Mr. Bennet offered an earnest thanksgiving for Roy in his evening prayer.

Scarcely one week had elapsed when Roy received a formal notification that the scholarship was his. This settled the matter, and Roy's heart was full of thankfulness to God and to the kind friends whom He had raised up for him. He lost no time in sending the good news to his parents and Mr. Inman.

"It is less than two months now that Roy will be with us," said Mr. Bennet to his wife. "We must see what we can do for him, to make him comfortable and happy. He must have a good outfit for the academy."

"Yes ; I have thought it all over," replied Mrs. Bennet, who was always ready to second her husband's benevolent designs. "Providence did not send Roy to us for nothing, and we must do our very best for him."

"The boy has never said a word to me about his wages since he has been here, nor I to him," continued Mr. Bennet, "and he is a capital worker and has much more than paid his way, even deducting the two weeks before he was strong enough to do much. From the first I designed to do well by

him ; but as it looks now, I must do better than my original design. As you say, God did not send him here for nothing."

"Somehow it has been a great benefit to me personally to have Roy here," added Mrs. Bennet. "I have thought more about helping the poor and unfortunate, and have been more thankful that our own Frank has been so happily situated. How many times I have said to myself, 'But for the grace of God Frank might have been a waif, like Roy.'"

"Or worse," added Mr. Bennet.

"To help a worthy young man into the ministry may be one step toward the salvation of a great many souls," continued Mrs. Bennet ; "I often think of it. To start a great wave of Christian influence is an unspeakable privilege. I think it may start such a wave to help Roy, and that we shall never regret having an agency in it."

Mr. Bennet fully agreed with his wife on this subject ; and the few weeks that remained before Roy would go to the academy at A. were filled with thoughts and labour in his behalf.

XXI.

*A STUDENT.*

“REMEMBER that this is one of your homes,” said Mrs. Bennet to Roy on the morning of his departure; “just as free to you as it is to Frank.”

“Yes,” added Mr. Bennet, “you will be welcome any time. You must come often with Frank to see us; and we shall expect that you will spend your vacations here without fail.”

Roy thanked Mr. and Mrs. Bennet heartily for their great kindness, and assured them that it would give him great pleasure to accept their invitation whenever it was possible. He felt very much more than he could express. That abode had indeed been a home to him. He fully appreciated it, and often laid his head upon his pillow at night with a feeling of inexpressible gratitude that God had guided him to such a retreat.

As Mr. Bennet told his wife, nothing had been said about Roy's compensation for his work. Roy was not, however, a loser by his silence on the subject. For on the morning he left, his trunk was well filled with a comfortable wardrobe, and he had on, besides, a new suit that was to be his best in the

academy. In short, he was supplied with everything to make him comfortable, and his small, but precious "education fund," which had been somewhat broken in upon by his sickness, was made up to its original amount by the good farmer, who was happier in bestowing his kindness than Roy was in receiving it. Roy realised that he had received twice the value of fair wages, but when he said so to Mr. Bennet, the latter answered that he had meant to give him all his labour was worth, and as much more as his own circumstances would admit and Roy's wants required.

Roy's heart was full when the time for his departure arrived, and when he took the hands of his good friends in his to bid them good-bye, the tears came in spite of him, and he cried like a child.

Mr. Bennet knew well the gratitude and love that were the spring of those tears, and he said,—

"You scarcely know how glad we are to be able to do what we have done for you. God has blessed us richly, and we show our gratitude to Him in this way."

The next day Roy began his student-life in the academy at A., resolved to improve to the utmost the advantages that he was now to enjoy.

Here was a new field of trial to him, where new temptations met him. Two hundred and fifty youths were crowded into the institution, and among this number were found, of course, some wild, thoughtless, and even vicious boys who took delight in leading others into mischief.

Roy's room-mate, though he did not belong to the class we have mentioned, was a smoker; and the

first day that Roy made his acquaintance, he met the temptation of a cigar.

"Have a smoke?" said his companion, at the same time offering him a cigar.

"Thank you, I never smoke," Roy answered, after hesitating a moment.

"Have you never tried a cigar?"

"Never, and I don't mean to try one."

"I think you'd enjoy a good cigar; almost all the fellows here smoke," remarked his room-mate.

"You'd better begin."

"Well," answered Roy, "a poor fellow like me couldn't afford such an expensive habit, to say nothing about the evil of it. How much does it cost you annually for cigars, if I may ask?"

"I don't know; I never reckoned."

"Well, how much a day, should you think?"

"Twenty-five cents, when I buy them by the quantity," was the reply.

"Three hundred and sixty-five quarter dollars in a year; let us see how much that amounts to. Ninety dollars annually; enough to pay a good part of my school expenses. I think I will not form the habit at present."

His room-mate expressed some surprise at the amount, adding, however, "But I enjoy it."

"And I enjoy being entirely free from the habit," returned Roy. "It is a real pleasure to me to think that I am not a slave to tobacco."

"Do you think it is wrong to smoke?" asked his room-mate, who was a member of the Church.

"It would unquestionably be wrong for me, on account of the expense," replied Roy. "But aside from that, as a useless indulgence, which the majority of physicians agree, I believe, in regarding as injurious to health, I do think that smoking is wrong. And I think that professing Christians such as you and I, should set a good example in this respect as in everything else."

"Do you call smoking setting a bad example?"

"If smoking is a bad habit, then the practice of it must set a bad example," replied Roy. "I think that Christians ought to avoid all evil habits. If they don't how can they expect that irreligious men will avoid them?"

"Sure enough," answered his room-mate, "I think you are right; but it is very difficult to be consistent."

"I don't agree with you exactly," replied Roy. "It is easier for me to abstain from smoking on principle and be consistent, than it would be to smoke and try to make it appear consistent. The latter is very difficult indeed."

His room-mate laughed good-humouredly, but went on with his cigar. In a month from that time, however, he had renounced smoking. Roy's resolute stand against the habit set him to thinking, the end of which was his emancipation from tobacco. He became a more active Christian, also, Roy's earnest spirit and consistent life leading him to draw nearer to Christ.

Roy's first term had not expired before he met



another temptation, common in academies, and before which hundreds of students fall and are ruined. He was an officer of one of the literary societies; and one evening he had occasion to call at a brother officer's room on a matter of business. There he found six or eight schoolmates assembled around a table, playing cards; a jug of cider occupying the centre of the table.

"Halloo, Robson!" exclaimed one; "just in time to have a game. Take a seat right here by me."

"Take a drink first," interrupted another, at the same time filling a glass.

"A drink of what, spring water?" responded Roy.

"Cider! cider!" was the answer by two or three voices, one adding,—

"It's capital, too; try it."

"No, I thank you," answered Roy; "I never use intoxicating drinks."

"What! never drink cider?" exclaimed one of the number. "It is a temperance beverage. Cider would not intoxicate a fly."

"That is true," replied Roy, "for flies won't drink it. It will and does intoxicate men."

"Well, whether it's intoxicating or not, it is good," added one of the wildest boys of the company. "It's a wonderful help to Greek and mathematics."

"Hard study is a better help," answered Roy.

"If you won't take a swig, then take a game of cards with us," interrupted the boy who had first addressed him. "It is a splendid recreation."

"A game of ball, or a long walk in the bracing air, is much better recreation," replied Roy. "I never played cards in my life."

"Time you had, then," remarked one.

"Too late to begin now," said Roy; "I have too much to do to waste my time in this way."

This last remark roused the ire of the wild youth alluded to, and he exclaimed,—

"Too much of a bigot and saint to drink a glass of cider or play cards!"

"Just as you please," answered Roy, pleasantly. "You enjoy them; but I don't. You claim a right to your opinions, and I have an equal right to mine."

"That's so," remarked two or three who did not sympathise in this insult to Roy; "don't be a bear, Gilroy."

Perhaps all the company did not know Roy's position in respect to these things; but some of them did, and their object was to tease him. But they only had their labour for their pains. Roy remembered that he was a Christian, pledged before the world to be true to God. He did not dare be untrue, for he feared God more than he feared his companions. Drinking cider and playing cards, though not contrary so far as he knew to the letter of any law of the academy, were, he believed, contrary to the spirit of the institution, and above all to his duty as a Christian—to do nothing whereby another might be led into sin or encouraged to continue therein; cider and cards were

too often, he thought, the introduction to intemperance and gambling to be indulged in by one who desired that his influence should be on the side of truth and purity. And Roy found in Christ, in the joy and peace that flowed from Him into his own heart, far more satisfying pleasure than any he could have derived from a glass of cider or a game of cards with the most entertaining fellows in the academy. Nor was he ashamed to avow his principles and stand by them before his associates.

In all of his classes Roy stood near the head. His ability was universally acknowledged by teachers and students. He was unpopular at first with a class of thoughtless, unprincipled students, who were disposed to ridicule him and make light of his convictions. And yet, down in their inmost hearts they must have respected him, for virtue, integrity, fidelity, and sincerity command the respect of even the vicious. Not many months elapsed, however, before these young men learned to let Roy alone, and some of them who had in various ways experienced kindness from him, began to be a little ashamed of their former treatment of him.

Roy still wrote weckly to his mother, who was again alone, Mr. Robson having recovered health and strength sufficiently to go on another voyage. Nor did he forget Mr. Inman, or the Bennets, all of whom rejoiced with him in his happy student life. But to Mrs. Robson, especially, Roy's affectionate letters were a delight. They revealed to her the guiding hand of God in Roy's blessed experience.

She longed to see him, but she longed more for the time when he would proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to his fellow-men. And so she prayed and waited, waited and prayed, confident that her highest hopes would be realised in God's own time.

Near the close of his first school year, Roy received from his mother a letter that filled him with grief on his account and on hers. It announced the death of his foster-father. The captain of the vessel in which Mr. Robson sailed as first mate had conveyed to Mrs. Robson the sad intelligence that her husband had been washed overboard at night in a terrific gale, during which he had done his duty nobly to the last. Every possible effort had been made to rescue him, but all had proved fruitless owing to the darkness of the night and the severity of the storm.

The widow's grief was sincere and deep, but still she comforted herself with the thought that even through the darkness and the storm her husband, trusting in Christ, had entered into the haven of everlasting peace. She told Roy that God had revealed more of His love to her in this her great sorrow, and she was able to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Roy spent that summer vacation with his mother. It was the first time that he had been at his home in Maine since he left it for Boston, and great was the joy of both mother and son at their reunion, though their first meeting was tinged with the pain that

both felt at their recent loss. Roy found that his mother would be able to retain her little cottage, as the insurance on her husband's life would give her a small income, which with the rent for the two rooms that she could spare would be enough for her to live on.

Roy was not idle in the few weeks that he spent with Mrs. Robson. Four miles from where they lived there was a country schoolhouse where a teacher was needed for the summer term, the one who had been appointed being prevented by sickness from filling his engagement. Roy applied for the vacancy, passed the necessary examination, and satisfactorily discharged the duties of the office. With the money that he earned in this way he paid his board and thus helped his mother.

XXII.

*A DISCOVERY.*

THE close of the first term of Roy's third year in the academy had come. An urgent invitation from Mr. Inman to spend the short vacation in Boston had been received by Roy several weeks before, and accepted, and in the anticipation of a good deal of pleasure in revisiting old friends and scenes, Roy set out for the city, which he had not been in since he left it for C. more than two years before. The short vacation Roy had spent at C., where Mr. Bennet had given him employment ; and both long summer vacations had been passed in Maine with Mrs. Robson. In the second summer as well as the first Roy had been successful in securing a position as teacher, and had laboured faithfully and acceptably. His scholarship provided only for his tuition and the most pressing needs of the time which he spent in the academy, such as lodging, board, and the like. For the means of meeting clothing and vacation expenses, Roy was, of course, dependent on his own exertions.

Mr. and Mrs. Inman gave their visitor most kindly greeting.

"I grant you the freedom of the city and my house too," said Mr. Inman pleasantly.

"Thank you," replied Roy; "I shall be glad of both. I have wanted to come to Boston for a long time. It seems homelike here."

"Boston is a pretty good place to visit, Roy," continued Mr. Inman; "as good to visit as to be born in. I was never ashamed that I was born in Boston. A noble city with a noble record."

"And I have reason to think well of Boston," said Roy, "for it has given me a good home twice in my life: first, when I was too young to know that I was an unfortunate waif; and secondly, when I came a stranger here, seeking my fortune."

"Though you did get sick, and came near dying," remarked Mrs. Inman.

"Yes; that sickness was overruled to put me into the ministry two or three years earlier than I should have got there without it," replied Roy.

"So it would seem," responded Mr. Inman. "God's ways are mysterious indeed. When you left Boston for C. I feared that you were going to your grave. I little thought that this time you would be in the last year of your preparatory course, and that, too, in the academy at A."

"You expected to come back when you went to C., didn't you?" inquired Mrs. Inman.

"Yes, indeed. I should have been still sadder than I was if I had dreamed that my last day's work in the printing-office was done. The past two and

a half years seem like a dream to me, so much has occurred that has been unexpected."

One of the first places that Roy visited in the city was the Young Men's Christian Association. He had spent too many hours of real happiness and profit there to be forgetful of the institution now. He had a strong desire, too, to see his old friend the secretary, and to show him all the way in which he had been led.

"Is it you, Robson?" exclaimed the secretary, extending his hand and giving Roy's a hearty shake. "I am delighted to see you—looking so healthy and resolute, too. Take a seat."

The secretary knew of Roy's connection with the academy at A., and now, at his request, Roy gave an account of his life from that point.

When he ended his story the secretary remarked, "You have not yet learned where you came from, I believe."

"In that respect I am just where I was when I left you," answered Roy; "and I have ceased to expect any enlightenment on that subject."

"Did you visit the institution on —— street? I overlooked that when you were investigating."

"No, sir, I never heard of it before."

"I thought of it after I received your letter from A. I would go now. Possibly that is the place."

"I have no such expectation," said Roy, "but I will go. Thank you for mentioning it."

On the following day, without disclosing his purpose to Mr. Inman, he started for —— street, upon



what he could not but think a useless errand. On approaching the institution, an iron fence in front arrested his attention, and a strange feeling of familiarity somewhat startled him as he stopped to look at it. Could it be that memory retained the impression of that fence? "It is not possible," he said within himself; "I was too young to notice such things." And still he could not rid himself of the impression that he had seen that fence before.

Going up to the door, he rang the bell. A lady answered the call at once, and ushered Roy into the reception-room. Roy announced his errand as briefly as possible.

"What was your name?" the lady inquired.

"I never knew what it was," replied Roy; "but I have a vague feeling that I have been here before."

"I will examine the books," said the lady, and she retired for that purpose. In a few minutes she returned with the announcement, "I cannot find any record of such a child, and I don't think you can ever have been in this institution."

Roy had been surveying a lounge that was in the room, and the impression came over him that he had played on it. He now said,—

"I think I remember that lounge. Was that here sixteen or seventeen years ago?"

"It was, though it has been covered more than once in that time," she replied. "Excuse me again, and I will call the matron."

The matron had been connected with the institution

about twenty years, and of course had been there at the period that Roy desired to learn about.

While the matron was being called Roy reflected on the remarkable though not infrequent mental phenomenon now present to his consciousness. In all his thoughts about this period of his childhood, and during all his previous investigations, he had not recalled the iron fence or the lounge. But no sooner were these objects presented to his eye than memory fastened on them, and by the power of association revived long-forgotten impressions which had been connected with them. So also a sound or an odour will sometimes cause whole scenes and experiences long unthought of to flash vividly before the mental eye.

In a few minutes the lady with whom Roy had been speaking returned with the matron, a motherly sort of woman, who sat down to hear Roy's story. Roy had but just entered upon it when she exclaimed,

"Why, my dear sir, I remember all about you. Your name is Rogers—Frank Rogers, and you have a sister."

"A sister!" exclaimed Roy, turning white.

"Yes, you certainly have a sister."

This good news was too much for Roy's equanimity, already a little disturbed by the discovery of the home that had taken him in, a baby waif. His lips quivered, his eyes filled, and he buried his face in his hands while his heart swelled with gratitude to Him who had added this crowning blessing to all his other loving-kindnesses.

As soon as Roy could command himself, he inquired,—

“Where is my sister?”

“In the town of S., in this state,” answered the matron, “in the family of the Rev. Mr. Southard. She is not far off, you see.”

“How long has she been there?” Roy asked.

“She went there soon after you were taken from the institution. She is two years older than you are. She has had an excellent home. I know nothing of your parents except that they are dead. And now I want to know more of yourself. Where are you living? What is your business?”

Roy continued the story of his life from the point where it was broken off by the matron's announcement, adding an account of his academy life at A. and his purpose to enter the ministry. We need scarcely say that the matron listened with interest. Here was one of her own waifs, whom she had sheltered and tended for a season in his helpless childhood, come back to report how the Father of the fatherless had led him. What a record for her Home! What an encouragement to labour like hers!

Before Roy took his departure the matron went for the book in which his arrival as “Frank Rogers” was entered, and showed the notice to our hero. After it was the record, “Left May 26th, 1854, in charge of James H. Franklin. Adopted by John Robson, seaman, B., Maine.” Franklin, the matron informed Roy, was the policeman from whom Mr.

Robson had received him. This record the lady whom Roy had first seen had overlooked in her search, having only the name Robson to guide her. To Roy's inquiries about the policeman, the matron replied that both he and his wife had been dead for some years. The matron also gave Roy a note of introduction to Mr. Southard, in order that that gentleman might be in no doubt as to the truth of his story.

It was on Saturday that Roy visited the institution. He left about noon with but one all-absorbing thought, his sister. How different were the feelings with which he quitted the institution from those with which he had entered it! The last lingering hope that he would ever learn his origin had fled, and he had long been satisfied that there was neither brother nor sister for him on the face of the earth. Now the mystery of his life was at least partially solved, and a precious sister would share his future. The reality was so blissful that he almost felt it could not be true. With a bounding heart he walked rapidly away to convey the good news to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association. In his excitement and joy he rushed into the secretary's presence, exclaiming,—

“I've found her! I've found her!”

“Whom have you found?” interrupted the secretary. “What in the world is the matter? Where have you been?”

“I have been to the institution that I was taken from, the one on —— street that you told me of yes—

terday," Roy explained, a little more calmly ; " and I have a sister."

" Ah ! " said the secretary, grasping Roy's hand and congratulating him, " I don't wonder that you are excited. But you must tell me about it."

So Roy sat down and related the circumstances to his friend, who sincerely rejoiced with him.

Then he hastened to Mr. Inman's house to bear the good tidings, and to prepare for a trip to S. by the earliest train, being resolved, if possible, to see his new-found sister before the sun should set.

## XXIII.

### *THE MEETING.*

OF Roy's meeting with his sister we will tell in the words of Mrs. Southard, who related the circumstances to an old friend who chanced to call upon her on the very evening of Roy's arrival at S. After the usual greetings had been exchanged, Mrs. Southard said,—

"You find me under great excitement. I scarcely know what I am about."

"How so?" was the response. "In such a quiet little town as this, I should think excitement would be out of the question."

"Well," answered Mrs. Southard, "I have just been made a participant in the strangest and most interesting affair that I ever had anything to do with."

"What is it? Do tell me," urged her guest.

Mrs. Southard then proceeded to relate the following story :

"About seventeen years ago, after the death of our little Amy, my husband and myself, as you know, adopted a little girl, five years old, from a charitable institution in Boston, and she has been

in our family ever since. When she first came here she said she had a little brother, younger than herself, but that she did not know where he was. She grieved very much that she could not see him again. We comforted her as well as we could, and as the weeks and months went by she seemed to forget her sorrow, as children will, and rarely spoke of her brother except to express a hope that she should one day meet him. As she grew older, however, and especially after we lost the two little ones who were born after she came to us, she appeared to think more of her own brother and of her separation from him, and I heard her say but a few months ago,—

“‘If I only knew where he is, that I might write to him if he is still living, I should be perfectly happy.’

“About two hours before you arrived the door-bell rang, and I answered the call. On opening the door, a fine-looking young man asked me if Mr. Southard resided here.

“On my replying that he did, he inquired again,—

“‘Does Mary Rogers live here?’

“‘Yes, sir,’ I answered—we never changed her name, you know, Fanny ; Mr. Southard and I were both opposed to that.

“Then said the young man, who was evidently a good deal agitated,—

“‘I believe that she is my sister.’

“If a pistol had been unexpectedly fired off close by me, I don’t think I could have been more startled.

I managed, however, to say, 'Come in,' and when we were seated in the parlour I looked well at him to see whether he was trying to impose upon me. I soon decided that he was not. Then I thought of Mary's joy, and almost wept for joy myself. And still I asked myself, 'May there not be some mistake? Perhaps he is not her brother, after all.' Yet I could see that he strikingly resembled her. His eyes and forehead were remarkably like Mary's, and even in his voice there was something that reminded me of hers. He gave me a brief account of the manner in which he had discovered his relationship to our Mary, handed me a letter from the matron of the institution from which we had taken Mary, and satisfied me that he was what he claimed to be.

"Mary was at a neighbour's, and I sent for her. While I was talking with the young man and wondering how she would receive him, she came in. Our visitor rose, and extending his hand, said,—

"'Is this Mary Rogers?'

"'Yes, sir,' she answered wonderingly.

"'I have to-day been informed that I may claim you as my sister,' he said. "I am Frank Rogers."

"For a moment she seemed not to understand, and she turned to me for an explanation. But when I confirmed Frank's declaration her whole face lighted up, and the joy of the two it would have done your heart good to see. I was so glad then that we had not tried to make her forget all about



her brother, as some of our friends said we ought to do. Well, you can imagine how rejoiced we all were. There's no need for me to try to tell you. I believe I was as glad for them as they were for themselves and each other. You know Mary has always been such a dear, good daughter to us.

"Frank, or Roy, as he says he has always been called, has been giving us a sketch of his life, and I should like to have you hear something of it from himself while you are here. It is wonderful how God has provided for him and opened the way before him. He is with Mary now in the other room. In the course of the evening I will call him in and introduce him."

Roy, as we shall still call Frank Rogers, found that his sister was a very lovely girl. She was in her twenty-second year, well educated and intelligent, and attractive in personal appearance. Her sweet face and gentle ways spoke truly of a heart that had been yielded to the Saviour and that His Holy Spirit was sanctifying. Mr. and Mrs. Southard had treated her as their own child, and, as Mrs. Southard had remarked to her friend, Mary had been a good daughter to them.

On the next day Roy addressed the following letter to his adoptive mother :

"S., MASS., Dec. 19th, 1870.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—You will be very much surprised to receive a letter from me dated at this place ; but I came here to see my sister ! Now do

not be startled, nor conclude that I am crazy or joking, for I am speaking the truth. I have a genuine sister, just like the sisters of other brothers, one of the dearest girls you ever saw. She is two years older than I am. Her name is Mary Rogers. And so I have found *my* name: it is Frank Rogers. However, I shall stick to my old one, as I like that better. It fits me better; at least, it seems so to me. And I love it for your sake and father's. 'What's in a name?' But there is a great deal in a *sister*, I assure you. More than I ever dreamed of. I am happy beyond any expression that I can use to tell you; and I shall be happier still when, at some future time, I may be permitted to introduce her to you in my dear old home on the Penobscot.

"You will want to know how I found her. I will write all the particulars as soon as I return to A., the last of the present week. I have time now to say only that I found the institution in Boston where I was placed when I was a poor, helpless child-waif; and there I learned my name, and that I had a sister, and where she was. You may be sure that I lost no time in coming here. I have no brother and no other sister. We two, and no more!

"My heart is full. God has indeed led me in a way that I knew not. His goodness makes me feel my own unworthiness. I will love Him more and strive to serve Him better than I have done.

"Mary sends much love to you. She says, if I

am your son, she must be your daughter, since she is my sister.

“Your loving son,  
“ROY.”

Mr. Southard and his excellent wife were much pleased with Roy, and at once tendered to him the hospitalities of their house.

“Consider this your home,” said the minister; “you shall be just as welcome as Mary is. During vacation, or at any other time, we shall always be glad to see you.”

“I endorse that invitation, Frank,” added the pastor’s wife, “and I hope we shall see a great deal of you.”

“Nothing would give me greater pleasure,” answered Roy, “and I shall come as often as I am able. You know I have several years of hard work before me, in vacation as well as term-time. But my spirit will be here many a time when I’m absent in body. By the way, ma’am,” he added a moment after, “I observe that you call me ‘Frank.’ I really think I had better retain the name to which I’m accustomed. I am exceedingly puzzled with two names.”

“It is more than you bargained for,” said the minister with a smile. “I should think that two names would be more troublesome than convenient. Rogues have three or four sometimes.”

“I don’t know but I shall be obliged to write my name,

‘Frank Rogers, *alias* Royal Robson.’

"How will that do?" questioned Roy.

"It will look rather suspicious," Mr. Southard replied. "I have never seen or heard of any one in just such a predicament as you are. You are worse off than you were when you had no name."

"That is so," replied Roy. "For Mary's sake I should prefer my real name. Brother and sister ought to bear the same surname."

"But you forget," said Mrs. Southard, "that Mary will change her name before many months, and then your names will not be alike."

"Really I did forget that," answered Roy, with a roguish glance at Mary. "I suppose she would not relinquish her purpose for the sake of having our names alike."

"You might make that proposition to her, and see," remarked the minister playfully.

"Well, I think on the whole that I had better retain the *alias*, and be known here as elsewhere as Royal Robson. Gratitude to my foster-parents, who have done so much for me, inclines me in that direction. And then it would be very perplexing to return to the academy with a new name."

"Yes, I think there would be many inquiries as to what had become of the old one," said the minister. "You would need a fresh introduction to your teachers and classmates."

"As to that," responded Roy, "I should need a fresh introduction all around. Church records, town records, school records, family records, and all, would have to undergo a radical change."

"And that satisfies me that both of your names will stick," remarked the minister. "For, without doubt, your name is recorded as Frank Rogers in the town in which you were born, wherever that may be ; while it appears on other records, in the town where you were reared, as Royal Robson. I don't see any way of removing the difficulty. You must be known in history as the man with two names."

"I shall go on with the name that has helped me along in the world the greater part of my life," added Roy, with emphasis. "It has served me many a good turn, and I can risk it in the future."

"A wise decision, I think," said the minister's wife ; "old friends should not be cast aside."

Roy remained with his sister four days, and then returned to A., through Boston. He stopped one day and night in the city, time enough for long and joyful interviews with the secretary and Mr. Inman's family. All were eager to hear of his trip to see his sister, and the account of it afforded them real satisfaction. It was another strange chapter of an uncommon experience.

Roy was promptly on the ground when the academy term opened. He had never returned to his studies with so much zest and joy. He had never had such a vacation before. The discovery of a sister seemed to give him a new impulse.

"Did you have a good vacation?" inquired his room-mate.

"The best I ever had," answered Roy, with an accent that challenged attention.

"I had the poorest that I ever had," responded his friend. "But what made yours the best?"

"The most marvellous experience that you ever heard of," replied Roy promptly.

"If it beats some that I have heard of, it must be marvellous," remarked the other. "I heard of one college student who got married and buried his wife and became heir to a fortune, all in a single vacation."

"That is not so remarkable as mine," responded Roy; "it is more solemn, but not so wonderful. Men get married too often and their wives die too often for the experience to be wonderful."

"Yours must be remarkable, if neither a wedding nor a funeral can compare with it," said his friend. "What is it?"

"I am nearly twenty years old," said Roy, "and I never knew that I had a sister until this vacation, and I never saw her before."

"Can that be so? How is it possible?"

"It is incredible at first thought," said Roy; "and yet it came about as naturally as one school-term after another."

"It looks to me as if it were very unnatural. If there is anything natural in the world, it is that a brother should know a sister."

"When you know the facts, you will see that it is precisely as I tell you."

Roy entered at once upon the recital of his vacation experience, and this involved much of earlier life by way of explanation. He rehearsed the

matter somewhat minutely. His companion interrupted him occasionally with expressions of surprise, and exclaimed, when the story was finished,—

“Roy, you ought to be put into a book. I never heard anything like it in my life. I never dreamed that I was rooming with such a living mystery as you are.”

“Well, it was natural enough that I should not know I had a sister, was it not?” said Roy.

“Why, yes, natural enough, and unnatural enough, too,” his friend answered. “I can have no conception of what your feelings must be, Roy. I’d like to step into your place for about twenty minutes, just to realise how you feel.”

XXIV.

*HONOURS.*

WE shall summarise the remaining facts of Roy's student life, and conclude the narrative with one brief chapter.

Roy's preparatory course was drawing to its close. He had reached the last week of his stay in the academy, and was busy in preparing his valedictory address, when he received the following letter.

"MR. ROYAL ROBSON.

My dear Sir,—Will you accept the enclosed from a stranger, who is nevertheless your friend, and who has himself struggled with adverse circumstances that he might obtain an education? I have been interested in your history, which a friend has communicated to me, and am glad that God has so prospered me as to enable me to help another forward as I would gladly have been helped myself at your age. May God give you grace to be faithful to Him in your further preparation for His service in the ministry, and make you His instrument in bringing many souls into the kingdom of His dear Son.

"Your sincere well-wisher,

"P."



With surprise and gratitude Roy read the letter, which contained two fifty-dollar bills, and then silently passed it to his room-mate. The latter exclaimed after reading it,—

“Another mystery, Roy! I wonder who your new friend is. Have you any idea?”

“Not the least,” answered Roy. “I am taken wholly by surprise. I wish I did know, that I might thank him. As it is, I must, as he suggests, let acts speak for me.”

“This will be a great help to me next fall,” Roy continued after a few moments’ silence, “with what I hope to save from my summer at the Herrick Hotel. Dr. Tucker told me yesterday that he had succeeded in securing a place for me as a waiter there. He thinks it will pay better than teaching in Maine, and I am sure it will. So, Fred, if you should find yourself at that ‘delightful summer resort’ some time during the next three months, don’t be surprised if your coffee is handed you by your humble servant.”

“But, Roy,” said his room-mate in a horrified tone, “you don’t mean what you say. You surely can’t intend degrading yourself by taking a menial’s place.”

“Why, no,” returned Roy, with a look of amusement at his companion’s dismay, “I don’t look at it in that light. It’s honest work, isn’t it? I shall try to be a first-rate waiter. And I sha’n’t be the first student who has helped himself on in that way. The wages are fair, far better than I could earn in any other way I know of at present. The scenery is

grand, the air is invigorating, and the nature of my work will give me some opportunities to enjoy both, and also to profit by the 'table talk' of some of the guests who take their summer's recreation at the house, and who are well worth being near. And the change of work will make me more fit for study in the fall, I think. Altogether I am heartily glad of the opening. I want to do everything in my power for my own maintenance in my college and seminary course, while I am sincerely thankful to my heavenly Father for all the help that He has sent me through His servants."

"Well," said his room-mate, "I suppose you are right, as you generally are, but my pride would prevent me from taking such a step."

"The step doesn't come in your way," replied Roy; "but if it did, I believe you'd take it, thinking, as I do, that it would be but little for you to do for Him Who 'took on Himself the form of a servant' that He might save us. The only thing that troubles me," he added, "is that this arrangement will prevent me from seeing mother this summer. However, she doesn't really need me; and I know she'll think as I do about the matter."

Roy's standing in his class has been already alluded to, but the following letter from Dr. Tucker in answer to Mr. Bennet's inquiries will throw a little more light on the subject:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter is at hand, and I will answer your inquiries concerning Roy at once.

I know of your interest in his welfare, and the liberality which you have shown him, for he has told me of both. I believe you will never have cause to regret what you have done. Roy is an excellent scholar and an estimable young man. He has carried off the honours of his class, and is its valedictorian. He will leave the institution with the confidence and love of teachers and pupils. Such a young man is of great value in a large school, apart from the example and stimulus of his scholarship. Roy's personal influence for Christ has done for many other students what I believe nothing else would have been likely to do.

"I predict for him a course of usefulness and honour.

"Very truly yours,

"GEORGE K. TUCKER."

Often the bestowment of the parts for commencement\* exercises creates dissatisfaction, even where the bestowment is just. But there was no such feeling at A. It was conceded by every student that the highest part rightfully belonged to Roy. His average standing was so much higher than that of any one else that no questions were raised about the fitness of the appointment. And on this important occasion itself Roy justified the expectations of his friends, and especially gratified his sister, who was present with her husband and Mr. and Mrs. Southard.

\* The commencement of a new term is celebrated at the close of the preceding one.

We have not space to follow Roy's student-life farther. We can only say that in the autumn following the completion of his course at A., and his summer at the Herrick Hotel, he entered college and at once took a high standing there. Difficulties, of course, were still before him, and he sometimes felt discouraged because of the constant struggle necessary to enable him to achieve and endure. In competition with others he had to meet disappointments which showed him the power of ambition and self-love in his heart, and drove him to his Saviour's feet for strength to overcome them. More than once poverty and anxiety pressed him hard, but when the clouds gathered darkest, a friendly hand was stretched forth to help him. He succeeded in winning a scholarship for two of the four years of the course; and he also at different times obtained three prizes of some pecuniary value. Work of some sort busily engaged him in every summer vacation. And when the end was reached a post of honour was again assigned him, as at the academy commencement.

In due time he entered a theological seminary, where he passed through a similar experience.

Roy's hopes are realised now, and he is a minister of the gospel. His mother has heard him preach, and she is more than ever thankful for the part that God made her able and willing to perform for the little nameless waif, who still manifests toward her the devotion of a loving son.

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## XXV.

### *THE LESSON.*

WE will conclude with the report of a conversation about Roy which took place in Mr. Bennet's family.

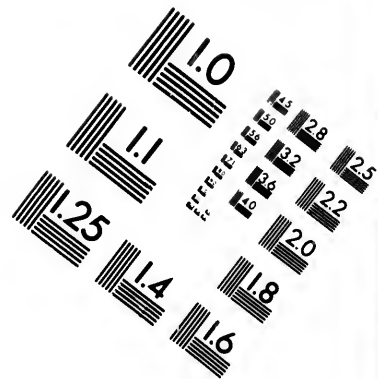
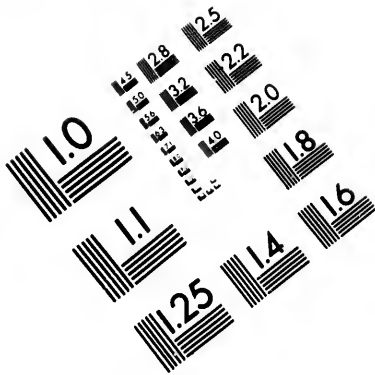
"The course of his life has really been quite remarkable," said Mrs. Bennet; "the more I think of it, the more surprised I am at his present standing."

"Any young man of equal energy and perseverance might achieve similar results," replied Mr. Bennet.

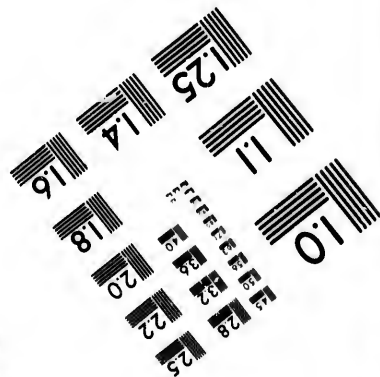
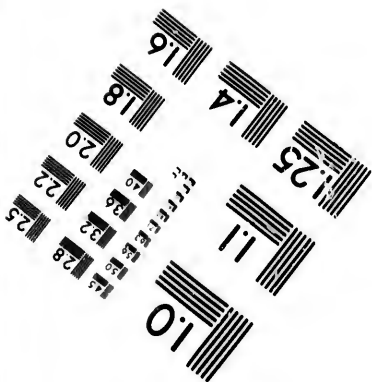
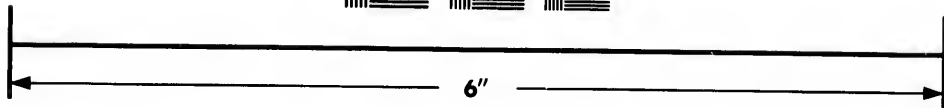
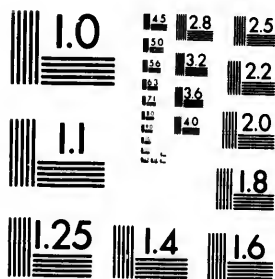
"Roy has set a good example for young men to follow," remarked Mrs. Bennet.

"He has proved what was always true—that success depends, under God, upon certain elements of character, instead of on chance or luck," rejoined Mr. Bennet. "Many young men live on the hope that something will turn up to give them a lift in life, never stopping to think that they need to exert themselves if they wish to advance. Many are not really in earnest in their work, whatever it may be, and so they jog along, accomplishing little. If Roy had been like them, he never would have undertaken to get an education."



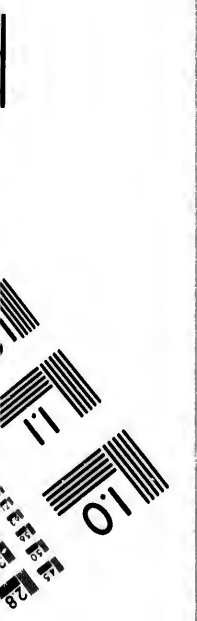


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"He never would have done it but for his Christian principle," said Mrs. Bennet. "We must not overlook that."

"No," responded Mr. Bennet, "his conscience impelled him to do to the extent of his ability according to the Scriptural rule. If young men had more conscience, they would exhibit more energy and perseverance. The first step for a young man to take is in the way of righteousness. He must become a Christian, and then, sooner or later, he will see that laziness is sin. Christ brands it as sin in His parable of the talents: 'Thou wicked and slothful servant'—wicked *because* slothful."

"Roy has had a noble aim before him," said Mrs. Bennet.

"Yes," replied her husband, "he told me once that he had an abiding conviction, the fruit, as he believed, of earnest and repeated prayer for direction as he considered the matter, that God called him to preach the gospel. He saw that there were obstacles in the way of his preparation, but he believed that if he tried to obey the call, God would help him to surmount the obstacles. He didn't hold himself back from hardship in his Master's cause, and God honoured his trust in Him; not by making his path perfectly smooth before him, but by giving him just the training and help that he needed to fit him for his work."

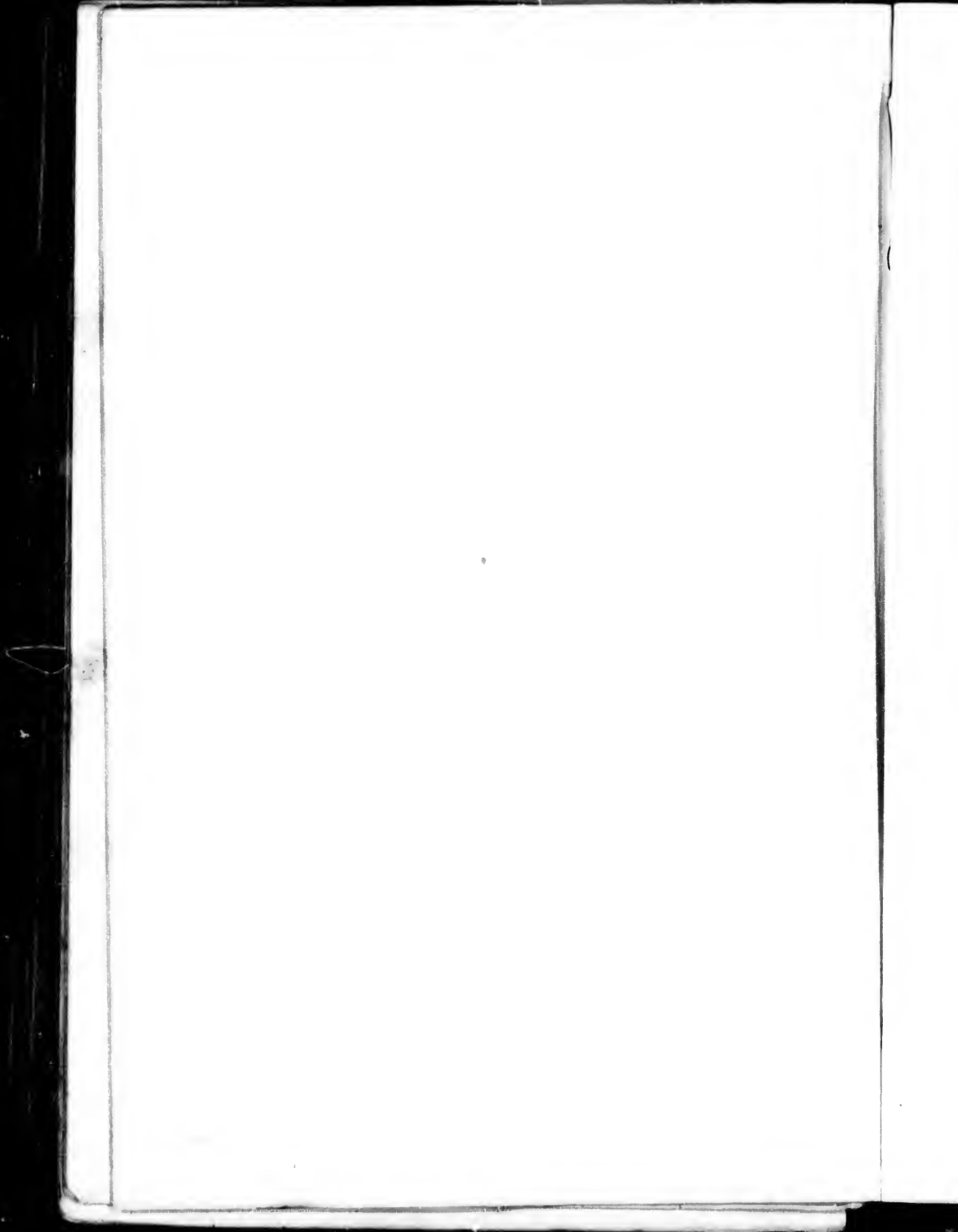
"Where do you think he will settle?" inquired Mrs. Bennet.

"He wants to go where there seems to be most

need for him. He has two calls under consideration now, he writes me : one from a flourishing little church in the town of F.—; the pastor died two months ago, perhaps you recollect ; and one from a feeble, struggling church on the frontier. I'm almost certain he'll accept the later. Now if it was young Maxwell, who was licensed at the same time with Roy, I'd say differently. He doesn't hesitate to declare that he wants his ministerial life to be 'easy and pleasant.' He has not any desire to be buried alive, he told me when I saw him the other day. I think, though, that whatever outward hardships Roy may have to contend with in the path of duty, his *inner* life will be more 'easy and pleasant' than Maxwell's."

"Well, I am glad," continued Mrs. Bennet, "that Mr. Inman sent Roy to us that summer. Perhaps we should never have known him but for that."

"His story makes me think more than ever of all benevolent institutions that care for the fatherless and motherless," said Mr. Bennet. "There is no telling what precious jewels may be found in such places. And souls that are less attractive by nature are yet precious in God's sight, and may be saved and polished for the Saviour's crown. I suppose there are many families into which a poor boy or girl might be introduced, as Roy was introduced into Mr. Robson's ; and how much sin might be prevented and how much good be effected by the Christian training of many such waifs !"



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