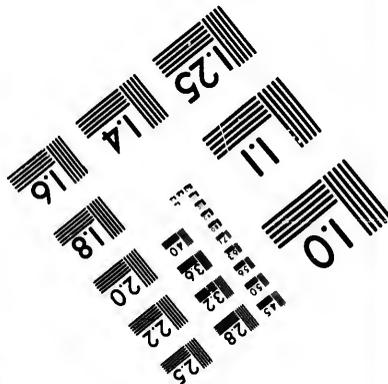
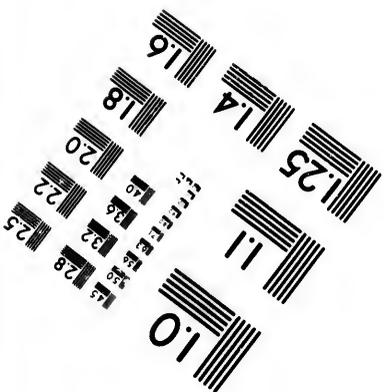
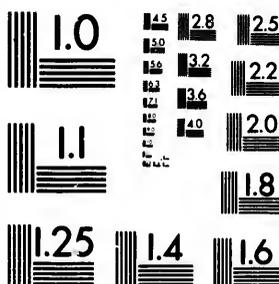


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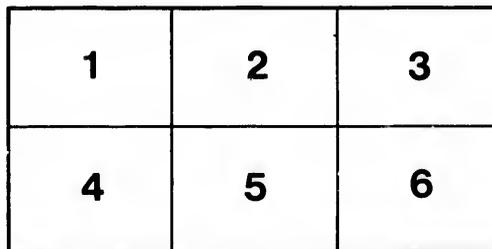
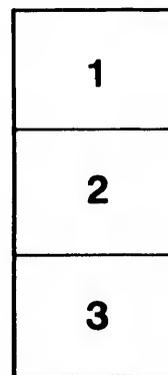
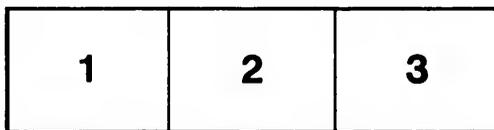
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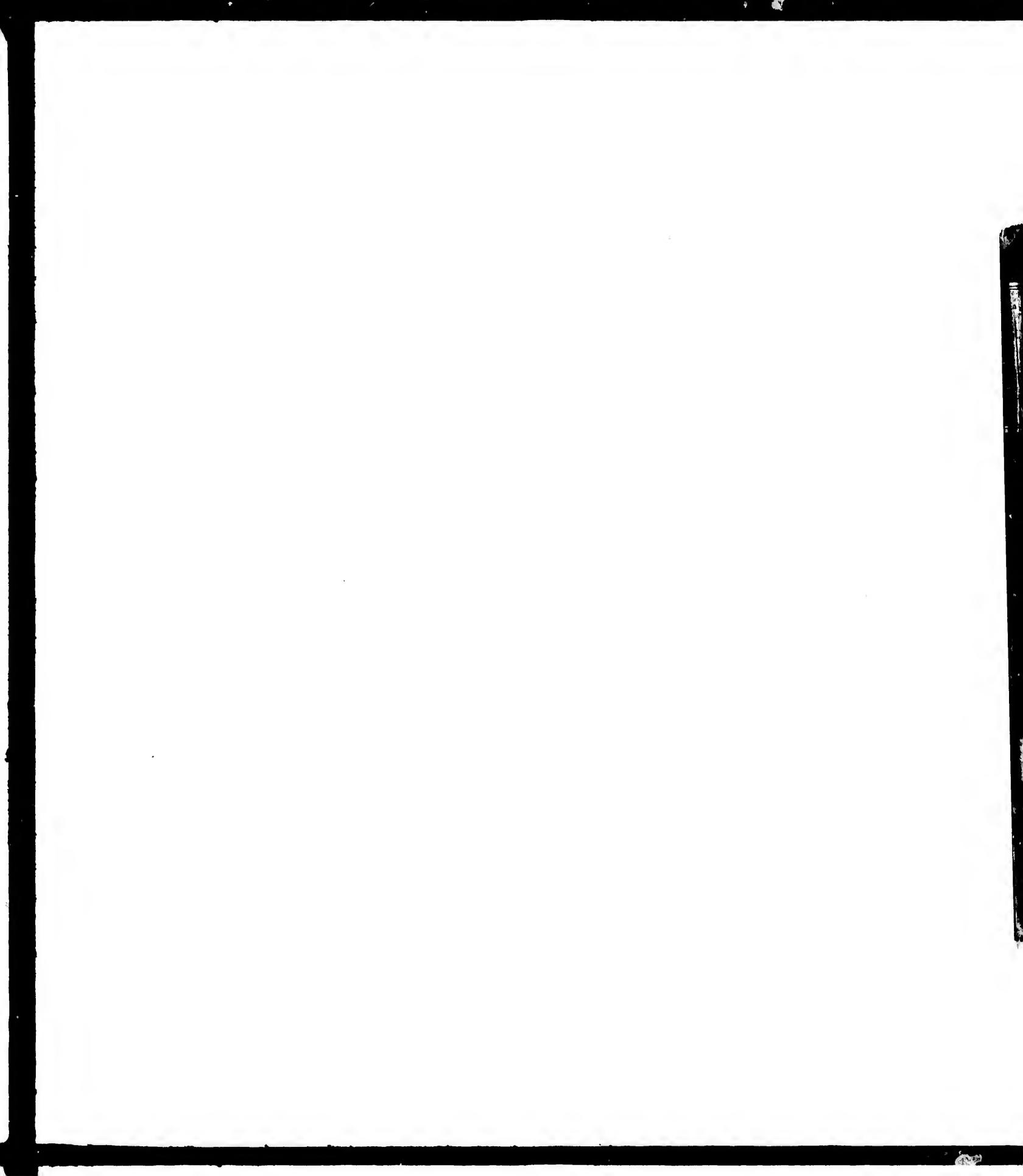
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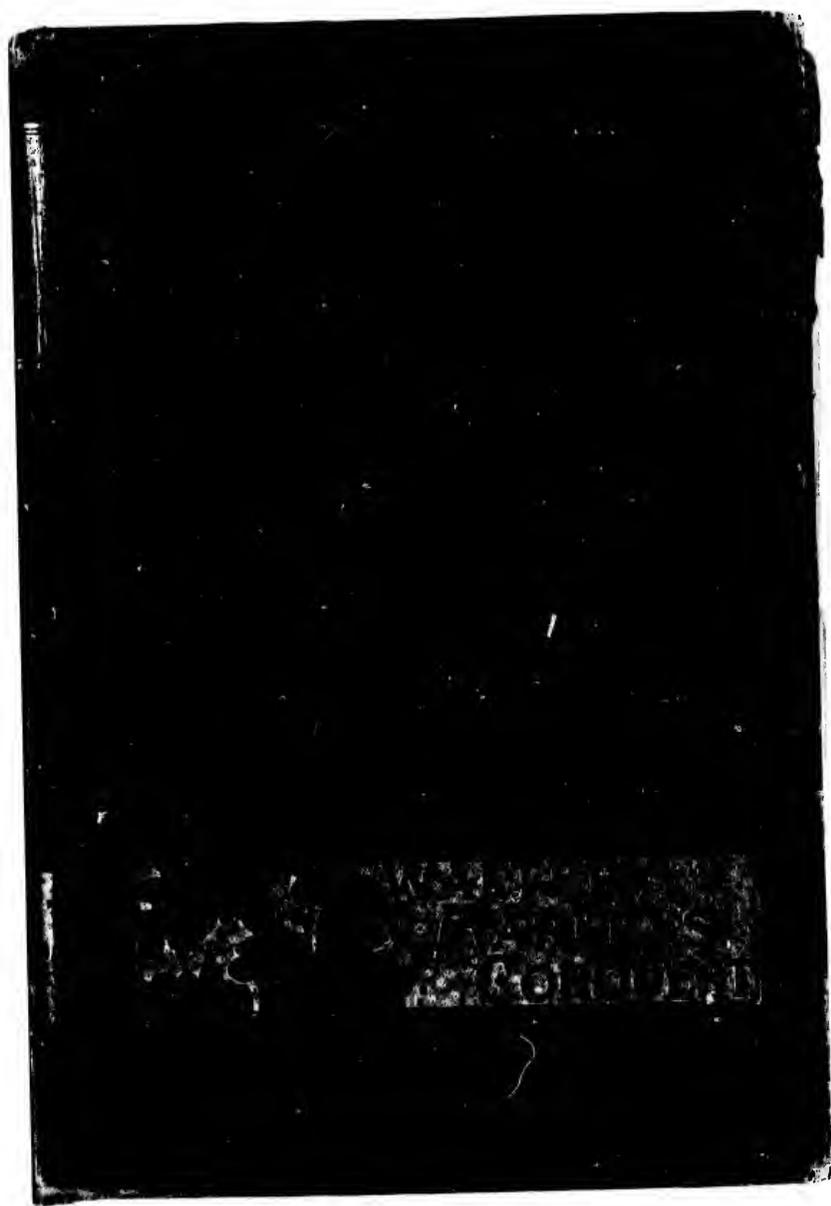
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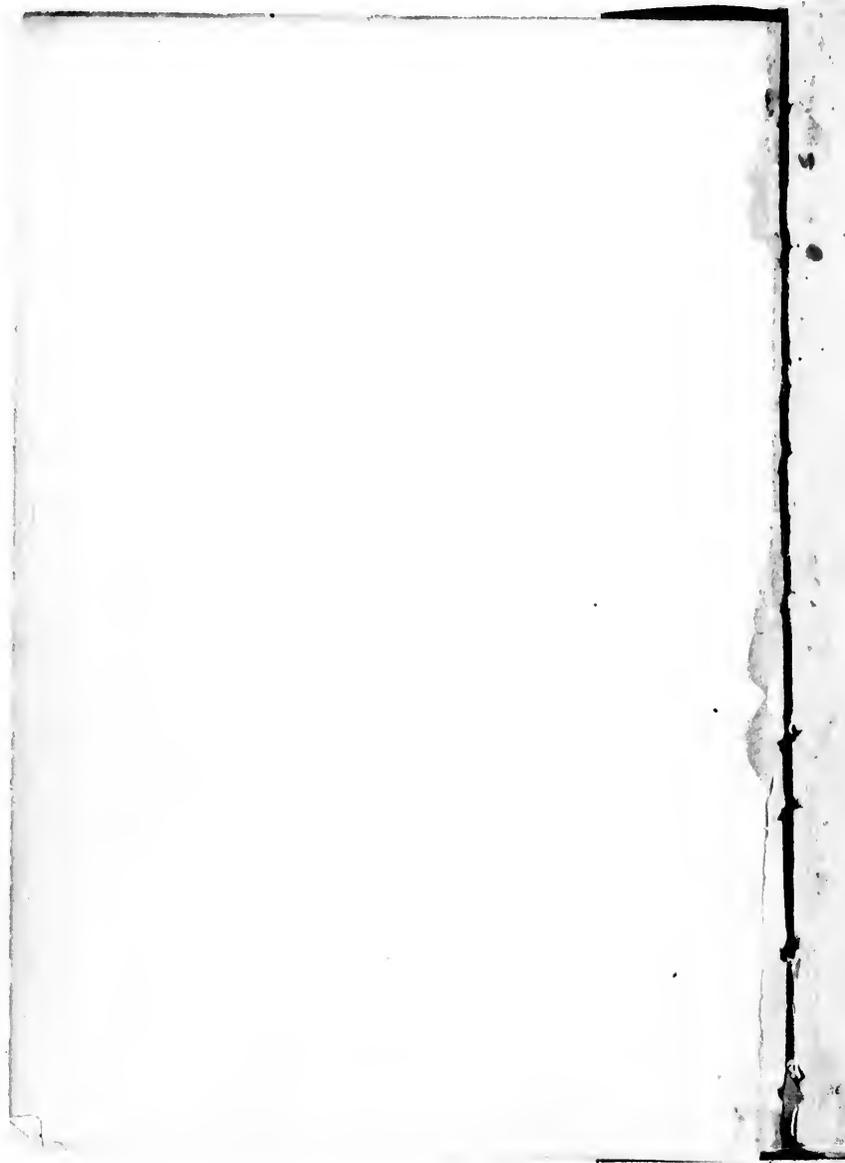
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WALTER HARLEY'S CONQUEST.

CHAPTER I.

WALTER AND LINA.

IT was a cold, cheerless afternoon in the latter part of December, and the cosy fireside seemed far more inviting than any out-door pleasures. So at least Walter Harley seemed to think, as drawing up a large arm chair to the library fire he threw himself in it, and was soon deeply absorbed in a new story book—a Christmas gift. The silvery-toned bell of the little timepiece on the mantel chimed out the hour of three. Quickly its hands slipped round, and four rang out through the room. Still Walter read on. Then dusky shadows began to gather in the corners of the room, and the firelight, flashing fitfully, threw a ruddy glow over the crimson carpet, lit up the tall, dark bookcases, with their rows of well-bound books, gleamed on bust and statuette, and played hide-and-seek about the curious carving of the arm chairs. But Walter

saw nothing of this; neither did he notice the opening of the door, nor hear a soft footfall, until a cheery voice said:

"What! reading by this light, Walter?" And, looking up, he saw his cousin, Lina Morton, a bright-faced young lady of twenty, who had come to give him his music lesson.

"It is dark," he exclaimed, starting to his feet, and throwing down the book. "I have finished it, anyway. I tell you, Lina, that fellow was just splendid. He was a hero."

"What did he do?" asked Lina.

"What didn't he do?" exclaimed Walter. "He did everything that was brave. The last thing he did was to rescue a woman and her two children from a burning house, and it nearly cost him his life. Now, Lina, can't you get up a fire down your way, and I will come and save you just before the roof falls?"

"Thank you. I would rather not go through the experience; and if I did, I would probably be shivering in the street, looking at the ruins of our house, while your royal highness would be wrapped in slumber sweet, all unconscious of my danger."

"Now, Lina, that is too bad."

"Well, Walter, I do not know how I can make you a

hero, unless I can manage to tumble into the river next summer, when we are out boating."

"Oh, do!" said Walter, laughing, "and oblige yours truly. But honestly, Lina, I often think I could do a brave deed if I had the chance; but I have never had the chance yet, and I don't suppose I ever shall."

Very manly the boy of fourteen looked, as he drew himself up to his full height; and very handsome too, Lina thought, as figure and face were thrown into full relief by the bright firelight. His was a Saxon type of countenance, with bright brown hair clustering around an open brow, and merry blue eyes that wore an earnest look just now, and rounded cheeks on which rested the glow of health. But Lina saw something far better than all this in that pleasant, frank, boyish face,—something that would last when all that youthful charm was gone,—the love of all that is pure and true, the aspiration after all that is great and noble in life. All this flashed through her mind in the pause that followed Walter's words. Then she said:

"I do not think the chance to do deeds of heroism such as you have mentioned comes very often in any man's life, and to many the opportunity never comes; yet these may be just as truly heroes as the others."

"Oh, yes, I grant that," said Walter. "There are

some fellows, for instance, who are poor, and have to work hard to support mother, and brothers and sisters, and get an education the best way they can. I think they are noble; but I am not called to do that."

"Yes; but what makes their lives noble? Is it not their devotion to those they love—their readiness to make any sacrifice for their benefit? And that is just what every one can do, however easily their lives flow on. It seems to me the question for most of us is not, Are we ready to die for those we love? but, Are we ready to live for them—to make any little self-sacrifice which will render them happier; to put one's own special feelings and tastes and preferences in the background, and always consider others first? I tell you, Walter, it is harder than any one would dream to be *always* self-forgetful; and such a life is heroic, however commonplace in other respects it may be."

Lina spoke earnestly, and a little flush rose in her face, and her dark eyes brightened.

As for Walter, a vision of a little disappointed face rose before him, as he remembered how, that very afternoon, he had told his little sister Bertha, to "run away and not bother him," when she came asking him to mend a broken toy. "And perhaps poor mother had to fix it," he thought; "and it is Ann's afternoon out, and baby is

fretting and cross. How selfish I have been all the afternoon! Have I indeed failed to be a true hero?"

He could not help feeling glad, however, that Lina knew nothing of all this; and, ready to excuse himself, said:

"Oh, of course, one ought to do all those things, but then they are so very small."

"That depends on how you look at them," said Lina. "If you look at them with the eyes of the world, they do look small, and perhaps they may not seem great even to your nearest friends, because they cannot know how much it has cost you to make the sacrifice, or give up your own way. But they are great in the sight of God. And, after all, Walter, there is only one true standard of greatness, and that is the divine standard. As things are in the sight of God, so they really are, and we shall see this in the light of eternity, if we do not now."

"You would do for a preacher, Lina," said Walter.

"Now you may be sure I shall not say any more," returned Lina, gayly. "How dark it is getting! Come, Wally, we must begin our music lesson."

"Yes, I suppose so," replied Walter, with a half sigh. "Nothing very heroic in that."

"I don't know," said Lina, quietly. "I wish it might be, as I have to spend so much time in that way."

Walter had just lit the lamp, and, glancing at Lina as she spoke, he noticed a momentary weary expression pass over her face; it was only momentary, but it set him thinking as he led the way into the parlor. Was it possible that, after all, Lina did not very much enjoy teaching music? It was a new thought to him, for Lina always seemed to like to do everything she did. But the thought made him take more pains with his exercises and scales, and he secretly resolved that hereafter he would practice more faithfully, and so make the hour easier for his young teacher.

Just here let us pause a moment, and learn something more about our young friends. Walter was the eldest of a family of four, and the only son. His father, Mr. Harley, was a prosperous merchant, everywhere respected for his integrity, and beloved by all who knew him for his genial manners. Mrs. Harley was a sweet-tempered, gentle woman, devoted to her husband and family. Naturally quiet in manners, she was nevertheless the centre and life of her home, and one could not be long in her presence without feeling that all her thought was how best to promote the happiness and comfort of others. Mr. and Mrs. Harley had had six children; two next in age to Walter had died in infancy; then came Carrie, eight years old, Bertha, four, and Baby Winnie. They

had a delightful home a short distance out of the small town of Knowlton. Elmwood, for that was the name of the place, was a well-built, substantial house. It was surrounded by ample grounds, which were well kept, making it a charming place in summer; nor was it less attractive in winter, for the house was tastefully furnished and filled with all that could please a refined mind. Yet the chief charm of that home lay not in its surroundings, but in the fact that it was a happy Christian home; for Mr. and Mrs. Harley were both earnest Christians, and their highest desire was to see their children loving and loyal followers of Jesus.

Lina Morton was the only daughter of Mr. Harley's sister. Her lot was differently cast from that of her cousin. Mr. Morton was a bookkeeper at a moderate salary. Mrs. Morton had some property of her own, from which she received a small income, and with prudence and good management they had always been able to live comfortably. But as Lina grew up she felt the necessity of earning something for herself, more particularly as her brother Rob was ready to enter college. His cherished desire was to become a doctor, and Lina knew that her parents would have heavy expenses for some years. As she had a good musical education, she resolved to give music lessons, and soon had a number of

pupils. Besides this, she acted as governess to her cousin Carrie, spending three hours with her every morning. Her afternoon was taken up with lessons; so she was kept very busy. Very buoyantly Lina entered upon her tasks, but, like most young people, she found that work is work, and sometimes she was very weary, and her zeal flagged so that she was almost ready to give up. But the thought of being a real help to those she loved spurred her on, and perhaps her best friends never guessed her discouragements. And through all these experiences the young girl was drawn nearer to her Heavenly Friend, and day by day received renewed strength from him.

Mr. Harley was very fond of his niece, and to Walter she was like an older sister. Indeed, to Lina, Elmwood seemed as much home as did her own, and she often laughingly told Walter that she was as rich as he, for she had as much enjoyment of his home as he had.

But by this time the music lesson was finished, and Lina was putting on her wraps in the hall. Walter, who was inclined for a walk after his afternoon in the house, remembered an errand he had in town, and said he would walk in with her. Then a thought occurred to him, and he called his mother to know if there was anything he could do for her on his way. Walter was not often so thoughtful as this.

"Yes," said his mother. "I wish, dear, you would take a mould of jelly down to Jennie Elston. She has so little appetite, poor thing! and I dare say she would relish it. I was thinking of her to-day, and wishing I could take her some."

"I am sure she would like it," said Lina. "Mrs. Elston told me the other day that Jennie only cared for little niceties of that kind, and it must be difficult for them to get those little luxuries for her."

"Yes; they have a hard struggle to get along," said Mrs. Harley, and then she flitted away to the pantry, whence she soon returned with a glass of jelly.

"I suppose, mother," said Walter, as he took it from her hand, "that if I drop it in the road it won't make any difference."

"Oh, you are a sad case, Wally." But the fond mother-look was in her eyes as she said it. "Lina, you must look after this boy, and see that he behaves himself."

"All right; if any accident happens, I will charge it to you, Lina." And thus merrily they set off down the avenue.

"That is just like mother," said Walter, as they turned into the road; "she is always doing something for somebody. I wish I did as much."

"So you will, some day, I am sure," replied Lina. "And now it is something to be the bearer of her gifts, is it not?"

"Yes," said Walter, "I suppose it is; I never thought of that. I know that there are many things I might do for others; but the worst of it is, that I never think of them until the opportunity is gone."

"Very much my trouble too, Walter, but this thoughtfulness for others grows with exercise. One thing is certain, one must have 'a heart at leisure from itself,' if one would be helpful. One whose thoughts are centered in self cannot be a blessing to others."

"Well, the new year is close upon us," said Walter, "and I, for one, intend to turn over a new leaf."

"Here is the place," said Lina, stopping before a little low cottage, and tapping gently on the door.

The knock was answered by a pale, care-worn woman, with a delicate-looking child clinging to her dress. Her face lighted up as she took the jelly.

"Thank you," she said; "Mrs. Harley is very kind. Jennie will enjoy it so much."

"How is Jennie to-day?" asked Lina.

"She is quite feverish this afternoon, Miss Morton. She sometimes gets so discouraged. Won't you come in?"

"Not now, thank you; I will be in to-morrow," said Lina.

"Oh, Lina, what must it be to be ill in a place like that?" exclaimed Walter, as they turned away.

"Mrs. Elston keeps everything clean and tidy," replied Lina.

"Oh, yes, tidy enough, but the rooms are so small; and then think of having the smell of the cooking, and the noise of the children, and all the work going on close around one."

"Many people have to live that way," returned Lina; "and these things may interest her sometimes, with nothing else to do. She is *my* heroine; she is so patient through all her weary hours. It is a great trial to her not to be able to help her mother; and on days when she feels brighter and better, I have seen her trying to do some of the sewing for the family. She can do some fancy work, and it so amuses her that I interested some of my pupils in her. They gave her orders for work, and this Christmas she was able to earn a little money, and you should have seen how pleased she was. Sometimes she thinks she will get better,—consumption is such a flattering disease,—but I know her mother has no hope."

By this time they had reached Lina's door, and, with a cheery good-night, Walter went on his way down town.

He soon accomplished his errand, and started for home. As he left the town behind him, he slackened his pace, and gave himself up to thought.

Walter was a good-hearted boy; none were more willing to help others than he, and he was a general favorite among his school fellows. But he was rather case-loving, and there was nothing in his surroundings to counteract this tendency; for he was not obliged by circumstances, as many are, to do things he did not like.

This evening he felt as though he had had a glimpse into a new life—a higher one than that he was leading. Walter had trusted in Jesus, and had begun to try and follow him. He had prayed to be made unselfish; but he had never before realized how much selfishness there was in him. Perhaps that vision of something better was a call to him to come up higher. Would the coming year see some effort to obey that call? Solemnly, earnestly, Walter resolved that it should.

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CHAPTER II.

"LITTLE DEEDS OF KINDNESS."

WALTER was awakened next morning by the bell for rising. He had been in the habit of paying very little attention to it; then, almost at the last minute, he would jump up, dress in a great hurry, and get down just in time for prayers, congratulating himself on his punctuality. But this morning he remembered his resolve to turn over a new leaf—"and it is better to begin on the last day of the old year, and so finish it up well, than wait for the new year," he thought. As he did not wait for second thoughts, he was soon up and dressed. Then he sat down in an easy chair by the window, and looked around for something to occupy him until breakfast time.

Such a cosy room it was, bearing on every hand traces of a mother's loving fingers. The walls were covered with a light, cheerful paper; the carpet showed a pretty pattern of running vines in brown on a green ground; white window curtains were drawn back and kept in place by pink ribbon; on the bureau was a dainty toilet set in pink and white. A pretty desk stood in one

corner of the room. On one wall was a hanging bookshelf, with books of travel and adventure, such as boys like, interspersed with school books and a few works of a graver character. Pictures also hung about the walls — one, of little Samuel kneeling in prayer, Walter had had ever since he could remember; then there were two little bits of landscape, and a fine steel engraving of one of Landseer's pictures. On a little table lay an uncut magazine, a daily text book, and his Bible.

As Walter glanced around the room his eye fell on the latter, and with shame he remembered that of late it had been too much neglected. "I can never be a good soldier of Jesus Christ if I do not read my Captain's orders," he said to himself. "I will try, after this, to find time to read a few verses every day."

So he opened the Bible at the Epistle to the Romans. The little blue marker showed the place where he had left off some days before. It lay at the fifteenth chapter, and the words came with new power to Walter: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves . . . for even Christ pleased not himself."

Walter's mother had always taught him that the best way to study the Bible was to read the references to any passage; so he read in the Epistle to the Galatians:

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"; and in 1 Thessalonians, "Support the weak"; and in the Acts, "So labouring, ye ought to support the weak." For a few moments he knelt in prayer, asking the aid of the Holy Spirit to carry out in his life the words he had just been reading, and then went down with a happy heart to join the family in the breakfast room.

As Walter was now enjoying Christmas holidays, he had considerable time to himself; so, after breakfast, he went up to what he called his workshop. This was a room in the attic, where he kept tools, paint, etc., and where he exercised his ingenuity in making a few things and spoiling a good many more. In one part of the room he had his gymnasium, and before sitting down to work he went through several exercises. He had just fairly settled down, and was whittling and planing at a great rate, when his sister Carrie came in, and, after hovering about in an uncertain way for a while, said:

"Walter, I wish you would come out skating with me by-and-by; the ice is lovely on the pond."

Carrie had her first pair of skates given to her at Christmas, and was beginning to learn to skate on a small sheet of ice near the house; but she was ambitious to try on some larger piece.

"I can stand on my skates now," she added, encouragingly.

Walter smiled. To go out skating with a child who was only just learning was rather dull work; but he remembered the text of the morning, "Even Christ pleased not himself," and said, cheerily:

"All right, Carrie; I will go with you at eleven o'clock."

By eleven o'clock Carrie was all ready, and was soon skipping merrily along by the side of her brother. It was a beautiful, bright morning—not too cold for enjoyment. To reach the pond they went across some open fields, and down the hill to a low, swampy tract of ground, through which ran a small stream. The stream overflowed its banks in spring and autumn, forming a miniature lake, which was now a wide expanse of ice. As it was perfectly safe, it was a favorite resort for youthful skaters who were not allowed by their parents to go on the river.

Walter soon had Carrie's skates on, after which followed many awkward attempts on her part to skate, with some tumbles. But with Walter's strong hand to hold her up, she did pretty well, and really began to improve. Of course, there was no fun in all this for Walter, and by-and-by he began to weary of it.

"Don't you feel tired now, Carrie?" he said.

"Oh, I am not a bit tired," said the little damsel, innocently.

"Still, it does not do to stay out too long at first, you know, till you get accustomed to it," continued Walter, with an air of superior wisdom.

"We have not been out long, Wally, and I am getting on so nicely now."

"Well, I will take a turn to the end of the pond, and you try and go alone for a little while; you will learn more that way," said Walter, wheeling around on one foot, and making curves and flourishes which Carrie thought simply wonderful as she stood there balancing herself on her skates, afraid to move for fear she would fall.

"Don't be long," called Carrie. But by this time Walter was almost out of hearing. Away he glided to the other end of the pond and up the stream for a little distance. When he returned he found that three or four of Carrie's little girl friends had come on the ice, and were helping her along; so he started off to enjoy himself. He had not gone very far, before he overtook a little boy who seemed to be having trouble with his skates.

"What is the matter?" asked Walter. "Can't you make your skates stay on?"

"They are loose, and I haven't any wrench," replied the little fellow.

"I have one," returned Walter, "and I will soon make them all right."

It was some time, however, before he could make them fit. But the little chap was so pleased that Walter felt rewarded for his trouble, though he had only time himself for one more skate around the pond before dinner time.

In the afternoon Walter started off for a skate on the river. He had not gone far before he heard a calling and halloing, and looking back saw Arthur, Mary, Adeline, and Stanley Harrington coming along the road after him, all bent on the same errand as himself.

The Harringtons lived about a quarter of a mile from Elmwood, and were very intimate friends of the Harleys. Judge Harrington had been very successful in his chosen profession—that of the law—and had risen step by step until he had reached his present position. He had a large family of sons and daughters growing up around him, and a pleasanter circle it would be hard to find.

We will glance at the four who now joined Walter.

Arthur was twelve, but being small of his age looked much younger than Walter. Having been delicate in

early childhood, he was not so advanced in many respects as most boys of his age; but he was a bright, pleasant little fellow, with very gentle manners. Mary, a healthy, blooming girl of fourteen, with unbounded vitality and energy, made quite a contrast to her brother. She entered with great spirit into all kinds of out-door amusements, and excelled in them all. Her lively conversation, tempered as it was with good common sense, made her a very agreeable companion. Walter liked her, and a pleasant boy and girl friendship existed between them.

Adeline was eighteen, and consequently quite a young lady. Walter thought her very pretty, and most people would agree with him. She always dressed well and in good taste, and withal had a style about her which made her look well in almost anything she chose to put on. Walter was rather in awe of her, as she was quite witty and somewhat sarcastic. He often felt, too, inclined to resent her patronizing manner toward him, whom she classed among the younger ones.

Stanley was a tall, slender young man of twenty, pale-faced and dark-haired. He was attending college, and was home now for his holidays. It was generally understood that he intended to follow his father's profession. Some thought him wanting in energy, but they little

dreamed of the force of character hidden beneath a quiet exterior. Stanley was as proud of his sister Adeline as she was fond of him, and they were constantly together when he was at home.

The party went merrily on. Not finding very good skating near the town, they crossed the river and skated up toward a tributary stream which was now one sheet of smooth, clear ice. The elder ones met some friends, and stopped on the way; so the others found themselves far ahead. Walter and Mary, who had skated fast, were glad to throw themselves down on the ice and rest.

The sun was setting, and the western sky was bright with golden light, while a faint, rose-colored mist hung upon the eastern horizon. All was perfect stillness, and something of that quiet rested on the two young friends; and for a while neither of them spoke. Mary first broke the silence.

"What a perfect day it is! Do you know on days like this, when everything in nature around one is so beautiful, I feel such a longing come over me to be of some use in the world—to so fill my life with noble deeds that it would be worth living. I would like so much to be a doctor, and I will some day," she added, with sudden energy and with almost a defiant air.

"You!" said Walter, in open-eyed amazement.

"Yes, why not? I do not see anything unwomanly in it, and one could do good that way. I know they will laugh at me at home, but that shall not hinder me." And she pressed her lips together firmly.

"Molly, I would never have thought of you as wanting to be a doctor."

"I suppose you think, as every one else does, that I am only a fun-loving girl, with no thought of doing serious work in the world; but I am in earnest." And there were tears in her brown eyes.

"I am sure you are; but you do not know what hard work it is, both in the study and the practice."

"Yes; but it is the ambition of my life; it is the work I want to do so much, and that will make it easier; and I am strong and healthy. But I do not know how I ever came to say all this. You will not tell any one just now. Walter, will you?"

"I will keep your secret," said Walter; "and I, for one, wish you well."

"Thank you," replied Mary.

She had no time to say more, as just then the rest of the party appeared in view.

"Here you are, I declare, having a flirtation," said Adeline; "we thought you were lost. Isn't this ice perfection?"

"Come, Ada," said Stanley, "it is time we were going home."

"You provoking creature, that is what you always say when I am enjoying myself, and do not want to leave."

"It is your own fault," returned her brother; "we would have been here long ago, if you had not wasted time talking to the Bentleys."

"Wasted time, indeed!" replied Ada, "when I had not seen them for so long, and had so many important things to say. You seemed to enjoy skating with Fannie very well, I thought."

"Oh, I had to fill up the time somehow," said Stanley.

"Quite to your satisfaction, though, I fancy," returned Ada. "Come, Molly, we ought to be on our way home."

"Let us all join hands and skate down to the mouth of the stream together," proposed Stanley.

Soon all five were gliding rapidly over the smooth ice.

When they reached the other side of the river, Walter left the party, as he had a message to deliver for his father, which took him a different way. Climbing the steep bank, he passed close by the back yard of a little cottage. An old woman was tottering across the yard with an arm full of wood.

"How are you Aunt Jane?" called Walter.

Nurse Brown, or, as she was commonly called, Aunt

Jane, had been Mrs. Harley's nurse in childhood, and was a favorite with the young Harleys.

The old woman turned and looked for a moment at the boyish speaker, whom she could only dimly see in the dusk.

"Don't you know me?" said Walter.

"Oh, Master Walter, is that you? I couldn't think who it was at first, you are growing so tall. Come in and sit down. I have had the rheumatism, and I am rather stiff these days," she continued; "but it might be worse with me than it is."

"You are not alone, are you?" said Walter.

"No; a niece of mine stays with me. She goes out all day sewing; but she is company for me in the evening."

"You ought not to be carrying in wood," said Walter.

"The neighbors' boys often come in and do little chores for me; but I guess they are off playing to-day."

"I'll bring some wood in." And before she could say a word, Walter was off to the wood shed.

He soon had her wood box piled full, answering her inquiries about the different members of the family the while. Then he went to work splitting kindlings, paying no attention to Aunt Jane's remonstrances.

"There, now you will soon have a good fire," he

said, slipping in some of the dry kindlings between the pieces of damp wood.

"You are your mother's own boy," said Aunt Jane, admiringly; "she was always helping somebody."

"I wish to be like her," replied Walter. And without waiting to hear the parting blessings showered on him by the old nurse, he ran off on the way toward home. He must have left sunshine behind him; for somehow things looked very bright to Aunt Jane as she went back into her little room.

As for Walter, he reached home quite in the mood to romp with the little ones till the tea bell rang.

That evening, passing through the kitchen, he found Hannah, the cook, over a closely-written sheet.

"A letter from your sweetheart, Hannah?" said Walter, mischievously.

"Sweetheart! No," returned Hannah, scornfully. "I wouldn't be bothered with the likes of them. It is from my brother Jim, and see the lovely Christmas card he sent me, and it only got here this morning." Here she carefully drew out a really handsome card to show to Walter. Then, with some pride, she took from an envelope a New Year's card. "I want to send this to him," she said, "and I'd like to send a few lines to tell him I am well; but, dear me, I couldn't write a letter fit to be

seen to save my life. Jim is such an elegant writer," she added, looking admiringly at the numerous strokes and flourishes on the sheet before her.

Walter inwardly smiled at the idea of applying the term elegant to Jim's cramped, irregular handwriting.

"Shall I write it for you?" he said.

"Indeed, and I would be greatly obliged, if it's no put out to yourself."

"Not at all," returned Walter. He went into the library for pen and ink, and his eye fell on the new magazine lying temptingly open on the table; but it was with no regret that he closed it, and returned to patiently put on paper all Hannah's messages. He was a good writer; and, when the letter was finished, regarded it with pardonable pride, while Hannah was simply delighted. When he went back to the library, he found his mother sitting alone by the fire; and glad to have mother all to himself, he threw himself down on the hearth rug, and recounted the day's doings.

"I am glad my boy has been trying to help others to-day," said Mrs. Harley, when he had finished.

"Oh, but mother, they were such little things. They seem hardly worth naming."

"But, my dear boy," said Mrs. Harley, "do not these little things, as you call them, make up life? I am sure,

I, for one, would be discouraged, if I thought they were of no importance; for my days are largely made up of just such opportunities for doing good. You remember the familiar old hymn you used to sing when a child:

“ ‘ Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like to heaven above ’ ! ”

“ But do you not think it would be nice to do some great thing, mamma ? ”

“ Yes, if God gives us some great thing to do, but not otherwise. It is best to do just the work that God places before us. We are simply called to be faithful, and ‘ he that is faithful over a few things ’ will one day be made ‘ ruler over many things. ’ Yet, Walter, when you think of it, it is no little thing, but a very solemn responsibility and privilege, to show forth Christ in all the relations of life. ”

“ How can we do that, mother ? ” said Walter.

“ You know God reveals himself to us through earthly relationships. He calls himself our Father in heaven, that we who know what ‘ father ’ means may better understand the love and care of God toward us. Then Christ is spoken of as our Elder Brother. Now you are an elder brother; and if day by day you try to be a

loving, kind, helpful brother to your little sisters, then when they hear Christ spoken of as an Elder Brother, they will be drawn to him, and, remembering all you have been to them, they will be helped to understand the love and tenderness of Jesus."

"Oh, mother, I never thought of it in that light before. I am afraid I can never do it; I fail so often in being what I should be."

"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me," replied his mother, gently. "His 'grace is sufficient.' You have done it to-day, in your kindness to your little sister. Little things make a deep impression in little hearts, and are often carried as a life-long remembrance, influencing the acts of the full-grown man or woman."

"It makes life seem very solemn," said Walter, as he kissed his mother good-night.

"Yes, and very happy too, dear," she answered.

And her words rang in Walter's ears till they mingled with his dreams, and seemed to drift away and blend in "a Happy New Year."

CHAPTER III.

A DAY AT UNCLE ZEBEDEE'S.

“WELL, mother,” said Mr. Harley, next morning at breakfast, “I suppose you are all ready for an early start to Uncle Zebedee’s.”

“You would not wish to set off before eleven o’clock, would you? Then we would reach there soon after twelve; that would be about the time they would expect us, would it not?”

“If we were to come when they expected us, we would be on our way now,” replied Mr. Harley; “for when country folks ask one to spend the day, they mean the day, and not half of it, as town people do. But as it is winter time, and they will not be up so very early, I presume it will do to start punctually at eleven.”

“And we are to go to Rev. Mr. Upham’s donation party in the evening, are we?” said his wife.

“That is the idea,” returned Mr. Harley. “I think Uncle Zebedee wanted to make sure of us by inviting us to his place to dinner. When he was in the office some days ago, he mentioned that the people thought of giving their minister a donation party on New Year’s evening,

so I drew out my pocketbook, and was about to hand him something. 'Oh, no,' he said, 'come and bring it yourself; we want your presence, as well as your money. Come, and be ready to say a few words.'

"I told him that we were getting to be such stay-at-home old people, that I didn't believe we could take such an excursion. In fact, we enjoyed our own fireside in the evening.

"'Come now,' he said, 'you have a cosy home; but you needn't be so fond of it as all that, and you are not so old but that you could drive a few miles on a winter night; and then you know we like to see a few friends from the town.'

"So I went so far as to say that, if the weather was favorable, we would try and be there. Not long after, uncle came asking us to spend the day with them."

"I am so glad. I think it will be splendid," said Walter.

"It will quite remind us of old times, Alfred," said Mrs. Harley, smiling.

"Yes," he replied. "Do you remember, Alice, the time when a sled load of us young people drove up to Elder Smith's donation?"

"I should think so; that was the time when we were upset in a snowdrift on our way home."

"Oh, what fun that must have been!" exclaimed Walter.

"I did not mind it as much then as I would now," said his mother.

"I remember," said Mr. Harley, "that I was so anxious for fear you might have been hurt, Alice."

"And I never knew that you cared anything about me, then," returned his wife.

"Ah, Walter!" said his father, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "those were the good old days."

"I presume there are just as good ones yet to come, sir," returned Walter.

"No doubt," said his mother, "but it is the especial privilege of old people to have lived in days better, in their estimation, than any their descendants will see."

"Papa," said Carrie, timidly, "you don't think we will be upset to-day, do you?"

"Oh, no, dear; not unless our good old horse should run away, which is not at all likely. The time mamma was telling about was later in the season, when there was a great deal of snow, and in one place the road slanted so that the sled swung very much to one side, and went so far over that we were all neatly turned out into the snow."

As the whole family had been invited, Mrs. Harley

had decided to take both Carrie and Bertha; but she thought it best to leave the baby home with Ann. Eleven o'clock found all the party comfortably seated in the family sleigh; and "Frisk" was soon speeding along the road toward Uncle Zebedee's.

Zebedee Brown was Mr. Harley's uncle, and was the owner of a large farm, about twelve miles from Knowlton. The young Harleys always looked forward to spending a day there in summer; and Walter had sometimes stayed there for a week or more. Aunt Susan was a most hospitable soul, and could never do enough for her nephew's children.

About noon they came in sight of the old farmhouse. It stood some distance back from the road, near the river bank. On one side of it were two or three tall elms, which afforded a delightful shade in summer. Beyond these, in a little hollow, grew some firs, whose dark green now made a pleasant contrast to the whiteness of the winter landscape. The good people of the house saw them coming, and were at the door to meet them with many warm greetings.

"Here you all are, safe and sound," said Uncle Zebedee. "Will," turning to a tall young man behind him, "you just see to the horse. Come right in, all of you. We were looking for you before."

"I am going with Will, uncle," said Walter, who felt quite at home, and was anxious to see some of his favorites among the stock. "Well, Rover, old fellow, how are you?" as a large, shaggy dog leaped up on him, and almost threw him down. "You remember me, do you?" While Will was unharnessing the horse, Walter was looking about for some of his pets. "Where is that bantam you used to have, Will?"

"A weasel killed her; mother was awful sorry. We caught the old weasel afterward—not before it had taken some fine chickens, though."

So they went around, till Walter had seen all that he wanted to see out of doors. Will then showed him into the house by the front way.

"Come in, Walter," said his uncle, calling from the parlor.

It must be confessed the best room had but little attraction for Walter. It looked exactly as it had ever since he could remember. The carpet was as bright and fresh as when new. The chairs all stood in the same places. The same books were arranged exactly in the same way on the centre table; the same pictures and ornaments stood on the high mantel; and, although there was a good fire in the grate, the room had the chilly air of one which is seldom used. So Walter was

glad to make his escape cut into the family sitting room, where to-day the dinner table was set, and from thence into the large, old-fashioned kitchen, with its strings of dried apples and ears of corn hanging from the rafters. In one corner stood a spinning wheel, and piled on a broad shelf near lay hanks of yarn, spun by nimble fingers.

Soon dinner was announced, and all were ready to do ample justice to Aunt Susan's good cooking. There was quite a party around the table. There were the two "boys" at home—Will and George, the former over twenty, the latter thirty; and to-day they had also with them a married son, with his wife and family.

There were only sons now in the family. Once a daughter had brightened their home; but just as she was developing into womanhood she was called away to the home on high. It was years since then; but when Aunt Susan begins to talk about Esther, and brings out the faded daguerreotype that recalls her darling, her tears fall fast. It was a great blow to that mother's heart; but sorrow made her very tender and sympathetic.

But Aunt Susan was very happy now, surrounded by such a gathering; she loaded the plates of her guests with good things, and when all were abundantly satisfied, wondered that they could eat no more.

The afternoon passed quickly and pleasantly away. The younger members of the party spent the time in games, and made the house ring with their merry voices. They even induced Uncle Zebedee to play "Blind Man's Buff" with them.

About seven o'clock the older members of the family were all in a bustle of preparation, making ready to go to the parsonage. The farm sleigh was brought out, and plenty of straw thrown in the bottom to sit upon; and then various mysterious parcels were stowed away, with various injunctions to be careful.

Walter preferred to go in the farm sleigh with his cousins—it was far more fun; and soon they were slipping and bumping along over the roads, which, owing to the fact that there had not been any heavy fall of snow, were rather rough. It was a cloudy night, and not very cold. They were soon at the parsonage, which was only a mile distant, where already several sleighs were drawn up in the yard. The house was lighted up; and, as they drew near the door, they could hear the hum of many voices. Then the door was opened, and they were all ushered in, and the mysterious parcels were passed out into a back room.

The house was very small, and was already well filled. The elderly ladies occupied the best room, while the

younger ones were to be found in the sitting room. Most of the young men, as well as many of the older ones, were standing about in the hall. The older ones gathered about the stove, talking on general matters; the younger ones lingered around the doorways which led into the rooms, somewhat too bashful to enter just yet, and encounter the glances of so many blooming girls and matrons.

A glimpse into the little dining room would have revealed a bewildering array of baskets and parcels, among which three or four matronly women were hovering about, unpacking and arranging, and making preparations for the supper. As for the minister and his wife, they were in and out everywhere, and anxious for the enjoyment of all.

After about half an hour there was a call to order, and one of the deacons stepped forward and read a short address, at the close of which he presented to the pastor, in the name of those present, a purse of money. This was not all the good man received, however, for there was a barrel of flour, and there were sacks of potatoes, and poultry and butter and cheese; there were socks and stockings for all the family, knit by the farmers' good wives. Some of the young girls had brought fancy work, and the young men nicknacks and ornaments for the house.

And for all this the good pastor thanked them most warmly, for he knew they were the gifts of kind hearts; for this was all in addition to his salary, which, though not large, was regularly paid.

Some more speeches were made, and many kind, encouraging words spoken, which gladdened the minister's heart as much as did the gifts.

After this every one became very sociable. The bashful young men were soon enjoying themselves among the girls, and there was a general chatter of voices on every side. Then came the call to supper, and a grand attack was made on the cold turkey and ham and biscuits and coffee and frosted cake and pies, of which there seemed to be no end.

Mr. and Mrs. Harley and Walter left at eleven o'clock, as they had a long drive before them. They stopped at Uncle Zebedee's for Bertha and Carrie; and, after they were tucked safely in the sleigh, the whole party started for home, which they reached in due time, having thoroughly enjoyed their New Year's jaunt.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. HARRISON'S TALK WITH HIS BOYS.

IT was the first Sunday in the new year—a bright, beautiful day. The sky was clear and cloudless; the earth pure and white in its mantle of newly-fallen snow.

Did some, as they looked forth on the fair scene, think of the precious words, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"? Did some desire to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, of which that pure, spotless snow was but a faint emblem? Doubtless, some did; but to others, perhaps to many, it was only a pleasant winter morning—nothing more.

It was not without serious thoughts that Walter went that morning to church; and so it was that some words in the sermon seemed just spoken for him.

"The New Year," said Mr. Somers, "is like a blank book opened before us, on whose fair white pages each of us may inscribe a record. Some may say, 'There is nothing in my life worth recording; it is only a round of commonplace duties.' But if," continued the minister, "each commonplace, homely duty be done in Christ's name; if the petty trials and burdens and

cares of every day be borne for his sake, that record will be one on which the Lord will smile approval. It is doing and bearing all for Jesus' sake which ennobles life."

Walter went to dine with Uncle Morton. He always took dinner there on Sunday, so as to be in good time for Sunday-school. He liked his teacher very much, and did not care to miss a Sunday.

Mr. Harrison, the principal of the academy which Walter attended, was teacher of his class in Sunday-school. He was an earnest, devoted Christian, a talented man, and an excellent teacher. He had a large class of boys, many of whom were also his pupils in the academy. He had gained a strong hold on his scholars' affections: they felt that he had a deep, personal interest in each one of them; that it really made a difference to him whether they tried to live right or not; that he was anxious that each one should give his heart to Jesus. They knew too that he gave them his best thoughts—one might say his very self. No thought that had helped him was withheld from them. Was it any wonder then that "his boys," as he called them, esteemed and loved him?

The room in which the Sunday-school was held was bright and cheerful. Texts of Scripture neatly framed,

and pictures illustrating the lessons hung upon the walls. Smaller class rooms opened out of it, one of which was occupied by Mr. Harrison's class during the lesson hour.

To-day as they gathered around their teacher there was an interchange of New Year's greetings.

"I trust it will be a happy year for each one of us," said Mr. Harrison. "It will be if we use each day aright. I suppose you have all been resolving to do better this year than last."

"Yes, sir," came from some.

"We do not seem to do any better," said Charlie Somers, rather dolefully.

"The progress we make in a year must depend on the progress we make each day, Charlie," said Mr. Harrison. "We are too apt to despise the 'to-days,' and reach after the 'to-morrows'; and they in turn, as soon as they become 'to-days,' are treated no better than their predecessors. What I mean is simply this: we have faults, besetting sins; we have a vague hope that some day in the future we will gain the victory over them. Are we making any effort to overcome to-day? If not, then our hope is a delusion. Evil habits grow, sinful tendencies strengthen, and each day only makes it more difficult to break the bands that fetter and hold us. I am sure each one of you who thinks at all about the matter wishes to

build up a true, good, noble character. If so, you must begin now. Step by step we must climb upward; and if we do not take the first step to-day, it is very unlikely we will to-morrow. As Longfellow says:

“The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

“All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasure and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.”

“But,” said Ned Brookes, “we have all our own dispositions, and we cannot alter them.”

“More than we think, Ned,” replied Mr. Harrison. “For instance, here is a miser; he became one by yielding to his propensity for hoarding. He might have become a generous man had he habitually resisted that propensity. You have met perhaps unamiable, irritable, disagreeable men; yet perhaps some one will tell you those very men were once pleasant boys, just such as you are. But they had faults; they did not resist them, and they have gradually become what they are. You see a man whom you admire; he, too, had faults, but he strove against them, and day by day he is becoming better and more Christlike. But some of you, I fear,

have never taken the first step toward forming a truly noble character. You have not given your hearts to Jesus. God calls to you: 'My son, give me thine heart.' 'To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart.' If you refuse to listen to the call to-day, what hope have you that you will obey it to-morrow? Aye, more, you may never see to-morrow. Then use to-day as God would have you use it; and if you faithfully sow good seed in the 'to-days,' you will reap a glorious harvest in the 'to-morrows.'"

As the boys filed out into the large room, at the close of the lesson, Mr. Harrison looked after them sadly. How many would act on his words? Some, he feared, would go away as careless as they came. The serious, thoughtful faces of others showed that they were impressed. Would those impressions prove lasting? He hoped so. There were some, however, he felt sure, who "having received the word into honest and good hearts would bring forth fruit with patience."

Of these last Walter was one. He saw plainly now how often he had let the days drift by without seeking to make any advancement in Christian living, and all the time had hoped that at some time, in some way, he would be what he wished to be. He thought of his mother, so unselfish, so patient; of his father, so self-controlled, that

Walter scarcely realized that he inherited his quick temper from him; and he wondered if they had attained to this through patient endeavor. To Walter it seemed the most natural thing that they should be what they were, and he had always looked upon it as a matter of course. He resolved to ask his mother about it some time. The opportunity came that evening.

Mrs. Harley stayed at home with the children on Sunday evenings, for they missed her sadly when she went out, and she felt that in those quiet Sabbath evening hours she could sow good seed in little hearts; she loved to show them Bible pictures and tell them Bible stories, and tried to lead these lambs of the home fold to Jesus.

To-night Walter stayed at home too; and when the younger ones had said good-night, he told his mother what Mr. Harrison had said, and then added:

"But, mother, does it not come natural to you to be always thinking of others?"

His mother smiled.

"My dear boy, if you knew me as well as I know myself, you would never ask such a question. If I am in your eyes unselfish, it is not that I am by nature so. I find that it requires daily effort to overcome my selfish tendencies, and it is only by watchfulness and prayer that I can gain the victory."

"And father too?" said Walter.

"Yes; and father too has his struggles; for none of us
'have attained, neither are already perfect.'"

"Mother, I am going to try to overcome my faults."

"I am so glad, dear," said his mother; "and, Walter,
you must not forget to ask the Saviour to help you."

"I will, mother." And the boy fondly kissed her
good-night.

Ah! was not that mother beginning to reap after years
of faithful sowing?

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOL DAYS.

MONDAY came, and with it the return of school days. School began at half-past nine, and Walter was early that morning. The town clock was just striking nine when he mounted the broad stone steps leading to the academy. Just before him was a little lad, who was evidently a new scholar. He carried a school bag well filled with books, and stood there in the large hall, looking doubtfully about him, as though he did not know which room to enter.

"Which is Mr. Harrison's room?" he asked, as Walter entered.

"In this way." And Walter threw open a door, and they both entered a large, pleasant schoolroom. "There is Mr. Harrison sitting at his desk," said Walter.

The new boy went up and handed in his permit, and Mr. Harrison had soon entered his name on the register.

"You may take this seat," he said, pointing out one not far from where Walter was arranging his books.

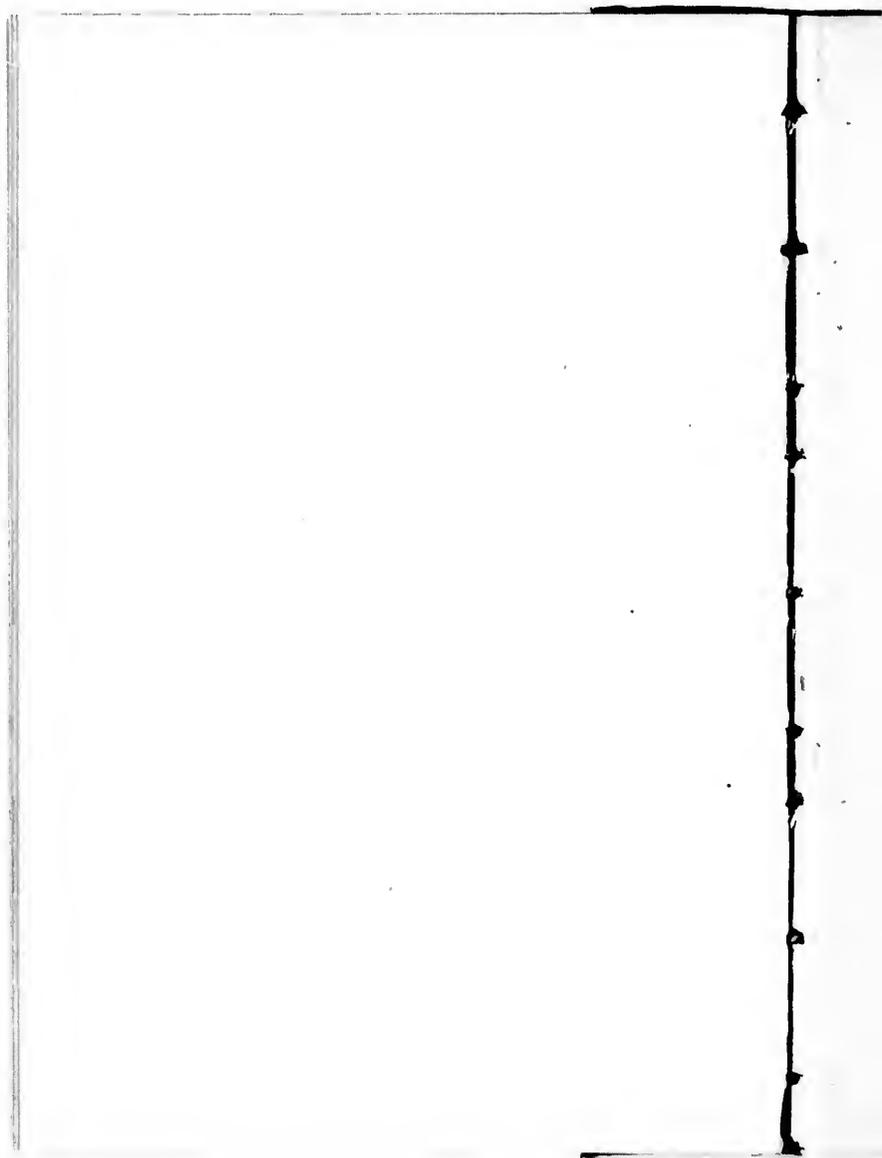
"Walter Harley, this is Bennie Harris. You must make him feel at home," he added; "he will be in the

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Walter Harley's Conquest. Page 48.



same class with you. You can show him where to hang his coat and cap."

While Bennie hung up overcoat and cap, Walter leaned back against the window, and silently surveyed the new comer. Bennie was thirteen, but small for his age, and slightly built. Dark brown hair fell in waves over a broad forehead; his eyes were very dark blue, and had a pensive look just now, as indeed they always had when he was quiet; but, as Walter afterward found, they could be brimful of fun and mischief at times. Almost a girlish look rested on the delicately-formed features. He was very neatly dressed; but Walter instinctively guessed that the suit he had on was the best one he had, and that some one had taken great pains to make him look as well as possible on this his first day at a new school.

Walter suddenly recollected that he ought to make himself agreeable to the new scholar; so, when they returned to the schoolroom, he sat down by him, and soon learned that his father was dead, and that his mother had lately come to live in Knowlton.

"I am the eldest, and must get through my schooling as soon as I can, so as to be ready to go to work. That is why Mr. Harrison put me into this class. I am away behind you all, but I'll soon work up to you."

"He is a pluckly little chap," thought Walter, and he said: "If you want any help, just come to me."

"Thank you, I shall." And Bennie evidently seemed to feel that he had found a friend. Then the bell rang, and all took their places.

There were many glances directed toward the new boy, and many mentally took his measure. His school-mates soon found out that he was a brave, manly little fellow, and the general verdict was that "he would do." It is true one tall young fellow, who was a regular fop, and thought more of style and dress than anything else, sneeringly remarked, in a tone quite loud enough for Bennie to hear: "I wonder if a New York tailor made that suit."

"Come, Lansing; no more of that when I am around," said Walter, quickly.

And Lansing, who saw a dangerous flash in Walter's eyes, and did not care to provoke his wrath, turned away carelessly, saying with as much scorn as he dared:

"Oh, I didn't know he was a friend of Walter Harley."

"You know now," retorted Walter. And to say the truth, he felt very much drawn toward the little lad who was working so bravely for his mother.

Hitherto Walter had kept all his resolutions, and, for-

getting how little he had been tempted to break them, began to think very well of himself; and as he made entries in his diary of what he had done, he felt quite complacent. But there came a day not very long after this when his self-conceit was sadly taken out of him. He began this unfortunate day by lying in bed so long that he was late for breakfast, which called forth a rebuke from his father, who very much disliked unpunctuality. Then, when it was time to start for school, he could not find his mittens. He laid the blame on Bertha, who was a mischievous little puss, and scolded her until she began to cry; then he found them just where he had thrown them down the evening before. He went off in a very unamiable mood, and reached school just after roll call. This did not improve his temper.

When recess came he quarreled with Ned Brookes about some trifling matter. Ned was tantalizingly cool and provoking, while Walter was so angry that he scarcely knew or cared what he said. They almost came to blows, when Mr. Harrison appeared and ordered them both in, with a look of grave displeasure. As they left the school at noon, Ned, who was inclined to have the quarrel out, said, sneeringly:

"I wonder what Mr. Harrison will think of his favorite now."

Walter, stung by the taunt, turned on him fiercely, and what would have been the end it is difficult to say, had not Charlie Somers, who was inclined to act the peacemaker, struck in with, "Come now, Ned; enough of that," and drew him off another way.

Walter had brought no lunch that day, intending to dine at his uncle's, but he could not think of going now, he felt so miserable and disgusted with himself; so he bought a few cakes with some change he had in his pocket, after eating which he began to recover his spirits. Then he began to justify himself by throwing the burden of his misdoings as much as possible on others, and tried to quiet conscience by resolving to do better in the afternoon. But, alas for good resolves! the first hour was spent with Mr. Harrison; the sight of him recalled the morning's events. Walter felt really annoyed that his teacher should have seen him lose his temper, and he felt vexed with him because he had, as he thought, interfered. So he paid as little attention to the lesson as he possibly could without calling forth open rebuke.

The second hour was spent with one of the assistant teachers, Mr. Grant; and Walter had no sooner entered the room than he felt possessed with a spirit of mischief. The other boys were ready enough for fun, and Mr. Grant was fairly distracted with their antics. Although

the poor man never had very good order in his room, he certainly felt more than usually discouraged this afternoon, and had it been near the end of the term would have sent in his resignation.

At the close of school, Walter threw on his coat and cap, and was out ahead of all of his schoolmates, for he felt little inclined for company. When he reached home, he went straight to his room, closed and locked the door, and slammed down his books on his desk. Taking up a magazine, he threw himself down in a chair by the window, and began to look over the contents, but somehow he did not find it as interesting as usual; so, tossing it aside, he opened his geography, and tried to study the lesson for the next day. But he could not fix his mind upon it, and soon closed the book; then he leaned his head on his hands, and began to think.

What a miserable failure he had made of that day! Conscience spoke out loudly, and Walter felt that he had no excuse to make. Then a feeling of discouragement stole over him; the tempter whispered: "It is no use for you to try any more; you see you cannot do right." And half aloud, Walter said: "Shall I always yield to temptation?"

Some one was singing down stairs, and the words came floating up:

" Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you ;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through."

The words came like a heavenly message to the discouraged boy. Ah! that was the trouble: he had forgotten to ask the Saviour to help him; he had trusted in himself, and how soon he had been overcome!

Anew Walter sought the throne of grace for forgiveness and help; nor sought he in vain, for a peace and rest very unlike his former confidence stole into his heart, and it was with a cheerful air that he went to make friends with little Bertha, and carry her round on his shoulder.

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CHAPTER VI.

BENNIE HARRIS.

EVER since Walter's thoughts had been directed to helping others, he had been on the lookout for little opportunities of usefulness. So when one day, about a week after the events recorded in the preceding chapter, he found Bennie, with knit brows, poring over some difficult examples in arithmetic, he offered to go home with him after school, and show him how to do them. Bennie readily accepted the offer. So, as soon as the afternoon session was over, they started off in the direction of Bennie's home. After walking some distance, they turned into a lane in the outskirts of the town. On either side were small cottages, built at irregular intervals. Some of them were new; others quite old, and very much in need of paint. Before one of the latter Bennie stopped.

"This is our house," he said, with as much satisfaction as if he had been introducing Walter to a palace. "Was it not fortunate," he continued, as they passed through the gateway and up the path to the door, "that mother found a house out of the town? We shall have a garden

in summer, you see. Having been used to living in the country, I do not know what we should have done if we had been cooped up in some little place in the town."

Walter could not help inwardly wondering whether he would consider himself fortunate if called on to live in a house like this.

But now they were in the little sitting room. It looked very cheerful, with the rays of the setting sun streaming in; and there were bright touches of color in the large home-made mats that partly hid the worn carpet, in the red table cloth that covered the centre table, and in the really pretty chromos that hung on the wall, giving the room a homelike look.

A sweet-faced woman sat sewing by the window. Walter knew at a glance that she was Bennie's mother. She had the same dark blue eyes, with the same pensive expression. When she spoke, her voice was very gentle, and there was a quiet dignity and an air of refinement about her which told of better days.

The two boys sat down, and were soon busy over their ciphering. It must be confessed, Walter's explanations were somewhat confused. He was quick to see how a thing could be done, and seldom troubled himself about the whys and wherefores, and so found it more difficult than he had imagined to give clear reasons for all he did.

Bennie, on the other hand, must see each step clearly before he could go on to the next. So they had to refer to the explanations given in the book; and altogether Walter received as much benefit from the exercise as Bennie did. They had worked out all the hardest of the examples when a little cry of "mamma" came from the adjoining room.

"What! has Robbie been asleep all this time, mother?" said Ben. "I had forgotten all about him. I'll go and get him." And he quickly disappeared into the other room, soon returning with little two-year old Robbie, the baby and pet of the family.

Very pretty the little fellow looked, his cheeks flushed from sleep, and his brown curls tossed about his face, while he still rubbed his eyes vigorously with one chubby hand. Bennie handled him in a way that showed he had experience in that line; and, after considerable petting and coaxing, induced him to make friends with Walter, and shake hands and say, "How do you do?"

"Now, Robbie, sing for brother." And after a while the little fellow quavered out a bar or two of a familiar air, and then hid his face bashfully on his brother's shoulder.

"That is first rate," said Walter. "You will make a singer."

"Oh, you could do better than that, baby," said Bennie. But Robbie could not be persuaded to try again, and Bennie had to give up.

"You were going to show me the ship your uncle made," said Walter.

"Yes; will you come up to my room?" And Bennie led the way up a narrow, dark staircase into his bedroom.

It looked so bare to Walter, as he mentally contrasted it with his own well-furnished room. There was no carpet on the floor. The furniture consisted of a bed, covered with a patchwork quilt, one chair, a large chest and a washstand, with a small looking glass hanging over it. On a shelf on one side of the room was the toy ship, and some other boyish treasures. Bennie took down the little craft, which was an excellent model of a sailing vessel, and Walter examined it with much interest; for he had often tried his own hand at making toy boats, and he knew enough about them to appreciate the good points.

"I wish I could make a ship like that," he said, as Bennie replaced it carefully on the shelf.

"It never seemed anything to Uncle Joe to make them. He would sit working away at them in the evenings, and telling us long stories about the foreign countries he had

seen. I must show you the curiosities he brought us. Whenever he came home from a long voyage he would bring us lots of queer things that he had picked up in different places. Once he brought me a beautiful bird; but it did not live long. I suppose our climate did not suit it."

They went down into the little sitting room again. There was no one there now.

"We shall have a good chance to look at the things while Robbie is out of the way." And Bennie opened a little closet, and brought out curiously shaped shells, and branching coral, and a hideous idol, and a tiny shoe of a Chinese woman, and many other odd things. The two boys looked at them and talked about them for some time. Then, while Bennie put them away, Walter turned to look at some framed photographs on the mantel.

"Is this your father?" he asked.

"Yes, that is father. It was a very good picture of him when it was taken; and that," as Walter passed on to another, "is Uncle Joe; and that one is mother."

"Is that your mother?" exclaimed Walter. It was a pretty, bright, girlish-looking face.

"Yes," said Bennie, "that is mother. I can remember when she looked like that; but she grew so pale and thin when father was ill so long." The little boy spoke

sadly, and in a low tone; then after a moment's pause, he added, cheerfully, "But she will look as well as that some day, when I grow to be a man, and can make things easy for her. I am ever so much obliged to you for showing me how to do those sums. I think I am getting on nicely now, and Mr. Harrison encourages me so. I like him ever so much; he makes the lessons so interesting."

"He does that everywhere," said Walter; "he is just the same in Sunday-school."

"Oh, is he your teacher on Sunday too? How I should like to be in his class."

"Do you not go to any Sunday-school?"

"No; I have not gone to the Sunday-school of the church which we attend, because I do not know any one there, and I do not like to go in where I am a perfect stranger."

"Come to our school, then, and go in Mr. Harrison's class. I'll call for you next Sunday, if you like."

"I would like to go very much." And Bennie's face brightened. "I used to go to Sunday-school at home whenever there was one, and it seems lonesome Sunday afternoons without it. I will go if mother is willing, and most likely she will be."

"All right. I will call for you at two o'clock next

Sunday." And Walter started for home, well pleased to have gained another Sunday-school scholar.

Sunday proved stormy. When Walter told them at the dinner table at Uncle Morton's about calling for Bennie, Mrs. Morton said :

"Not a very favorable day, is it? Do you think it worth while to go, Walter?"

"I said I would," replied Walter, "and I shall do my part. If he does not want to come, he need not. I know he would not stay at home from day school, and I do not see why he should make Sunday an exception; anyway, I am going."

"That is right, my boy," said his uncle, "always keep your word."

So Walter set out, and after trudging all the way through drifting, whirling snow, was rewarded by finding Bennie ready and waiting for him; and Mr. Harrison was cheered by having an addition to his class on such a stormy day.

"There will be special collections for church purposes next Sunday," said Walter, at the breakfast table, the following morning; "and Mr. Harrison wants us to take one up in our Sunday-school class. Each one is to bring all he can, and it must be our own money. So provoking: I wish it was any Sunday but next Sunday."

WALTER HARLEY'S CONQUEST.

"Why so?" said his mother.

"Because I have not anything to give until I get my next allowance."

"How does it happen that you have nothing?" said his father.

Walter colored. "The bill for that little work table I gave mother at Christmas came in this month. I couldn't pay it before," he added, apologetically, "because Mr. Hawkins did not know just what it would come to until he made it." Walter knew his father objected to his running a bill.

"It is evident that you couldn't have paid for it if he had," returned his father. "Oh, Walter, when will you learn to spend your allowance carefully, so that one month will not encroach on the next?"

"I do try, father, but it goes before I think."

"You are just such another as I was. I found it very difficult in my earlier days to live within my income, and if I had not learned long before this, I would not have been as prosperous as I am. However, about the collection next Sunday, if you like to come to the office after school and do some writing for me, you can earn enough to have something to give."

"All right, father, I will," said Walter. And he went to school quite in good spirits. Walter was naturally gen-

erous, and he did not always stop to think what he could afford; so, although he had a liberal allowance, he was almost always penniless before the end of the month. He then would come to his indulgent father for an advance on next month's allowance. Mr. Harley soon perceived, however, that that would not be the best thing for Walter; so he had told him a month or two before that in future he could not do it.

Walter worked with a will through the week, and never had felt more satisfaction in giving. Each of the boys had made some effort to bring a contribution, and the result was that Mr. Harrison handed in ten dollars to the church treasury.

After the close of the school, Walter crossed over to Lina, who was talking to Adeline Harrington. Adeline looked very pretty, as she stood fastening her fur collar-ette. Just then Mr. Harrison came up.

"Your class was the banner class to-day, Mr. Harrison," said Ada.

"My boys did nobly," he returned, with a pleasant smile and a glance at Walter.

"I wish I could prevail on my class to do as well. You must tell me the secret of your success." And they passed on out of the room together, Walter and Lina following.

Walter's gaze rested on Adeline as she tripped along before them, and he thought Lina would look just as pretty if she were only dressed as handsomely. With this thought in his mind, his first remark was not very suitable for the Sabbath:

"Lina, I thought you were going to buy a set of furs this winter."

"I changed my mind," replied Lina. "I thought I could do without them, and the money might be better used some other way."

"A set like those Adeline has would be very becoming to you, Lina."

"I dare say; but then, you know, I cannot afford to dress like Ada Harrington." And Lina said it so bravely that Walter felt satisfied she did not care for dress at all.

"I am so glad the collection this afternoon was so large," said Lina, determined to change the subject. "You must all be pleased with the result in your class. Most of my scholars are very poor, but the little sums they brought had all been earned in different ways, and it was quite touching to hear them tell what they did in order to have a few cents to bring." And then Lina began to talk about some of her little scholars, in whom she was specially interested. She was a faithful teacher,

visiting the girls in her class regularly, thus becoming acquainted with them in their homes, and taking a deep interest in everything that concerned them.

A few days after this, Walter was spending the evening with Charlie and Arthur Somers. In the course of the evening, Mr. Pierce, the treasurer of the church, came in. The conversation turned on the anniversary collections.

"By the way," said Mr. Pierce, "we found twenty dollars in one envelope, without any name—simply a text. I do not know whether any of you would recognize the writing."

"Why, that is Lina's writing!" said Walter, as soon as he saw it.

"She has given more than many who are better able," said Mrs. Somers.

The conversation of Sunday flashed across Walter's mind. "That must be the reason she did not get the furs," he thought. Aloud he said: "It is noble; for I know she could not give that much without making some self-denial."

"I am sure of it," said Mrs. Somers.

Walter resolved to find out from Lina herself whether his surmise was correct. So the next day when she came as usual to give him his music lesson, he said: "Lina, was

that twenty dollars that you gave on Sunday what you had laid by for furs?"

"Why, how do you know what I gave?" And Lina blushed as though she had been found out in some wrong-doing.

"Oh, a little bird told me; but is that why you did not get the furs?"

"Partly," said Lina. "The first idea of giving them up came to me when mother said she could not afford a new dress this winter. I felt she really needed a new dress more than I did the furs, so I took part of the money for that. Then this special collection was spoken of, and I was so glad to be able to give when there was so much need."

"Lina, what a good, self-denying girl you are!"

"Why, Walter, it was no self-denial after I once made up my mind to do it; it was only a pleasure." And her face lighted up with a bright smile,

But when Walter told his mother about it that evening, he said: "It did make me feel so small."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

IT was one day toward the end of the month. Lina was spending the day at Elmwood, and she and Mrs. Harley were sitting in the library sewing, when Walter burst into the room with a clouded brow.

"What is the matter, Walter?" said his mother, who saw at a glance that something had gone wrong.

"Why, you know, it is written examination to-day, and, of course, I had prepared carefully for Mr. Harrison's papers, but I did not pay so much attention to natural philosophy—in fact, none of us did; for Mr. Grant had taught us so little we thought he would be easy on us. Well, you never saw such a paper; it was fearfully hard, and he sat there looking so pleased to think he had caught us so nicely. I would not mind, only every boy in the class, except Bennie Harris and Charlie and Arthur Somers and myself, copied the answers right off his book."

"Did not Mr. Grant see?" said Lina.

"See? no; what does he ever see? Well, I suppose I shall make about fifty. That is all right; I do not deserve

more. But the other fellows will be up in the nineties, and that is the provoking part of it, when they didn't even know as much about the subject as I did. I don't believe it pays to do right," he added, disconsolately.

"I know you do not really think that," said his mother. "You would rather, I am sure, take a low place on the list than be one of the boys who cheated, however high you might stand."

"Yes," said Walter, "but it is so provoking. I had a hard struggle to resist the temptation to look."

"A good test of your principles," said Lina.

Walter did not exhibit his usual impatience to hear the result of the examinations. It was therefore somewhat of a surprise to his mother when, two days after the above conversation, he came home at noon in great glee.

"Hurrah!" he said, tossing up his cap to the ceiling, "I lead the class in natural philosophy."

"Why, how does that happen?" said his mother.

"Well, when we went into Mr. Grant's room this morning, he said, in his dry way, 'I suppose you would like to hear what your marks are, boys.' I am sure I did not for one. However, he read out 'Walter Harley, sixty-six.' That was much better than I expected. Then came Charlie Somers, Bennie Harris, and Arthur

Somers. Then he laid down the paper. 'As to the rest of you,' he said, 'I was not able to mark your papers at all, for as you copied the answers from your books, it was no test of your knowledge.' You never saw such a sheepish-looking lot of boys. I never would have thought of Mr. Grant as being up to such a clever dodge as that."

That afternoon Mr. Harrison asked Class A to remain for a few moments after the close of the session.

"You are in for it now, Ned," said one of Class B, as he passed Ned Brookes' desk on his way out.

"No, we are not," said Ned. But he looked troubled, and a trifle paler than usual—in fact, none of the guilty ones looked at ease.

It was well known that Mr. Harrison hated anything like cheating or meanness; and when his indignation was aroused, he could speak with a withering sarcasm which made the offender wish he could sink through the floor.

Mr. Harrison sat at his desk adding up the columns of attendance in his register. The last boy had gathered up his books and slammed the door behind him, leaving the room to silence as his footsteps echoed down the corridor. Some small boys climbed up and peeped slyly in at the windows to see what was going on, but failing to satisfy curiosity, ran off to join their schoolmates.

Then the woman who swept the rooms opened one of the side doors and looked in, but seeing the room occupied, hastily withdrew. Still Mr. Harrison busied himself at his desk, putting books and papers away, setting pens and papers in their places with more than ordinary precision. The boys began to wish the storm would burst. Only the four who felt least concerned sat calmly, looking straight ahead. At length Mr. Harrison came down close to where the boys were sitting, and said, in a low tone:

"I am really disappointed in my boys." He spoke so sadly that it went to each heart. They had not expected this. "I thought," continued Mr. Harrison, after a moment's silence, "that you had better principles—more sense of honor—than to do a thing like that."

"Well, Mr. Harrison," said Ned Brookes, who was generally the spokesman of the class, "I, for one, did not think it was quite right, but all the other boys were doing it, and I thought if they all cheated, I might as well too, as I did not care to be at the foot of the class."

"They did not *all* cheat, Ned," returned Mr. Harrison.

"All who were near me did. I did not notice what the others were doing."

"And so you followed the many to do evil, and never stopped to think that you were acting a lie?" Ned

winned. "You do not like such plain terms," continued Mr. Harrison; "but what else is it. Suppose your paper had been marked: you would have taken a high standing. Your teachers, your schoolmates, your friends at home, would all have supposed that you were doing well in your class, and that you possessed a good knowledge of the subject you have been studying. Would that have been true?"

"No," said Ned, softly, then added: "I did not think of it in that light. I never did anything of that kind before in a written examination. But, in point of fact, I suppose we have nearly all cheated all along in Mr. Grant's class. We did not prepare our lessons very much, and it was such a temptation to take a look now and then; but then I always did it above board. I had my book lying on the desk——"

"And when Mr. Grant was not looking you peeped in; was not that it?" interrupted Mr. Harrison.

"No, sir; he would be looking as straight at me as you are, and I would open my book so,"—half opening a book as he spoke,—"and he never said a word about it, and I thought if he did not care, I need not."

"That is what I thought"; "and so did I," "and I," echoed some of the boys.

"Perhaps Mr. Grant did not notice, although he ap-

peared to be looking at you. But that has nothing to do with the question. You knew that it was wrong to look in your book during recitation, and that your act went unnoticed, or uncorrected, did not make it right. Then you see the result of this course. At first you doubtless had some scruples; but they gradually faded away, till at length you felt no compunction whatever in answering a question off the book."

"Yes, sir," said some of the boys.

"Then it was quite easy for you to take this first step in wrong-doing; and, if there is not a right-about face, I am afraid it will not be the last step in the wrong direction. Every time you stifle the voice of conscience, and do what you know to be wrong, you are taking a step toward becoming such a character as you would shrink from with horror could you see it to-day. Few men who have gone far astray had any intention of becoming such as they are. They went down step by step, and, depend upon it, they felt more twinges of conscience about their first departure from right than about any other." The boys looked grave. "How many of you will henceforth give up cheating, and act at all times in a straightforward, manly, truthful way?" The hands went up readily. "It may be harder than you think to keep the promise. Will you join with me in asking the help of our Heavenly Father?"

And then in a few simple, earnest words, Mr. Harrison prayed that each one might be strengthened to resist evil and do right.

Very quietly the boys dispersed. Ah! who can tell how far-reaching may be the influence of that quiet hour, and the faithful, earnest words spoken that afternoon!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIZE ESSAY.

IT was Thursday morning, a week or two after the examinations. There was quite a ripple of excitement among the boys; for after the opening exercises Mr. Harrison said he had "something to tell them which he was sure would prove interesting," and read to them part of a letter from a Mr. Barlow, offering a prize of fifty dollars for the best essay on "English Literature."

Mr. Barlow was a friend of Mr. Harrison's, and a man of means. He had been present at the Christmas examination, and stated his intention of giving some prize. The announcement of his offer was received with cheers. A prize of fifty dollars was worth trying for.

"Those who wish to compete will let me know as soon as possible," said Mr. Harrison.

At recess, most of the boys who thought they had a chance of winning the prize handed in their names. Among them was Walter Harley. He had won the prize for the best essay the previous year while still in the junior class, and, of course, did not intend to try for it again; but Mr. Harrison agreed with him that he had

a perfect right to compete for the one offered by Mr. Barlow, which was something quite different and quite distinct from the ordinary yearly school prize. Walter had always excelled in composition; and perhaps no one stood a better chance of winning the prize than he. So the boys seemed to think, as they gathered in groups, discussing the relative chances of one and another.

"Are you going to try, Ben?" asked one of the boys, as Bennie Harris joined one of the little groups.

"Yes," he answered; "and I only hope I shall be successful. If I am not, it shall not be for want of trying."

Walter, who was standing a little aside, noticed such a look of determination in the blue eyes, and thought to himself, "How large a sum fifty dollars must seem to Bennie!"

"Not much chance for any of us when Walter Harley enters the lists," said one.

"I say, Walter, just back out of this, and give some of us fellows a chance, won't you?" said Arthur Somers.

"He would be a fool if he did," said Ned Brookes. "Catch me backing out for anybody if I thought I was likely to get fifty dollars." And Ned whistled at the very thought. Then the bell rang, putting a stop to any farther conversation.

Walter did not find the walk home that afternoon either long or lonely, for his thoughts were busy. Already he had thought out the general plan for his essay; but, in the midst of all, Bennie's face would rise up before him, and he saw the wistful look in his eyes, as he had seen it that morning, when Bennie had said to Mr. Harrison, "I hope I shall get the prize." "I almost hope Bennie will get it. There is no one who needs it more," he thought.

"Could you not withdraw your name, and so make his chance better?" a voice seemed to whisper. But Walter quickly silenced it with, "Oh, no; I could not do that. I am sure Bennie would not wish it. He may win the prize, anyway."

Bennie had indeed a good chance, for in the recent examination in composition he had taken the second place. He was by far the most original thinker among the boys; but he did not express his thoughts so well as many, yet even in this respect he was steadily improving.

With these reflections, Walter dismissed all thoughts of Bennie, and went on again with his dreams of what he would do with the money in case he was successful. The prospect of possessing this amount as the result of his own exertions was very pleasing to Walter—far more so than if his father were to give him the same amount

outright; and although there was not one boy who needed it less than Walter, he fondly thought that not one would make so good a use of it as he would.

The next day came and went, and found Walter still thinking and planning for the prize. Saturday afternoon he went to see Bennie and found him in their little yard sawing wood. He looked so slight and delicate, working away with a saw almost as big as himself.

"We have just bought a load of wood," he explained, "and I thought I would cut it up myself."

"You have undertaken quite a job, I should say," replied Walter. "Are you not tired?"

"My back aches a little," said Bennie; "that is all." And he paused to wipe the perspiration from his brow. "I have done all that this afternoon," pointing to a pile. "Pretty well, is it not? But then it has to be split and piled yet," he added, ruefully. Then, picking up his saw again, he went cheerily to work, saying: "It will be done some time."

"Give me an ax, and I will do some of the splitting." And Walter was soon working away with a will.

When he left that afternoon, his shoulders were aching, for it was unaccustomed work for him; but then he had helped Bennie, and all the way home the little delicate boy was in his thoughts. "I wish I could do something

more to help him," he thought. He had visited the little cottage often enough to feel sure that, underneath the comfortable exterior, there was real poverty, none the less pinching because so carefully concealed. He had told his mother about them, and she had visited the gentle little widow and had found plenty of sewing for her ever since, and had sent many things which her own family had outgrown, but not outworn, which could be used for the children. More than ever the thought pressed itself upon Walter: "What a help that fifty dollars would be to Bennie!" and then the other thought would come: "Couldn't I make it easier for him to get it?" When he reached home he dismissed these thoughts without coming to any satisfactory conclusion. It was not till evening, when he went up to his room, that they returned. He had intended to look over his Sunday-school lesson; but the moon was shining in so brightly it seemed a pity to light a lamp, so he sat down by the window and looked out on a scene of fairy-like beauty.

It was a clear, wintry night. The stars twinkled faintly in the far depths of the heavens, their tiny beams nearly quenched by the light of the full moon, which poured its radiance over the snowy landscape. The thoughts of the afternoon now came trooping back again. "Why not give up your chance to Bennie?"

seemed to ring in his ears; and then followed a dialogue between Walter and his good angel somewhat on this wise:

"I cannot," said Walter's selfish self. "Why should I give up my right to any one?"

"For even Christ pleased not himself.' 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.'"

"That is a very high ideal. One cannot be expected to attain to it."

"Why not? It was written for struggling followers of Jesus just like you."

"I would not mind giving up the money, if it were not for the honor of winning. Could I not get the prize, and then give the money to Bennie?"

"Do you think he would accept it?"

"I suppose not. He has considerable pride about him. But it is hard to give up the honor of the thing." And then, in imagination, he could hear the complimentary words when the prize was presented, and see the flattering notices in the local papers regarding it. How proud of him all his friends would be! Ah, yes, it would be hard to give up the *honor*."

"Earthly honors are fleeting; only the honor that cometh from God is immortal. In a few years, perhaps

none, save your nearest friends, will remember your triumph; it will seem of small account even in your own eyes. Should you not rather seek 'the honor that cometh from God only'?"

"But Bennie might not win the prize, and then I would feel that I had made the sacrifice for nothing."

"You know that he has the next best chance."

"I wish I had never put down my name at all. I do not see how I can withdraw now. The boys would think it queer, and if they knew, or even conjectured the reason, they would think me very foolish." And the image of Ned Brookes rose before Walter's mind.

"What matters it what they think?"

"It is so perplexing. I wish I knew how to act."

"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally."

Walter knelt and asked guidance—asked that he might not consider self at all; then he rose, and stood for a long while looking out of the window. He felt no longer any doubt as to what he should do under the circumstances; he only felt it hard to make up his mind to do it. At length, with sudden energy, he said, "I will." The sound of his own voice startled him, for involuntarily, in his earnestness, he had spoken aloud, and the struggle was over.

Everything on the following day confirmed and strengthened Walter in his resolve, and made him rejoice over the conquest of himself. His heart had been at rest from itself for a little while, and so he had tried to be of service to another. The text was: "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." And the thought was emphasized that as Christ gave himself, so Christians should give themselves for others in loving service, and in ready self-denial for one another; and when that afternoon Walter saw Bennie come into Sunday-school, and his eyes fell on the little thin hands that toiled so hard for mother and home, he felt a thrill of joy go through him to think that he might in any way help him.

Monday morning Walter was early at school, and when he entered the schoolroom he was glad to find that Mr. Harrison was also early, and that there was no one else in the room. Walter went up to him, and said:

"Mr. Harrison, I wish you would please take my name from the list of competitors for the prize essay."

"Certainly, if you wish it, Walter; but why have you changed your mind, may I ask?"

"I think, sir, that it would be better for me to study for the classical medal. You know I am rather behind in classics."

Mr. Harrison smiled. He knew Walter had no love for the classics. "I am glad to see that you have resolution enough to direct your energies toward that in which you are most deficient." But Mr. Harrison felt sure there was some deeper, underlying reason than that given, which had led Walter to give up a prize comparatively easy of attainment for one which must be gained through toilsome effort, and as he looked for a moment into the clear blue eyes, he instinctively guessed the reason. "You thought, too, you would give somebody else a chance, did you not?" he said, as he glanced over the list; then, drawing a line through Walter's name, he added, "I am sorry to cross yours out, but—ah! well, there are better things." And he gave Walter one of those rare looks, which was in itself a reward.

Of course, none of the boys knew anything about it for a while. When, after a few days, it came out, Charlie Somers tossed up his cap with an "hurrah," in which all the others joined. In fact, they were all too well pleased to inquire much into Walter's reasons. Meanwhile, Walter applied himself diligently to his classical studies, and soon began to be quite interested in the Latin and Greek, which had seemed so distasteful before. Nor did he ever regret that he had made up his mind to devote more time to the study of them than formerly.

CHAPTER IX.

WINTER SPORTS—THE COASTING PARTY.

NOW came the days of heavy snow storms. The snow fell fast and thick. Noiselessly, flake upon flake, it came down, till it covered fences, and left no trace of the road; then the wind rose, and whirled it round and round, sweeping it off in some places, and piling it up in great drifts in others. Then began the shoveling and digging. There were parties of men out clearing the country roads. In the town itself, the sidewalks were kept clear by means of a large kind of snow plow drawn by horses.

It did not matter to Walter whether the roads were clear or not, for he donned his snow shoes, and tramped off across fields, and over drifts with the greatest ease. Many of his young acquaintances could snowshoe, and sometimes they made up a party, and went off for a snowshoe tramp, which they all thought most enjoyable.

After the snow storms came a thaw; then a rain which froze as it fell; then sharp frosts again; and the snowy fields were covered with a crust hard enough to bear any one.

"What a grand chance for coasting!" said Walter, to himself, as he looked out on the sloping uplands which stretched away beyond the Harrington homestead, shining like burnished silver in the morning sunlight.

It was Saturday, and Walter went into the town in the morning to see if he could find some of the boys, and arrange to make up a party and go out coasting; for it was before the days of toboggans, and toboggan slides, and such a good opportunity as this must not pass unimproved. He failed to find any of the boys, however. So, after dinner, he set out to see if Arthur and Mary Harrington could go with him; but the fates were against him, for on inquiring for Arthur he learned he was sick in bed; he then asked for Mary. She soon appeared, dressed to go out.

"I came to see if we could arrange to go out coasting together," said Walter. "It is too bad that Arthur is sick. Can you go?"

"I am going," she replied. "Ned Brookes has just asked me, and he is in the yard now, getting the sled ready."

Walter was very much disappointed. Mary was generally his companion in all amusements, and to have Ned Brookes get ahead of him was quite too bad. For a moment or two he felt inclined to go home, but he

remembered Adeline, and asked Mary if she thought her sister would like to go.

"She would be delighted, I am sure," said Mary, and went to call her. She accepted Walter's invitation, and shortly after appeared, looking as pretty as a picture.

Walter began to feel quite honored to be the escort of an acknowledged belle, so was in very good humor when he met Ned, and as gay as though all had happened to suit him. Now and then he felt a pang when he saw Mary chatting in her merry way with Ned, for he did not feel so much at ease with Adeline. Happily, however, she was fully capable of carrying on the conversation herself, without much aid from him.

They selected a starting point, and soon the sleds were flying along, faster and faster, down the hill; now striking a little hillock, and leaping a foot in the air, and bouncing down again, and on and on till, reaching level ground, the speed slackened and the sleds finally came to a standstill. There was such a long stretch of hill that it was grand fun, and they all enjoyed the excitement. Then came the long walk up again, and then another start, and so on. Both of the boys could manage the sleds very well, but Walter was the more careful of the two. They had spent some time in this way. At last, they had a race to see which could reach the top

of the hill first. Walter and Adeline proved the quickest walkers, and reached the starting point first. Perhaps Ned felt a little piqued about it. At any rate, he said:

"Come, Mary, we won't wait for them to start. Let us take a new track." And he placed his sled a little farther off.

"Look out, Ned, you will run right against that fence," shouted Walter.

"I guess I know what I'm doing," Ned called back, and away they went. Walter and Ada stood watching them.

"I knew it," said Walter, as the sled struck an almost buried fence, Ned and Mary being violently hurled out on the crust.

"Oh, I am afraid Mary is hurt," cried Adeline, for she lay so still, and Ned Brookes was trying to raise her. And Ada flew down toward them, followed by Walter.

When they reached the place they found Mary partially revived, but she looked very white, and blood was trickling from her mouth. Ned's face was pale with fright as he bent over her.

"You have killed her with your carelessness," said Walter, his voice choked with passion.

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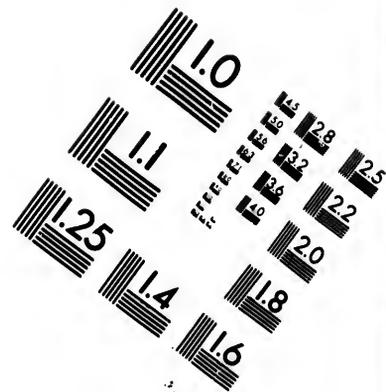
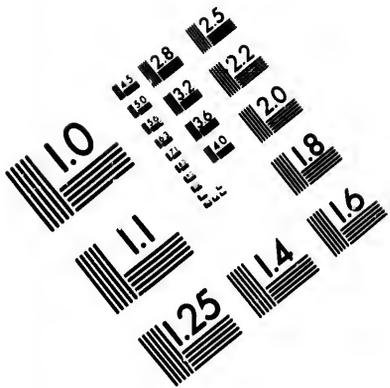
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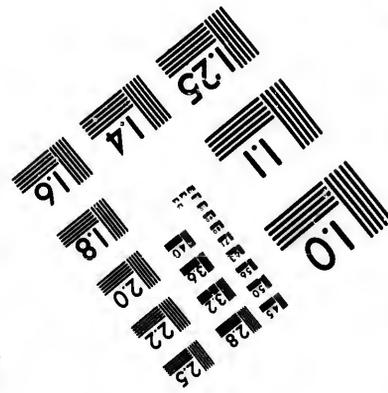
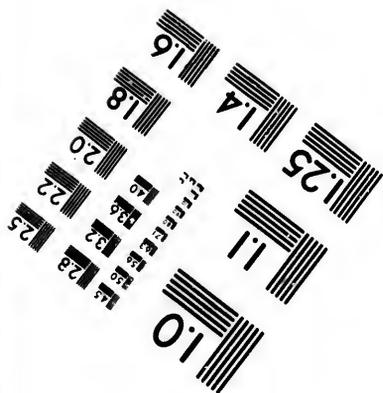
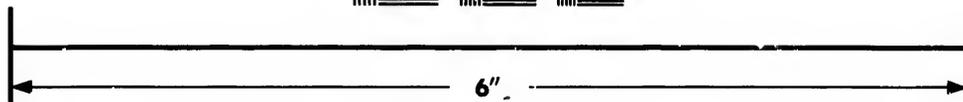
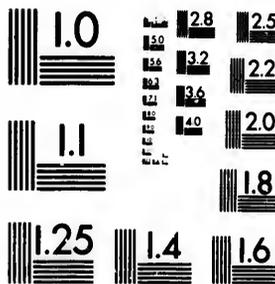
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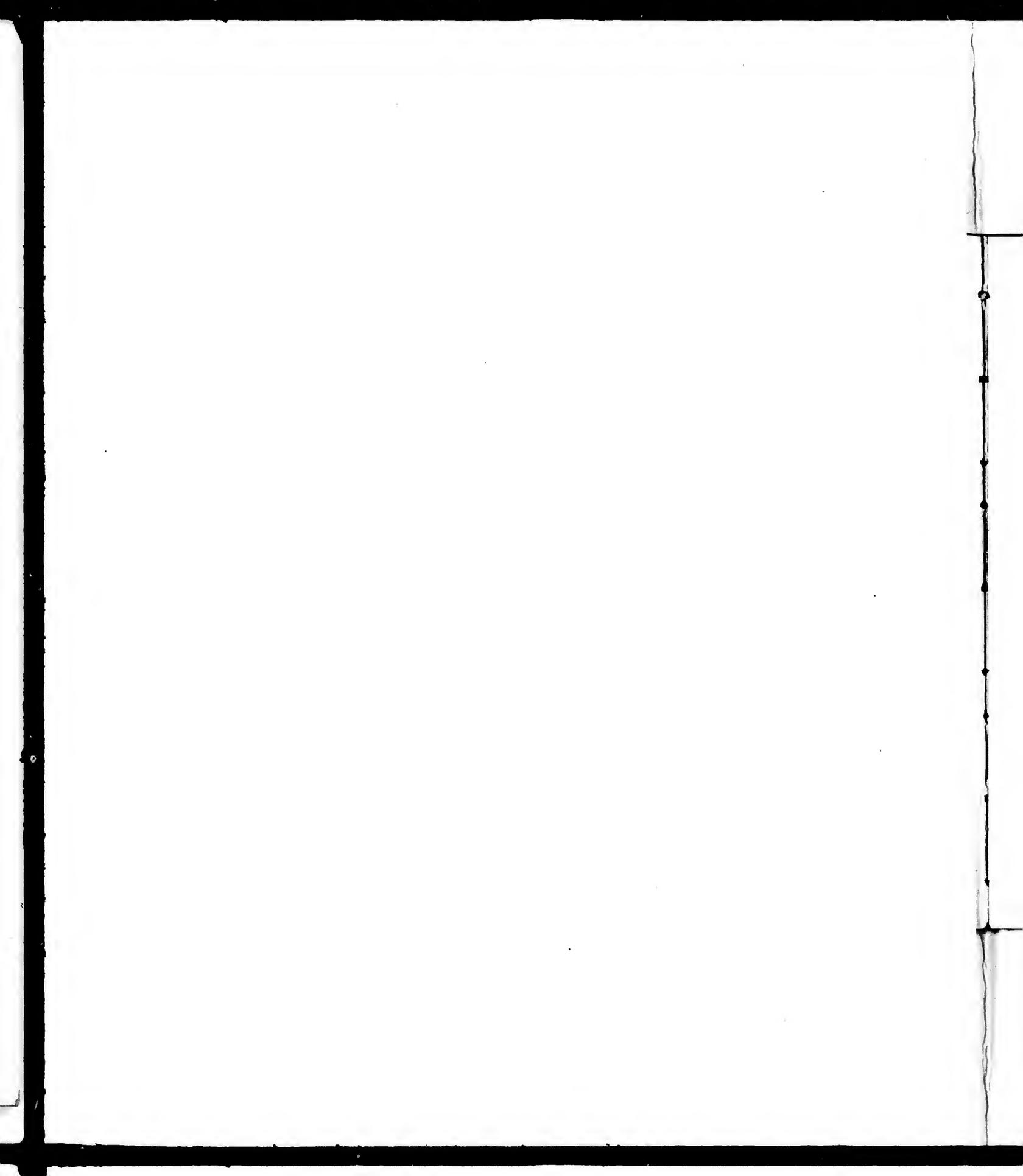
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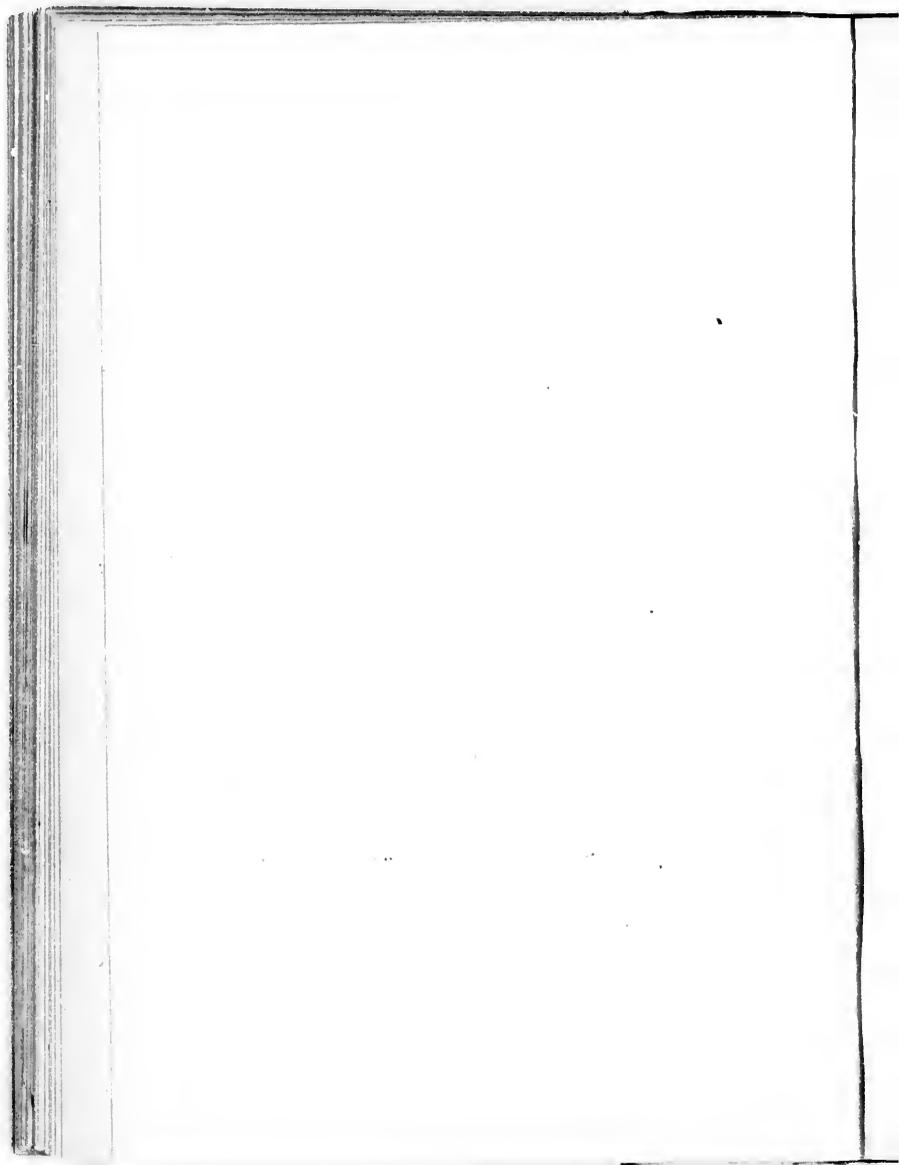
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Walter Harley's Conquest. Page 86.



"Oh, Mary, are you much hurt, dear?" said Ada.

"I think not," said Mary, speaking slowly; "it is only a cut in my lip, is it not, Ada?" And she clung to her sister.

They saw that that was all, as the bleeding gradually abated.

"I feel so weak," said Mary, as she tried to rise. "I don't know why I am so foolish, but I feel all unstrung."

"No wonder, having a shock like that; you might have been seriously hurt," said Ada.

"You might have known that you would strike that fence," said Walter, addressing Ned, angrily.

"We would have cleared it all right enough, only the sled struck this little hillock, and swung that way before I could change its course," answered Ned.

"I am sure it was not Ned's fault," said Mary. And she gave Walter an appealing look, which seemed to say, "Please do not be angry on my account." He understood it, and said no more; indeed, he realized the next moment that it was unkind to reproach Ned, who felt badly enough as it was.

They now turned their steps homeward. Mary talked quite gayly to keep up the spirits of the party, and when Walter and Ned took their leave, she assured them that she felt none the worse for the accident, save a slight

headache; but to say the truth, she had a very violent headache, and had to go and lie down as soon as she went into the house, and did not come down stairs that evening.

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CHAPTER X.

WALTER'S DECISION.

ALTHOUGH Walter was a true Christian, he had not yet made an open profession of religion, and so had not united with the church. His parents had never spoken to him on the subject; they deemed it a very important step, and in their anxiety that solemn vows should not be taken lightly were too fearful perhaps of urging upon him a public confession of the Saviour.

Lina Morton had often of late felt a great longing to see more young people brought into the church, and taking an active part in its services. She had hoped, as winter came on, that there might be a deepened interest—a general awakening, and that many might be gathered in. There were many of whom she thought; some of them she felt sure were not far from the kingdom, and she longed to have them take a decided stand on the side of Christ and his people. But the weeks slipped by. No special effort was put forth, other things crowded in and filled up the evenings, and the harvest time for the church was fast passing away.

The church at Knowlton was not very large, nor was

there any prospect that it ever would be; for Kuowlton was not a growing place, and the young men and the young women who might have been a strength to the church were obliged to go elsewhere to seek employment. Again and again the pastor, Mr. Somers, felt discouraged, as one and another of his helpers left for some other place. But still the little church kept alive; and it was the spiritual birthplace of many whose energies were afterward employed in churches far distant.

Walter was one of those who were often in Lina's thoughts. She wanted to speak to him about confessing the Saviour, whom she felt sure he was trying to follow. One day the opportunity came. Lina had taken tea at Elmwood, and as it was the evening of the regular church prayer meeting, Walter accompanied her to church. It was a beautiful night in March. The new moon hung low in the western sky, and threw a soft, mellow radiance over the scene. The snow, which had melted rapidly in the sun during the day, now crackled crisply under their feet.

"What a splendid night!" said Lina.

"Yes; too fine to be indoors," returned Walter. And then they walked along in silence for a few moments.

There was one thought uppermost in Lina's mind: "What a good opportunity to speak to Walter!" Yet

she shrank from it. "I hope we shall have a good meeting to-night," she said, presently; then she added, abruptly, fearful lest her courage might fail, "Walter, why do you not unite with the church? You are a Christian?"

"I have thought of it sometimes," he said, quietly,—"evidently it was no new thought to him,—“but I have felt afraid that after joining the church I might, in some way, dishonor my profession. People expect very much of one who takes an open stand, and they would be more apt to notice any failures in me than now.”

"But, Walter, that is want of faith. The Saviour whom you avow is able to keep you from falling. You would fail now if you trusted in your own strength. And how are you most likely to receive blessing and strength—when obeying Christ's commands, or when neglecting them?"

"Well, Lina, I believe you are right, and I have thought for some time that when there was a good opportunity—when there were others uniting with the church—I would do so also."

"Why wait for others, Walter? Perhaps they are waiting for some one else to lead the way. Why not be the first? Come out alone, if need be, and others might soon follow your example."

"Oh, Lina, I could not do that! How easy for Charlie and Arthur Somers—their father being the pastor of the church—to make the first move."

"I do not know that Charlie has given his heart to Jesus. Arthur is, I am sure, a Christian, but you know he is a timid, shrinking boy; and just think how much strength you might be to him! I am sure that if one who loved Christ would openly confess that love, good results would follow. It might be the beginning of a revival."

Walter walked along very seriously for a while, and then said:

"I suppose the members of the church would not care very much if I, a mere boy, should join. It will be some years before I can be of much use to the church."

"You very much mistake Christians if you think they would feel no pleasure in welcoming you to their number. If you can be but little help inside the church, you certainly are not any outside."

They were near the lecture room now, and Walter said, decidedly: "I could never be the first."

"I have done no good," thought Lina; and certainly she felt that it was a hard thing for Walter to do. There were no boys in the church, and she did not remember when any so young as Walter had joined. The prayer

meetings were not very largely attended, and those who took part in them were, for the most part, in middle life, or advanced in years. It would be such a new thing for a young lad to confess Christ that she knew it would be an effort for Walter. Lina felt discouraged; then she remembered who it was that felt a deeper interest in the growth of his church than she possibly could, and she laid all her anxieties at the Master's feet, and felt his peace fill her heart.

During the days that followed, everything conspired to bring the subject of their conversation constantly before Walter. The sermon on Sunday morning was from the text: "Who is on the Lord's side?" and in the afternoon Mr. Harrison followed up the words of the morning with an earnest appeal to his scholars to decide now whom they would serve; and if any had made a decision to serve God, to openly avow it.

A week passed away, and again it was Friday evening; and Lina, as usual, set off to prayer meeting. She was alone, as her mother did not feel able to go out that evening, and her father could not go until later. It was less than five minutes before the hour of opening when Lina entered the lecture room, when only about a half dozen were present. Almost immediately after, Mr. and Mrs. Harley and Walter entered; others came dropping

in, until at length the usual number had gathered. By this time, however, the pastor had nearly finished the short opening address, which was so full of helpful thoughts, that Lina wished every member of the church could have heard it. Then Mr. Harley, who was one of the deacons, offered prayer; Deacon Hodgson followed; then came a pause. Some of the brethren who usually took part in the services were not present. The minister gave out a hymn, which was sung heartily, after which Mr. Morton, who had just come in, said a few words. Then came another pause. "As some of those who are accustomed to take part in our meetings are absent," said Mr. Somers, "I hope those whose voices are seldom heard will feel it a duty and a privilege to say a few words."

No one stirred. Then Lina started a hymn; and her voice rang out, clear and sweet:

"Now just a word for Jesus,
Your dearest friend, so true;
Come, cheer our hearts, and tell us
What he has done for you."

She put her whole heart into it; for she felt such a longing that it might prove a message to some heart there. In a moment she felt some one behind grasp the back of her chair nervously, and her heart thrilled as Walter said, in a low, clear voice, though not without effort:

"I love Jesus; and I want to follow him in all his commands."

How the minister's face brightened! "Thank God!" he said, fervently. "Are there not some others who will make a similar confession?"

They sang again. Then some one rose at the other end of the room, and said, timidly, "I love Jesus," and sat down, unable to add more.

"God bless you, my son!" said Mr. Somers, with emotion, for it was none other than his own son Arthur.

"I think," said the pastor, in closing the meeting, "we may well sing, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow'; for what can make the Christian's heart so glad as to see disciples brought in?"

If Walter had thought the staid old members of Langton Square Church would give him an indifferent welcome, he felt that he had much mistaken them, as good Deacon Hodgson grasped his hand heartily, and others, whom he only partially knew, came up and gave him a warm Christian greeting.

"I was so glad to hear you to-night," said Lina, when she had an opportunity to speak to Walter.

"That hymn you sang helped me so much," he returned.

Not long after, Walter and Arthur were baptized on

profession of faith and united with the church, and sat down together at the Lord's table. It was a happy time for both of them; and Walter especially felt glad that he had not waited longer to enjoy this privilege.

This was the beginning of a season of revival. Others who had long been waiting came out now on the Lord's side. Special meetings were held, and there was a deep interest awakened among the young in the Sunday-school.

Walter had two surprises in this revival. One was that Ned Brookes was one of those who professed faith in Christ and united with the church; the other was that Bennie Harris was not among that number. Walter felt so sure that Bennie would come; he seemed not far from the kingdom. But at the close of the meetings he was just where he was at the beginning. He appeared to be waiting for some wonderful experience.

"I read the Bible, I try to pray," he said, when Walter one day spoke to him on the subject; "but I cannot see any light, I cannot feel that my sins are forgiven. Sometimes I hope I am a Christian, then again I fear I am not."

Walter quoted precious promises, but all in vain.

"They are not for me," said Bennie, sadly.

"Surely you cannot say that of this one, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out'?"

"No," said Bennie; "but I cannot seem to come."

"Why, Ben, it is only just believing what God says, that for Christ's sake he freely forgives your sins, and gives you eternal life."

But Ben could not see that it was "simply trusting, that is all." He must do something, or feel something before he could feel satisfied that he was a Christian.

Walter, telling his mother about it, said:

"It does seem so strange; there is Ned Brookes, who has always been so far off, is not troubled with doubt at all, and good little Ben is all in the dark."

"That is often the case," said Mrs. Harley: "'the last shall be first, the first last.' Perhaps we cannot do better for Bennie than pray that light may shine in upon him, and that the Holy Spirit may reveal Jesus to him."

CHAPTER XI.

ANTICIPATIONS.

ONE bright afternoon in May, Walter bounded into his uncle's. It was house-cleaning time, and he found Lina up stairs, mending a carpet; for she was a practiced hand in making a worn carpet look almost as good as new.

"We are not prepared to receive company," said Lina, with an arch smile.

"So much the better," returned Walter, flinging his books aside, and seating himself on a table; "I shall not have to put on company manners."

For a few minutes he sat in silence, watching Lina's busy fingers as she deftly sewed the carpet. At length he heaved a doleful sigh.

"What is the matter, Walter? You might groan if you had this carpet to mend; as it is, I do not think you have much to sigh over."

"Ah! you don't know what is before me, Lina. Carpets are nothing to it! Cousin Flora is coming to spend the summer—only think of it, Lina, the whole summer; she thinks it will do her health good."

Lina burst out laughing.

"Is that all the sympathy you can show a poor fellow?" returned Walter, pretending to be indignant.

"What difference does it make to you, Walter, if she does come to stay all summer?"

"All the difference in the world. She spent six weeks with us two summers ago, and I was so glad to see her go."

"Walter!"

"Well, I was; and you would have been too, if you had been I. You know she is an invalid, or thinks she is, and when she comes to the table she looks as though she would die. She has no appetite: she cannot eat this, and she dare not take the other—in fact, nothing suits her; and when we go out for a drive, we have to walk the horses all the way, for if they went fast she could not bear it, you know." And Walter put on a languid air. "Then she has to have every door shut, she is so afraid of draught; she is always chilly when nobody else thinks of being so—and mother, just the sweetest mother in the world, generally gets in such a fuss when she is there; and if I come in whistling, or happen to shut a door too hard, it is, 'Oh, Walter, do be careful; I am afraid you will waken Flora: she is resting.' I do not see why she cannot rest at night, like other folks."

"Well, Walter, I think, from all you say, that Flora is very much to be pitied."

"I don't think so; I think it is mostly imaginary."

"I think that you, who have never known a day's sickness, are not in a position to judge. It is easy for you to think her ills are all imaginary. Perhaps you would have a different story to tell if you were in her shoes. You do not know how illness changes life; if you did, you would have more patience with what seems to you now mere fussiness."

"Still, I have known people," said Walter, "who I am sure suffer more than she does, and yet one scarcely realized that they were invalids, they were so pleasant and agreeable."

"That may be. Flora may have been accustomed to dwell too much on her own feelings," said Lina. And then she added, gently: "Perhaps, unlike those others whom you have in mind, she has not yet learned what a friend we have in Jesus."

Walter was silent for a moment or two, then said:

"Well, I wish she were different, since she is coming to spend the summer with us."

"Think," said Lina, looking up with a bright smile, "that it is an opportunity for you bravely and manfully to lighten another's burden, 'to bear the infirmities of the

weak, and not to please yourself, and the summer will pass away more pleasantly."

"You always think of something good, Lina; but, after all, no matter what a fellow might do, it would be all the same to Flora: she would not think anything of it."

"We serve the Lord Christ," said Lina, reverently.

The word went to Walter's heart.

"I see, Lina," he said, thoughtfully, "it is enough if Christ approve, though we gain no praise from man."

"Yes," said Lina, simply. Her needle went flashing in and out of the carpet for a few moments, then she said, triumphantly, "There! I have put the last stitch in this carpet."

"Do you want to tack it down?" said Walter, jumping off the table with alacrity. "I will help you if you do."

"Thank you; that would be very good of you." And soon they were both at work, pulling and stretching and hammering. It did not take long to put it down; then, with much laughter and merriment, they moved the furniture into place.

"Now, does not the carpet look well?" said Lina.

"It looks just splendid, Lina. I do not see how you managed it so well. I must go now; it must be nearly six o'clock."

"Stay to tea, won't you, Walter. We can give you something to eat, if we are house cleaning."

"I can't stay, Lina, thank you; they would be looking for me home to-night. Dear me! only ten minutes; I must run. Good-bye, Lina; good-bye, aunt." And Walter was off.

"Dear boy!" said Mrs. Morton, "it does me good to see him; he is always so bright and merry."

"Yes, he makes sunshine wherever he goes," returned Lina.

Both mother and daughter sadly missed Rob, the only son and brother, who was away at college. He was unlike Walter, being quieter and more studious; yet he too made brightness in his home, and it seemed very dull without him.

Walter's boy friends knew they were always welcome to come to Mr. Harley's library whenever they wanted to gain more information on subjects than their own stock of books supplied; and sometimes after school one or more would walk home with Walter to look up some additional facts in history, or to consult a larger atlas, or to gain additional knowledge from books of travel and research. Walter was not long in extending the invitation to Bennie. So one pleasant spring afternoon Bennie paid his first visit to Walter's home.

"What a lovely home you have, Walter!" said Bennie, as they came in sight of the house.

"It is pleasant; you must come often in summer, Ben. It will remind you of the country."

Walter ran up the steps, and led the way into the hall, and through rooms which to Bennie looked very spacious and handsome. But when they reached the library, Bennie felt like one on enchanted ground.

"How lovely!" he said, half to himself, as he glanced around at the rows upon rows of books. "If I lived here, I should spend all my time in this room."

"Too much time for your own good," said Walter, laughing. "Now I am no such bookworm. I never expect to be killed by study. Here, Bennie, and here, and here," he continued, "are the books that will help you," drawing out one after another, and laying them upon the table.

Bennie looked half bewildered by the array. He had come to gather up facts to help him in preparing his prize essay.

"I shall not be able to look through all those," he said.

"Oh, yes, you will," replied Walter. "In some of them there will be only a page or two that will interest you. Take the study chair, and make yourself comfortable."

While Bennie searched the books, making occasional notes on a piece of paper, Walter selected a book of adventures, threw himself into an arm chair, and was soon engrossed in the tale. The time passed away quickly. At length Bennie closed the books, and said:

"I have finished now. I think I have all the facts I need."

"Yes?" said Walter, abstractedly, still going on reading.

Bennie left the table, and took an easy chair by the fireplace, and seeing that Walter was absorbed in his book, he gave himself up to a quiet enjoyment of his surroundings, and dreams of a possible future in which he figured as the possessor of a similar house. Bennie had a happy disposition in that he never envied others more fortunately situated than himself. His good times were always yet to come; and hope painted many bright pictures as he looked forth with vague longings into manhood. He was soon as deeply lost in his musings as Walter was in his book.

Having come to the end of a very exciting adventure, Walter suddenly came back to the realization of things about him. "Oh, have you finished Ben?" he exclaimed. "Did you find anything to help you?"

"Yes, thank you," replied Bennie.

"Come up again, and look them over if you want to. I must lend you this book; it is just splendid—so exciting."

"I should like to read it very much, but do not lend it to me until this essay is off my mind. I must stick to that."

"All right; you shall have it for the holidays."

"How nice it must be to have all the books you want!" said Bennie, looking around with hungry eyes on the tempting volumes. "How I should like to have a library just like this!"

Walter smiled; it seemed as though anything of that kind must be such a long way off, and most unlikely of attainment for such a little fellow as Bennie.

"It must be pleasant," continued Bennie, "to be a professor in a college, and have books always around one."

"Yes," said Walter, "I suppose so; though I would rather go into business. Would you like to be a professor?"

"Oh, I would dearly like it," said Bennie, earnestly.

"Perhaps you may be some day."

"I am afraid not," returned Bennie, with a little sigh. "My brothers and sisters must have a chance, and I am the one who will have to help them. Father said when he died that I must take his place."

Ah! how often a boy suddenly becomes a man in thought and feeling, when called to take father's place!

As Walter looked into that boyish face, through which shone the earnest purpose of a brave soul, ennobling and glorifying it, he could not say anything for the choking feeling that came in his throat.

There was silence for a few moments. "I shall always study all I can, however," said Bennie, "and learn all I can, and have as many books around me as I can afford to buy. But it is time I went home."

"If you can wait a moment, I will fetch the magazine I was going to lend you."

"I am so much obliged to you," said Bennie, on leaving, "for letting me look through those books."

"Oh, that was nothing. I am very glad to help you in any way," replied Walter. But he little knew how much he had helped his young friend by thus sharing his advantages with him—how all good and worthy ambitions had been quickened and strengthened even by the sight of that home, which seemed, to Bennie's wondering eyes, like a glimpse into fairy land.

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CHAPTER XII.

FLORA LANGLEY.

FLORA LANGLEY was a cousin of Mr. Harley's. She was an only child, and from infancy had been petted and spoiled by her parents. Indeed, their foolish indulgence was, in a great measure, the cause of her ill health. In childhood she was allowed to sit up late, to eat rich and unwholesome food, and had begun a round of parties when many a child would be scarcely out of the nursery. It was little wonder, then, that by the time womanhood was reached, Flora's health was ruined. She struggled along for some time, keeping up a round of pleasure, but became at length a perfect invalid, and now at thirty life was a burden she would fain lay down. And, as Lina had suggested, Flora knew not that Friend who bears our burdens and carries our sorrows. It is true that, when able, she had attended church. She had heard Jesus proclaimed, had listened to his word, and was acquainted with the sweet promises of the gospel; but they had fallen on her ears unheeded. Busy with earthly pleasures and pursuits, she had neither time nor inclination to listen to the Voice that pleaded with her.

But now, when health was gone, when all these gayeties ceased to please, Flora began to feel that aching void which all those who seek their satisfaction in this world must experience, sooner or later. From her father and mother she knew she could receive no help. They knew nothing of vital religion. Were she to speak to them concerning her feelings, they would only think her morbid and depressed, and send in haste to the doctor for a tonic, or try some new diversion. Her friends and associates were all gay and worldly. Instinctively her thoughts turned to Elmwood. She felt sure Mr. and Mrs. Harley were Christians. They could help her; she might there find the rest she was seeking. Her parents had planned to take her to a fashionable watering place, and were much disappointed to find her mind set on going to Elmwood; but as they always gratified her every whim, they yielded, and wrote the letter which had filled Walter with such rueful anticipations.

When, however, one glorious day in early June, the carriage drove up to the door, and Walter noticed, as Flora alighted, how pale and thin she looked, he felt really sorry for her, and ready to do his best to make her visit as pleasant as possible. He tried to remember that there was an invalid in the house, and moved about gently.

Flora felt fatigued after her journey, and kept her room for a day or two. Walter was just as well pleased; for he had an idea, which perhaps was not wholly incorrect, that his cousin thought boys in general troublesome beings who had to be tolerated, but who were very much in the way, nevertheless. Consequently he felt shy and awkward in her presence.

After a few days Flora began to feel much stronger, and Walter saw more of her. One evening, about a week after her arrival, they were both sitting in the drawing room, Flora in an easy chair, doing nothing and looking rather miserable; Walter by the window, reading, with an uncomfortable feeling that he ought to try and make things agreeable for his cousin, yet not knowing how to set about it. Just then his mother called him out of the room, professedly to help her about something; but her real motive soon appeared when she said, in a low voice:

"Could you not show Flora those new engravings, dear? She looks dull, and perhaps it would cheer her up."

"I am willing, mother; but she is sick so much of the time, I thought perhaps it would only bother her to look at anything."

"She is feeling pretty well to-night, and I think she might enjoy it."

"I always used to think, when she was here before, that she did not care to have me around. She could look at the pictures herself, couldn't she?"

"She would be more interested, I am sure, if you were to look at them, and talk about them with her. Probably it was only a fancy on your part that she disliked your company when she was here before. At any rate, you were only a boy then; you are more manly now, and have your share to bear in the entertainment of all visitors. Come,"—as Walter still lingered reluctantly,—“you could easily do it if it were Mary Harrington; and you must not allow your likes or dislikes to govern you in your intercourse with others.”

This was enough. Walter started for the drawing room. "I suppose she will be indifferent about it; she generally is about everything," he thought. It was such a simple thing to do, and yet he was conscious of making a painful effort, when he said, somewhat stiffly:

"Would you like to see these new engravings, Cousin Flora?"

She responded very heartily, however.

"Yes, indeed, I should. Your father said I must look at them when I felt well enough."

Walter drew up a small table, and opened the portfolio. Then Carrie stole in.

"Come, Carrie, here is a place for you," said Flora. "Bring your favorite little stool, and look at these pictures with us."

Flora was very fond of the gentle little girl, and Carrie was equally fond of her. Carrie, by her lively, childlike interest in the pictures, and wise little remarks about them, very much helped both parties to be social. When at length they had finished looking at them, and laid them aside, Carrie said:

"Flora, you play on the piano, don't you?"

"I used to, dear; but I have not played anything for a long time."

"Oh, do to-night, won't you?" pleaded Carrie.

"Yes, do," urged Walter. "I am so fond of music. I make Lina play all the evening when she comes."

So Flora yielded. She thought she could scarcely play anything; but the half-forgotten melodies came back to mind as her fingers ran over the keys. She was really an accomplished player, and in younger days had taken more interest in music than in any other study; and now she charmed her listeners with many light, lively airs. When at length she declared she could remember nothing more, Carrie said:

"Now, Walter, won't you play and whistle, 'The Mocking Bird'?"

"Oh, no, Carrie," said Walter, growing suddenly bashful.

"I wish you would," said Flora; "you ought to do your share. I am sure I have done mine."

Carrie also continued to plead, so finally Walter sat down to the piano. When he had finished "The Mocking Bird," Carrie thought of something else—a comic song—she wanted him to sing; and Flora laughed more heartily than Walter had ever known her to do. Just then Mrs. Harley entered the room.

"You are enjoying yourselves, I see," she said, smilingly.

"Oh, yes," said Flora. "I have spent a delightful evening."

"Why, Carrie, my dear, are you not in bed?" said her mother. "I was busy, and had quite forgotten you."

"I am so glad you did, mamma."

"What! ten o'clock?" said Flora, looking at her watch. "How quickly the evening has passed!"

From that time the barrier of reserve between Walter and his cousin was broken down. She seldom was well enough to spend so social an evening as that, but she took a far more lively interest than formerly in everything Walter said or did. Walter was growing by degrees very thoughtful. It was becoming quite natural to him to close a door gently, or lower a blind when the light

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was too strong, or close a window after sunset, or arrange cushions and shawls when Flora sat on the veranda or the lawn.

"I took Flora out for a walk yesterday, Lina," said Walter, one Sunday, when relating his experiences. "I never walked so slowly in all my life. We went as far as the gate and back, about a quarter of a mile altogether, I suppose, and honestly, I was more tired than if I had walked three miles. I thought if she walked a little faster she would not be so fatigued; but if I quickened my pace ever so little, she would say, 'Please, Walter, walk a little slower.' It must be dreadful to creep along at such a snail's pace all the time."

"No doubt it must be," said Lina. "We ought to be thankful that we are so strong and well."

Walter was encouraged in his good endeavors when his mother said to him one day:

"Flora says the brightest bit of the day is when you come home from school. That is as it should be," she added; "we all like a sunny face, and a cheerful word, but to invalids it is especially cheering."

The weeks rolled rapidly by, and vacation drew near. The last week of school had come, and every morning the boys eagerly scanned the slips of paper pinned on the wall announcing the results of the examinations in the

different branches. Of course, some were careless about their standing. They expected to be at the foot of the class, and their expectations were realized; and the fact that they would just as soon occupy that place as not was to their teachers a most unpromising sign. But the majority were quite anxious to know whether they had earned good marks or not.

The essays had been handed in and sent away to the judges, and their decision was awaited with great anxiety on the part of those who had competed for the prize. The day immediately preceding the public examination came, and at the close of school all waited in breathless silence to hear the important announcement.

"The essays," Mr. Harrison said, "were all of a high order; but there was one deserving of especial mention, and showing exceptional talent. When I mention the name of the writer, I am sure you will all agree with me that no one is more deserving than he, and I know you are all generous enough to be glad at his success, even though you personally may be disappointed. The successful competitor is Bennie Harris."

The announcement was followed by deafening applause. When order was restored, Mr. Harrison, in a few kindly words, congratulated the successful young essayist.

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moments everything whirled around him, and the voices sounded very far away; but by the time school was dismissed, he had sufficiently recovered himself to respond to the congratulations showered upon him.

Bennie was a general favorite, and every one was sincerely glad that he had won, especially since it was well known that the money would be very acceptable to him. Walter felt more pleased than he could tell any one; and as he looked at Bennie's happy face and shining eyes, and realized how much the prize meant to him, he felt as though any sacrifice he had made was nothing.

The public examination came, and the boys acquitted themselves well. The awarding of the prizes was perhaps the most interesting part to the visitors, the majority of whom found Latin and Greek, Quadratics and Logarithms rather dry. Arthur Somers received a valuable prize of books for excellence in English studies; Ned Brookes gained the mathematical prize; Walter was the winner of the classical medal, in the competition for which he was closely followed by Arthur Somers; while Bennie received his prize in bright gold pieces.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAYS AT FAIRHAVEN.

THE Sunday following was a bright, warm day, but Mr. Harrison's boys were all in their places at Sunday-school, for this was the last Sunday their teacher would be with them for seven or eight weeks, as he always spent his vacation away from Knowlton. To-day Mr. Harrison did not spend as much time as usual on the lesson, for he saw that the boys were full of their plans for the holidays, and he wished to speak a few words about the right use of their leisure time; so he said:

"I suppose you are all looking forward to spending a part, at least, of your holidays away from home."

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

"Well, I want you to think that wherever you are, God has a work for you to do, and I hope you will do it."

"Why what can we do, sir?" said Charlie Somers.

"We cannot hold preaching services."

"No, hardly," replied Mr. Harrison, smiling; "but good may be done without preaching. Many of you will spend your holidays in out-of-the-way country places,

where the churches are feeble and struggling. Do not excuse yourselves from attendance because the preaching is not so good as that to which you are accustomed. Do not neglect the prayer meeting, if there is one, because you are away from home; but go, and say a word to show that you are on the Lord's side, and you may cheer the heart of some lonely pastor. Perhaps you may find something to do in a Sunday-school. Be ready to lend a helping hand."

Ned Brookes heaved a long sigh.

"What is the matter, Ned?"

"Why, Mr. Harrison, you are cutting out such a lot of work for us to do, that it makes me tired to think of it."

"Why, is it more than a Christian expects to do at home?"

"No," said Ned, hesitatingly, "but then when a fellow goes away he expects to take things easy, and do nothing. Everybody does in the hot weather."

"But," returned Mr. Harrison, gravely, "do you think that a Christian's spiritual life is the better for taking things easy, and doing nothing, particularly when he is not an invalid, but a strong, healthy youth? The Christian soldier should be always on duty. Some of you may visit in cities, perhaps among worldly friends.

Stand by your colors, and be always, everywhere, true to Jesus. One word more for you all. Keep your eyes open, and use every opportunity to be helpful to others, and carry sunshine with you wherever you go. Now how many of you will try to fill these holiday hours with service for Christ, in some way or other?"

Several hands went up. Ned's was not among them.

"What! undecided, Ned?" said Mr. Harrison, with a kindly smile.

"I do not like to make promises when I think I am almost sure to break them," said Ned.

"Well, Ned, there is something in that. We are all liable to break our good resolutions, unless they have been made in dependence on One stronger than we; yet remember, 'I can do *all* things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' And then I only asked you to *try* I fear," he added, "that some of you are not prepared to do Christian work in these holidays. You have need of the Saviour first. Do not let these leisure hours pass away without seeking Christ. He will certainly be found of those who seek him, and then how full of blessing these coming weeks will be to you."

After the close of Sunday-school, Charlie Somers, Ned Brookes, and Walter found themselves together, and as they sauntered along in company, Charlie said:

"I never thought before of doing good when I went away. I always supposed I went away to receive good. I never thought much about it, to say the truth.

"You don't catch me running around, and looking up prayer meetings and Sunday-schools in this hot weather," put in Ned Brookes. "It is all well enough for Mr. Harrison, if he likes; but for my part, I like a holiday from everything when I go away. Then what is the use of wearing one's self out helping others. I go in for having a good time."

"Perhaps you might find your good time in that way," suggested Walter.

"I can't see it. I am going on a fishing trip first, anyway, and I don't suppose I can do much good then. Well, I suppose I'll see you again before I go." And Ned turned down a side street toward his home.

"Ned doesn't talk like a very earnest Christian," said Walter.

"The set he goes with don't help him much," returned Charlie Somers.

"Who are they?"

"Oh, Sam Lewis, and 'Tip' Johnson, and that young Slocum."

"I wonder that Ned keeps company with them."

"Well, you see they make a good deal of him. He

told father he thought the boys in the church were stiff and unsociable."

"I don't think we are stiff at all," said Walter. "He is a hard fellow to get along with; for my part, I do not understand him."

"There is considerable good in him, if we only knew how to bring it out," said Arthur Somers, who had joined them while Walter was speaking.

"It is hard to bring it out, then. I get quite out of patience with him. I fancy he doesn't like me, anyway."

"I would not think that, Walter," said Arthur, quickly. "You will never understand him if you do. Perhaps if we only tried to understand him, and like him, he would be more influenced by us."

"I am sure he does not know what we think of him, so that cannot be the barrier between us," returned Walter.

"How do you know he doesn't?" said Arthur. "I think people instinctively know whether we like them or not. We show our feelings a great deal more than we imagine."

"I do not know what is going to be done about it," said Walter. "I am sure I cannot feel differently."

Here the matter dropped. Walter's thoughts returned to it later, after his two friends had left him. Was it

his duty to like people who were so uncongenial as Ned Brookes? "Ned would rather go with those fellows: they are more akin to him," Walter said to himself. But though, for the time being, he dismissed the matter thus lightly, conscience had been awakened, and would not let him off so easily. He began to have a dim notion that he ought to try and understand Ned, and so place himself in a position to influence him; and though he often said to himself, "I cannot feel any differently," there came intermingled with this thought that other thought, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

Walter and Ned were so opposite in disposition, and had been so differently brought up, that they seemed to have nothing in common. It was difficult for them to appreciate one another's good points; and thus there came a coolness between them, which was founded more upon what each fancied the other thought of him than upon any real grievance.

But the prospect of a visit to Uncle George, and preparations for it, drove all thoughts of Ned Brookes for a time out of Walter's mind.

Uncle George was Mr. Harley's younger brother. He had been an ordained minister for three years, and had the charge of a small church in the little seaport town of Fairhaven. He had supplied the church there during

his vacations, while preparing for the ministry. He was blessed, and enabled to build up the feeble cause. He grew so interested in the work that, when his term of study was ended, he accepted the call to settle there, in preference to one from a large church in a neighboring city. He was in a better position to do so than some would have been, as he derived sufficient income from property left him by his mother to make him in a measure independent of the small salary which the church offered him.

George Harley was a singularly unworldly man. He was perfectly contented to labor in this small place, to live simply and plainly, to miss much of what is called society, if only he might serve the Master, and do the work committed to him.

Walter was very fond of Uncle George, and he used to look forward eagerly to the Christmas and Easter holidays, which his uncle always spent at Elmwood. He was indeed a most interesting companion. He had always a fund of stories to beguile the twilight hours. In the day time he would take long walks with Walter; and, being very observant, and an ardent student of nature, he could always make these rambles full of interest and instruction. He used to visit the workshop in the attic, and was equally at home making a boat for Walter, or a doll's chair for

Carrie. In the winter evenings he was always ready to play games; and, indeed, when young friends came to spend the evening, Uncle George was in constant demand.

Rather more than a year before, George Harley had brought home a wife to the parsonage at Fairhaven, and they sent a pressing invitation to their relations at Elmwood to visit them in their cosy home. Walter's father and mother had gone the previous summer, and now he was to have his long-promised visit.

His sister Carrie was to spend her holidays with her father's two maiden aunts. Mr. Harley planned to accompany his little daughter, and stay for a day or two at the old homestead where he had passed the days of his boyhood; for these two aunts had brought him up, his mother having died when he was yet a child.

Walter, on his return from Fairhaven, was to spend a few days with these aunts, and accompany his little sister home. This suited Walter very well. The place was altogether too quiet for him, and he always tired of it after a few days. To Carrie, on the other hand, the old-fashioned house, with its quaint furniture, and queer little nooks and crannies, was delightful. She had her favorite seat in the garden—an old-fashioned garden it was too, with tall hollyhocks, and blue lupins, and twining convolvulus, and sunny marigolds. She knew the apple

tree in the orchard where the robin built its nest, and the spot where the prettiest wild flowers grew. On rainy days she would sit at the little casement window in the attic, and listen to the rain pattering on the roof. Ah! yes; it was just the place that a dreamy child would delight in. Carrie too was very fond of her aunts, and did not object to their precise ways; and they, in turn, lavished a wealth of affection on her; for was she not the child of their favorite nephew? Indeed, they took it as quite a hardship if they did not see both Walter and Carrie at least once a year.

The day at length came when Walter was to start on his holiday, and he took his place in the train with quite a feeling of importance; for this was his first journey alone. He looked forward also with much interest to the end of his journey; for he had never seen Fairhaven, and there is always a charm in novelty. It was about two o'clock when the train left Knowlton. After a rapid ride of two hours, Perley Junction was reached, where Walter had to change cars. The car he now entered was poor and uncomfortable, compared with the soft-cushioned, easy-running one he had just left. The scenery too was uninteresting; and the train went at such a slow rate that Walter was quite out of patience. But at length the swampy lowlands began to give place to hills,

and Walter knew he must be drawing near his destination. Then he caught a glimpse of the beautiful blue ocean. A few minutes more, and the train stopped at the Fairhaven Station; and there was Uncle George, waiting on the platform.

"Well, Walter, my boy, I am glad to see you," he said, giving his nephew a hearty hand-grasp. "This is all your baggage, is it?" picking up a valise. "Then follow me, this way." And they passed quickly by the loungers who are apt to be about a railroad platform, and were soon walking rapidly along the main street.

Presently they turned up a side street, quiet and country looking, with grass growing on either side. It was up hill all the way now; and Walter had hard work to keep up with his uncle's rapid strides.

"There is my church, Walter," said his uncle, pointing to a neat, unpretentious building a little farther up the hill; "and the parsonage is close by it. You see we live on the heights, and have a fine view. There, now turn and look. Doesn't that repay ~~one~~ for the climb?"

Walter did as he was bidden. "Yes, indeed it does," he exclaimed.

Beneath them, on the side of the hill, and clustering about its base, were the white houses of Fairhaven. Beyond, the eye wandered over the bay,—its blue waters

dotted here and there with snowy white sails,—and away out farther still, to where ocean and sky seemed blended in one. Over all, the setting sun threw its glory. Its rays tinged the white houses with a ruddy hue; threw a warm glow over the rocky ledges that stretched far out on either side of the bay; gleamed on a distant cottage window, till it shone like a radiant star; touched the weather-beaten sails of the fishing boats, and made them look like fair, white wings.

They paused for a few moments, to take in the quiet beauty of that evening scene, and then Uncle George said: "We must not stop longer, Walter. It is growing chilly. You will have plenty of opportunities to see Fairhaven by sunrise and sunset, and by the 'pale moonlight.' So we will hurry on; for you must be quite ready for tea by this time."

They turned now into a road leading along the heights. The sun had sunk beneath the horizon; and the glory had faded from the scene, leaving it cold and gray.

"How different the same things look now the sun has gone!" exclaimed Walter.

"Yes," replied his uncle. "I could not help thinking, while looking on it, that just so dull and cheerless is life without the Lord Jesus."

They were at the parsonage gate now; and his uncle

turned the latch, and Walter followed him up the gravel walk that led to the door. The house was low, with wide windows on either side of the door. At that Mrs. Harley was standing to welcome them. Walter did not need to be introduced to Aunt Jessie; for she and Uncle George had spent a few days at Elmwood on their wedding trip. He had yet, however, to become acquainted with little Paul, the three-month's-old son and heir. He could not have this pleasure that evening, however, as, like a good orthodox baby, he was fast asleep.

Aunt Jessie showed Walter up to the spare bedroom. It was a pleasant room, very neatly furnished; and he was very glad to use the means it afforded to remove the dust and grime of his journey. As he came down stairs, an appetizing fragrance of coffee was wafted up; and when he entered the cosy sitting room, he found a tempting tea table prepared for his entertainment.

"We waited tea to-night till you could join us, Walter," said his uncle; "we thought it would be more sociable to sit down together." And a merry little party they made, all prepared to do justice to the delicate ham and puffy biscuits, the rich preserves and light cake.

Walter felt at home at once, and soon was conversing freely on different topics of the day; for his uncle was

one who always made young people feel that he was their friend. He liked to hear them state their views on subjects that interested them. He always respected their opinions, however crudely expressed, and did not set them down because they sometimes dared to differ from old-established authorities; so he won their confidence. They felt that he gave them credit for being something, and that he appreciated the best that was in them, and they were encouraged to tell him their ambitions and aspirations, their troubles and perplexities, knowing that they were sure of his sympathy and help; and he, in turn, would often ask their advice and help, thus making them feel that he looked on them as friends. It was not much wonder, then, that he had an enthusiastic band of young workers in his church, nor that he often received letters from those who had gone out to the great cities to seek their fortunes, and whom he still remembered with kindly interest.

The evening passed away quickly; then, before they separated for the night, Mr. Harley, in a few words, gave thanks for protection and guidance during the day, and asked the Heavenly Father to keep them all that night. And when he prayed "that our dear young friend might in this visit 'be blessed and be a blessing,'" Walter's whole heart responded "Amen!"

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Walter was just going up stairs, when his uncle, who had gone to the front door, called him ; and, as Walter came out, he said :

"Is not that a picture?"

The full moon poured a flood of silvery light over sea and land. Beneath them the little town lay hushed and still, while out on the bay the moonbeams, falling athwart the rippling waters, made a shining pathway, that seemed as though it must surely lead to heaven.

"Fairhaven is fairer than ever by moonlight," said Walter. And the vision of that bright scene followed him until he closed his eyes in sleep.

Walter came down the next morning in the best of spirits. The morning sun streamed cheerfully into the sitting room. Here he found his uncle, with Baby Paul.

"This is the king of the house, Walter," said Mr. Harley, holding up a blue-eyed, round-faced, rosy-cheeked boy.

The blue eyes gazed wonderingly at Walter; soon the baby lips parted in a little smile, and it was not long before they were the best of friends.

"Are you ready for a ramble, Walter?" said his uncle, at the breakfast table.

"Yes, indeed. I think, in this bracing air, I could walk miles."

"Well, you must walk over to the shore with me, and and I will show you my favorite nook, where I like to sit and watch the tide come in ; but first," continued Mr. Harley, smilingly, "I must take you around my estate."

So after breakfast Walter accompanied his uncle around the place. The little plot of ground in front, which was Mrs. Harley's especial charge, was tastefully laid out with beds of flowers set in a smooth lawn ; here and there were planted a few hardy shrubs ; a climbing rose waved its pink buds into the sitting-room window, every breath of air wafting their fragrance through the room. Behind the house was a vegetable garden ; at the side of the house grew a few fruit trees ; beyond was a pasture for the horse and cow.

Walter found that his uncle had been up since five o'clock, working in his garden, and tending his live stock ; and the order and neatness everywhere prevailing showed how systematically and thoroughly he worked.

About eleven o'clock they started for the shore. Mr. Harley took with him a note book and pencil.

"I often jot down thoughts for my sermons when I visit my little nook," he said. "At other times, I take a book with me and study."

They did not go down into the village, but struck

across the country, and came toward the shore on the other side of the point of land which shut in the bay. Here the waves rolled in with more force than in the land-locked haven. They followed a narrow pathway leading down the rocky slope. About half way down, Mr. Harley stepped aside, round a huge boulder, and they found themselves in a little recess. Here, sheltered from the winds by the rocks, they could sit and look far out to sea, and watch the white-crested waves, as they followed one another in quick succession, and broke on the rocks beneath, dashing high a shower of silvery spray.

By-and-by Mr. Harley began to write. Walter had a book with him, but he found the book of nature more attractive that bright morning; so he sat idly tossing pebbles down the slope, listening to their clink, clink, as they bounced from rock to rock, and were lost to sight. And all the while he was dreaming of the future that stretched before him, vast and trackless as the ocean on which he gazed; and his thoughts flitted as lightly and joyously over it as the birds that skimmed the sparkling waves.

After a while, Walter began to study his uncle, who was lost in deep thought. There was something rugged about Mr. Harley's countenance, and when in intense thought an almost stern look; but how soon that could change into

a radiant smile, that lit up every feature, Walter well knew. The deep lines on that high forehead seemed to suggest struggle and anxiety; and there was an expression in those dark eyes that told of deep, heart-felt suffering. Walter, as he quietly studied that face, felt sure that his uncle's life had not flowed on so easily as had that of his own father. He had heard very little about his uncle's early days, save that he had given up good worldly prospects to enter the ministry; but he resolved that he would ask him at some favorable opportunity how he was led to become a minister. Just then Uncle George turned around, and catching Walter's earnest gaze, his features relaxed into a smile.

"You think your uncle a grum-looking old fellow, don't you?" he said.

"No, uncle; I was not thinking anything of the kind."

It was on the tip of Walter's tongue to ask the question that was uppermost in his mind, but something held him back; he hesitated. At that moment a passing ship, evidently bound for Fairhaven, took their attention. Mr. Harley managed to decipher the name.

"It is the 'Water Nymph,'" he said. "She has been hourly expected for the last few days. Probably the storm we had a few days ago has delayed her."

"Well, they have outridden it, and will soon be in port," said Walter.

"Yes," returned his uncle, gazing abstractedly out over the waters, and speaking more to himself than to Walter, "through storm and through calm, 'so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.'" His eyes musingly followed the vessel for a time; then, suddenly recollecting himself, he pulled out his watch. "Come, Walter, we shall only just reach home in time for dinner; and we must not keep your aunt waiting."

"You are just like my father; he is so punctual, and cannot bear to have one of us a minute late."

"It is just as easy to be in time as to be just a few minutes late, and it often saves others a great deal of inconvenience. This afternoon, Walter, you will have to explore alone, as I shall not be able to go with you; and I advise you to make the most of to-day, as there will be rain shortly."

"Why, uncle, there is not a cloud in the sky," exclaimed Walter.

"True; but we have a barometer that never fails. Do you see that cloud-like line on the horizon?" turning and pointing seaward.

"Yes, plainly; it is an island, is it not?"

"Yes; it is Sandy Head Island. Now when you can

see that as distinctly as you can to-day there is sure to be a storm in a day or two."

"That is too bad," said Walter. "I was sure we were going to have fine weather by the appearance about us; however, I suppose I must take things as they come."

Walter spent the afternoon in wandering around the town. It was a very quiet, sleepy place. Some of the streets were quite grass-grown, and not a person was to be seen on them, the ducks, geese, and chickens appearing to have the monopoly of these less frequented parts. On the slope of the hill at the back of the town, he passed some substantial houses, built by retired sea captains. Walter thoroughly enjoyed his ramble; and gave an amusing account of it to his uncle and aunt over the tea table.

The next morning proved cloudy and foggy, just as Mr. Harley had predicted, and before afternoon a steady rain had set in. Walter concluded to write letters home.

"You had better come to my study," said his uncle; "there are pens and paper there, and you will be undisturbed."

The study was a little room in the right wing of the house. There Mr. Harley had all his books. There was a door on one side leading into the sitting room, and on the other side one opening into the garden. Walter was

soon engaged in letter writing; while his uncle busied himself turning out a desk, looking over letters, putting some aside to be burned, and carefully tying up others, noting on them the date and name of the writers. Walter had nearly finished his letter, when he happened to glance into his uncle's desk, now nearly empty, and saw there a picture of a fair girlish face, that certainly never was Mrs. Harley's.

"Oh, uncle!" said he, mischievously, "I am surprised at you for keeping a young lady's picture so carefully. What would Aunt Jessie say?"

"Aunt Jessie knows all about it," said Mr. Harley, smiling. Then a grave look stealing over his face, he continued: "This young girl, years ago, was my betrothed wife; we were to have been married in a few weeks when death snatched her away from me."

"Oh, uncle!" said Walter, "I beg your pardon. I never thought of anything of that kind, or I would not have said anything about it."

"You never heard much about my early life, did you?" said Mr. Harley. "Well, after leaving college, I obtained a position in a banking house, where I received a good salary for one so young, with a prospect of increase; in addition to this, I had some income from my share of my mother's property. All I wanted was a home, which

I had not had for years, as mine was early broken into by my mother's death. It was not much wonder, then, that I became engaged, while yet quite young, to Alice Leigh, a lovely Christian girl. After an engagement of a year or more, I wished to marry. Her friends objected on account of our youth, as I was barely twenty-two, and she not twenty; but I would take no denial, so we settled on September as the month for our wedding.

"I remember in the summer I ran down for a few days to visit your father. He had such a pleasant home. You were a baby then, and they seemed so happy; and I looked forward with bright anticipations to having as pleasant a home myself. I did not cross that threshold again for seven years. Alice was at that time away visiting friends. About a week after my return came the word, crushing me to the earth, that Alice was drowned. While out sailing the boat capsized. There were two saved, I think; but the agonizing thought was, 'If only I had been there I might have saved her,' for I was a good swimmer. Oh, Walter, how terribly sad are the words, 'It might have been!'"

He paused; for a moment a look of anguish came into his dark eyes, and he drew a quick breath, as one in pain. It was only for a moment, and then he went on:

"It is all over now, and after this lapse of time I can

say I am thankful; yes, thankful that she is safe—forever safe—from all earth's troubles and cares, enjoying the perfect bliss of a heavenly home.

"That dark trial completely changed my life. I had always imagined myself a good Christian; but in this time of trial I was like a tempest-tossed bark. I lost faith and hope, and could not be reconciled to my bereavement. Unable to stay in the place that was so full of recollections of her, I gave up my situation, and started westward, caring little where I went. I finally stopped in a large Western town. I obtained, without much difficulty, a position as bookkeeper. The salary was small, nor was there much prospect of advancement; but I did not care, there was so little incentive to work or earn.

"It was a dark time for me. Sometimes I was tempted to let go what feeble hold I had on religion, and plunge into a whirlpool of dissipation; but ever a sweet face rose before me—I could not go where she would not have approved. The memory of her kept me also a regular attendant at Sunday worship. I visited all the churches in turn; at last one morning I saw in the vestibule of one of them a printed programme of services with the name of the pastor, Rev. Harris Bowes. I recognized it at once as the name of a college friend. I listened, consequently, with more than usual interest to his sermon,

but at the close did not make myself known. I felt as though I could not let him know that his once merry, happy-hearted college chum was a disappointed, miserable man. As I passed out, however, determined to speak to no one, a genial, kindly man stepped up to me, and shook hands and welcomed me to the services. It was not in human nature to resist his kindness, so I gave him my address. That afternoon I was in my sitting room, when a card was brought up to me. The name on it was the Rev. H. Bowes, and in a few moments we were face to face. You may be sure he saw at a glance that all had not gone well with me, nor was it long before I told him my trouble and my doubts—it was the first time I had told any one. Oh, he was a true friend to me! I feel that under God I owe everything to him, so kindly, so patiently did he try to lead me back to faith in God, and in his unerring wisdom and love. In my dark hours—and they were not a few—he never grew discouraged, never let go his hold on me, but followed me up, and cheered me with the hope of better days ahead.

“He induced me at length to attend prayer meeting. Slowly the darkness passed, and light and peace dawned, and I began once more to take my place in the church. My friend found plenty for me to do, and in visiting

among the poor, and ministering to the sick and suffering, I found my own burden lightened. To work for Jesus was now my delight.

"One day, after addressing a meeting at a mission in which I was very much interested, I walked home with Mr. Bowes, talking earnestly of one and another for whose spiritual welfare I was concerned. When he reached his study, he said, abruptly: 'George, you ought to be a minister, and I believe the Lord has been leading you toward that all these years.'

"I said not one word, but the thought filled my heart to overflowing, and the more I thought of it the more there crept into it a joy that was a stranger there. I felt once again there was something worth living for. I remembered hearing that my mother had said that she hoped and prayed that one of her sons might be a minister—perhaps I was to be the one. It seemed others had the same thought as did Mr. Bowes, and the end of it was, I gave up my situation, and entered a theological institution. Very happy were the days spent there, and they are full of pleasant memories. Near the close of my term of study I met your aunt, and found in her one every way fitted to be my companion in life. You know the rest. And now 'my burden has fallen from me, and only the sorrow of others throws its shadow over me.'"

He looked up with a bright smile, for just then Mrs. Harley entered with the baby in her arms.

"Baby has just awaked," she said; "can you take him for a few moments while I finish my preserving?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Harley. And he was soon playing with baby in true fatherly fashion, while Walter finished his letter.

The rain had ceased; and suddenly a gleam of sunlight illumined the room.

"Sunshine after rain," said Uncle George; "we can go down to the office, and post those letters, when Aunt Jessie is ready to take the baby." A few minutes later, and they were walking rapidly along the muddy streets.

It was the first time they had been down into the town together, and on their way Mr. Harley pointed out the old schoolhouse where service was held when he first ministered to the people. The church in which they now worshiped had been built through his efforts; and it was evident that the work here had a strong hold on his heart.

"I am so attached," he said, "to my people, that I should find it a very difficult matter to sever my connection with them."

The people were just as much attached to their pastor, as Walter learned in the course of his stay.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVED.

SUNDAY morning came, and Walter met for the first time with the congregation at Fairhaven. It was also the first time he had ever heard his uncle preach.

Mr. Harley's style was simple, earnest, direct; and he spoke with a heartfelt conviction that made his words come with power to the hearts of his hearers. After the service he passed in and out among the people, shaking hands with one, making inquiries after some sick friend or absent child of another, and so on. He introduced Walter to a great many of the people—so many, indeed, that Walter was afraid he could never remember them all.

In the afternoon Walter went to the Sunday-school with his aunt, who was one of the teachers. The superintendent came up to speak to him, and asked him to teach a class whose teacher was absent that day. Walter hesitated for a few moments; he would much rather not teach, but he remembered Mr. Harrison's counsel to his class to do all the good they could while away. Then the words of Holy Writ came stealing into his heart,

"Even Christ pleased not himself." So he said: "I will try and teach the class," and followed the superintendent to the other side of the room, where he found a class of half a dozen boys. It must be confessed Walter felt somewhat embarrassed, for some of them were quite as large as he. The superintendent had, however, spoken truthfully, when he said it was a nice class. They were all poor boys, and not nearly so well informed on Scripture subjects as Walter; and as he could speak with considerable ease and fluency, he won their close attention; so the half hour passed away quite quickly.

Walter found opportunities for doing good on other days than Sundays. He sometimes accompanied his uncle to see some of his parishioners. One of these visits was paid to the home of a little boy who was suffering from spinal disease. Walter felt sorry for the little invalid, shut in from all active amusements, and soon he became a frequent visitor at the house. Jamie's eyes would brighten so at his coming; for he would sit down by him and read him a story, or whittle out some little toy. One close afternoon, finding him very poorly, he took the mother's place by the bedside, and fanned the little fellow, giving the mother an opportunity to attend to some household duties.

On Wednesday evenings Walter always went with his

uncle to the prayer meeting. He had, as yet, a sweet boyish voice, and so could help in the singing. Nor did he find it hard in that little company of simple-hearted believers to speak of his love to Jesus, and his determination to follow him.

The second Sunday of Walter's visit was a drenching wet day. As Walter stood at the window, looking out on the stormy scene, he thought, "Surely uncle won't be able to drive to Orme's Cove to-day," where Mr. Harley always held service on Sunday afternoon. The bay was wrapped in a fog; a strong wind blew from the sea, driving the rain in sheets against the window panes. Walter turned away and seated himself at the organ. While he was looking in the hymn book for some familiar tune, he heard his aunt say:

"You surely will not go to-day, George; there will not be any one there."

"It is my duty to be there, whether any one else is there or not," her husband replied. "If there is no one at the schoolhouse, I can go into Deacon Andrews' house and hold a service. There is quite a large household there, you know."

"Well," said Mrs. Harley, with a little sigh, "I suppose it is right to go; but it seems rather hard for you to have to drive so far in such a storm."

Walter waited to hear no more, but closed the book and slipped away to his room. Soon he came down stairs, his rubber coat on his arm.

"Uncle," he said, cheerily, "can you take me along too?"

"Oh, my boy, you must not go in such a storm. Some fine day you will enjoy going with me."

"I don't mind the rain; I am well fortified against it, you see. And you will be sure of having a congregation of one, at least," he added, merrily.

"If you are bent on going, I am sure I shall be glad of your company," said his uncle.

Mrs. Harley looked relieved. "I am glad you are going too, Walter," she said. "It will not be so lonely for your uncle." In a few moments she stood at the window, with the baby in her arms, watching them as they drove away.

Walter had never been out in such a storm before. The road, after cutting across the country for a short distance, followed the sea coast along the top of high cliffs. Here they felt the full violence of the storm. The rain, blown with violent gusts of wind, came with such force that they felt as though they were in the very midst of the storm cloud.

"In fine weather this is a lovely drive," said Mr. Har-

ley. "There is a fine view seaward, and also a pleasant prospect on the landward side."

Naught of this could even be guessed at now, as the fog blotted it out completely. So they drove on for five miles. Then the road began to dip down into a hollow, and they found themselves at Orme's Cove.

When they entered the schoolhouse they found three men and a boy. Mr. Harley started a hymn immediately, Walter took it up, and the three men and the boy joined in; so there was considerable heartiness in the beginning of the service. Meanwhile, word had gone around that the minister had come; and before long, the congregation numbered a dozen, among whom there were two or three women.

Mr. Harley chose for his text the second verse of the thirty-second chapter of Isaiah, "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."

At the close of the sermon, opportunity was given—as is customary in country places—for any who so desired to speak or pray. As is usual on stormy days, the few present felt themselves under special obligations, and one and another took part so simply and earnestly, that each Christian heart must have felt it was good to be there.

The service ended. Mr. Harley lingered, talking with one and another. Walter was introduced to Deacon Andrews and his wife, and before the good couple left, they made Mr. Harley promise that he and his nephew, together with Mrs. Harley and the baby, would come the first fine day, and spend the afternoon with them. Near the door stood two men, one a stalwart fisherman, in the prime of life, who was evidently well acquainted with Mr. Harley. He introduced the other, an elderly, weather-beaten sailor, as captain somebody. Walter could not catch the name.

"I reckon you are no fair-weather Christian," said the stranger to Mr. Harley.

After a few passing remarks, Mr. Harley said: "Do you not need Jesus as a shelter from the storm?"

"Aye aye, sir," was the response. Then, as they entered into further conversation, Walter turned away, and wandered about the schoolroom, whose arrangements and furnishings looked rude enough to a student of the Knowlton Academy.

The conversation ended, he joined his uncle, and they started on their homeward way. The storm had abated, though rain was still falling.

"I feel well repaid for comin' through the storm," said Mr. Harley. "That man with whom I was talking

was a stranger, and was only stopping at Orme's Cove for a few days. He had been feeling anxious about his soul for some time, and came to the meeting this afternoon with a desire to receive help. He said the words he had heard seemed just as though spoken for him only. In the conversation we had together afterward, he opened his mind freely to me, and I have good reason to hope that he has found the Saviour."

"It was worth your while to go through anything for that," said Walter.

Everything looked very pleasant when they returned home. There was a cheerful fire burning in the grate, and as they had become quite chilled by their long drive in the rain, it was very grateful. The tea table was set, and they were soon enjoying the delicious hot coffee that Mrs. Harley was so skilled in making.

"Do you have many wrecks here, uncle?" said Walter, next morning at breakfast.

"No; there has not been one for years, I believe. There is an old man at Orme's Cove who remembers the last one very vividly; we must pay him a visit some time. I dare say he would tell you all about it."

It happened that the Thursday following was a very fine day; so it was decided to go down to Orme's Cove,

and spend the afternoon, availing themselves of Deacon Andrews' invitation.

The drive was indeed delightful. It was a perfect contrast to that of the preceding Sunday. On the one side stretched the deep blue ocean, its foam-crested waves here dancing in the sunlight, there darkened by the shadow of a passing cloud. On the other side was a pleasant prospect of vale and hill, with green meadows, where the mowers were busy, and here and there a patch of dark woods as framework for the picture. To those accustomed to it the prospect was a joy; to Walter, from the tamer scenery of his inland home, it brought an ecstasy he had rarely known. And amid it all, his heart ascended in thankfulness to the All-Father that he had made the earth so beautiful for us to dwell in.

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CHAPTER XV.

MR. FORD'S STORY.

ORME'S COVE was a quiet, secluded little bay, shut in on either side by high cliffs. At its western extremity the land dipped down toward the water, and in this picturesque hollow nestled the little hamlet which bore the same name as the bay.

Deacon Andrews was out in a field adjoining his house when they arrived. He came to meet them with a hearty welcome.

"If you will excuse me, Deacon Andrews," said Mr. Harley, "I will make some calls, now that I am here. I want to go over and see old Mr. Ford, and I think my nephew would enjoy the walk with me." So leaving Mrs. Harley and baby with motherly Mrs. Andrews, they set out to visit Mr. Ford, who lived about a mile away.

"What is that strange noise?" said Walter, after they had walked some distance.

"What noise?" asked his uncle.

"It sounds like a steam whistle, only more unearthly. There! now it sounds louder."

"That is old Father Ocean. You shall soon see for yourself."

A few steps more, and Mr. Harley left the road and turned into a well-worn footpath. They followed it, the noise growing louder and more weird all the time, till they came abruptly to a deep, narrow ravine. Far beneath them the surging waves came thundering in, and dashed wrathfully against their narrow prison walls with a hollow roar, flinging high a column of misty spray.

"This is a grand sight in a storm," said Mr. Harley. "You would run the risk of getting a good wetting, though, if you were to stand as near to the edge as we are now."

"How I would like to see it in a storm! It is grand as it is," said Walter.

After watching it for a while they retraced their steps. The highlands now disappeared, and the coast was low, though still rocky. Soon they came in sight of a cottage standing alone in full view of the sea.

"That is where our old friend lives," said Mr. Harley.

Everything was neatness itself about the little cottage. The small garden in front was filled with such hardy flowers as could thrive in the cool sea breezes, and morning glories climbed up each side of the porch. The walk leading to the door was paved with pebbles

from the seashore; the flower beds were bordered with the same.

A knock at the door was soon answered by Mrs. Ford, a pleasant-faced old lady. Her husband sat in a large chair by the fire, nursing a rheumatic leg. After some general conversation about health and so forth, Mr. Harley said:

"My nephew was asking me whether we ever had wrecks on this coast. I told him you could remember the last. It was some years ago, was it not?"

"Aye, sir," said the old man; "nigh upon seventeen years ago."

"Yes," broke in his wife; "seventeen years come next November. Oh, but I shall never forget that night! It was an awful night!"

"And you remember, Betsy, I said that evening, 'What a fearful night to be on the sea!'"

"Indeed, well do I remember it," said Mrs. Ford.

Mr. Ford continued: "By-and-by Betsy said to me, 'Abel, what is that noise?' 'Oh,' I said, kind of careless like, 'I guess it is only the waves you hear rolling on the shore.' 'It sounded like a gun,' she said. Now Betsy always was nervous in a storm, and always imagining there were ships in distress; so I did not think much about it. 'There it is again!' she cried. I heard it

this time, and it did sound like a gun; but I did not want her to get frightened, so I said, 'I don't think it's anything but the waves and the noise of the wind rattling around the house.' I went to the window, however, and looked out. All was pitch dark. Suddenly a rocket went up, out by that point down yonder. It just fairly stunned me for a moment to think there was a ship in distress so near our home, and on such a night, and on those ugly snarly rocks. Betsy had come to the window, and she saw the rocket too. 'Oh, hurry, Abel,' says she, 'and go down to the shore and see if you can help them!' 'I was just thinking what we can do,' says I; 'there is no boat that can live in such a sea.' We have no lifeboat. 'Well, do something, quick!' she said, 'or I will go myself.' The very idea of her going out in the storm, who was frightened even to look at it!"

"Yes," said the old lady, "I am timid enough, I know; but I felt as though I could do anything to save those poor creatures."

"Well," continued the old man, "I said, 'You had better get the fire lit, and have some hot tea and coffee ready; for the poor things will want something to warm them.' Then I put on my storm coat, and took the lantern; and mother roused the boys, and two of them

went with me. When we got out on the road, the first person we met was Seth Jones coming up for me. Poor fellow! he has been dead this many a year! He was a connection of ours—he married Betsy's cousin; he was a strong man, and a good soul; there are few like him nowadays. Well, as I was saying, he was coming for me; and then some of the neighbors—there are not very many—joined us. It seemed as though the road to the point never was so long before as it was that night.

“While we were going the clouds cleared away, and by the time we got down there the moon was shining bright and clear; and there was the ship before us, not a hundred yards from the shore; but between us and them lay those rough jagged rocks, and there was a wild sea, that would knock the strength out of a good swimmer in no time. We could see the decks were black with people. We began to signal to them, and were trying to contrive some way to save them, when there came a fearful crash, and the ship went to pieces. The hinder part keeled over into the water, but the fore part stuck fast on the rocks. I pray I may never see such a sight again. It was terrible. There was just one shriek of agony, then it was over for most of them, poor things! but some were keeping up, battling with the waves, and a few reached the shore with the life almost beaten out

of them. There were still some on the fore part of the vessel, which, as I was saying, was wedged in the rocks. We knew they would freeze if they had to stay there much longer; for it was a bitter cold night, and the spray dashed over them as they clung to the rigging. The tide was going down now, and we scrambled out on the rocks until near enough to throw a rope to those on the wreck. After they had made the rope fast, we slung a large strong basket over the cable leading to the vessel, fastened two ropes to the basket, one of which we held, throwing the other to those on the wreck; they then drew the basket up to the vessel, and one by one we drew them over to us. The first to come over was a young woman with a child in her arms, a little girl about two years old, I suppose; she had taken off her own shawl to wrap around it. The child was all right enough, but the mother was well-nigh gone. We hoped she would have revived, and carried her into a house near by,—Jim Ryan's, a mere shanty of a place,—but she never spoke, and died in a few hours. I took the child in my arms, and carried it over to our home. It was sobbing and fretting like, with its face hid on my shoulder. I brought it in, and said, 'Here, mother, is a little daughter for you.' We had no girls, and mother was always pining for one. And, do you believe, when

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that child saw my wife, it just stretched out its little hands and went right to her, and never fretted any more."

"Aye, the dear wee thing," broke in the old dame, "how it went to my heart to have it come so confiding like to me."

"Well," continued the old man, "we never could find out anything about her or her family. None of the persons saved knew anything about her mother, except that she was one of the emigrants. Her father was drowned when the vessel broke up, they said. So we just took her for our own, and brought her up. People said we were foolish, and that she might be put on the parish; but Betsy and I felt that she was sent to us, and we would share what little we had with her. I guess she always thought that we were her parents, and the boys were as fond of her as though she was their own sister. One day, when she was well grown, she said: 'I don't know how it is, but I am always frightened in a storm. I feel as though I had been out in one some time, but I can't recollect.' I thought the time had come when she had better know all, and I told her. From that time she seemed as though she could never do enough for us. Such a good girl as she is! She is out now taking some work to a lady for whom she sews. Many a time folks say to her, 'Why

don't you go up to the city? You could do better there.' But she says, 'I'll not leave father and mother while they need me. I owe everything to them, and all I can do for them is little enough.'"

"I am sure I don't know what the house would be like without her," said Mrs. Ford; "that storm, dreadful as it was, brought us a blessing which we shall always be thankful for. Here she comes now, I believe."

The door opened, and a fresh-faced, pleasant-looking girl entered. It was easy to see what a comfort she must be to the aged and infirm couple, who regarded her with such fondness and pride. The young girl's face beamed with pleasure as Mr. Harley, who knew she was fond of reading and study, promised to lend her some books.

Before leaving, Mr. Harley brought out his pocket Testament and read a few verses, and then offered prayer, after which they bade good-bye to the old couple and Margery, and were soon on their way, walking briskly; for the afternoon was waning, and Mr. Harley was anxious to pay some more visits at Orme's Cove.

Walter now left his uncle and went back to Deacon Andrews.

Mr. Harley returned just in time for tea. They were all entertained hospitably by Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, Baby Paul receiving a large share of attention. After

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the evening meal some of the neighbors came in, and a short, pleasant service was held, for the people of Orme's Cove had but few meetings to attend.

As they were driving home, they agreed they had spent a very pleasant afternoon. It was a little break in the week's routine. Mrs. Harley and the baby had been well entertained in the Andrews' home, Mr. Harley had come into a renewed closeness of contact with some of the humbler of his people, and Walter had been interested in the rugged beauty of the coast, and in the story of the wreck which Mr. Ford had told. Yes, they had spent a pleasant and profitable afternoon.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHILIP RAY.

SATURDAY morning, as Walter was leisurely strolling along the streets of Fairhaven, he heard a voice behind say :

"Walter, how are you?"

"Why, Philip!" he exclaimed, turning suddenly to meet a familiar face, "how came you here?"

"I am teaching for the summer months in a small school about four miles distant. They have been having holidays; but, as you know, the vacation is shorter in country schools than in town schools, so I have to go to work Monday; that is what brings me here. Now, may I ask how you happened to be down this way?"

"I am visiting my uncle, Mr. Harley, who is pastor of a church here."

"Oh, yes, I know. I did not think about his being your uncle. I am glad we shall have an opportunity to see one another. It is nearly a year since we met."

Philip Ray was an intimate friend of Walter. He was three years older, and looked quite manly; but in spite of the difference in years, they had been warm friends

ever since, as a small boy, Walter entered the academy, and Philip, then in the advanced class, took his part on the playground, and helped him out in his Latin exercises. The previous autumn Philip had left Knowlton to attend college, some distance away; and as he did not come home at Christmas, the two friends had not met since, and in all that time had not written more than two or three letters to each other, in spite of resolves to correspond regularly. So they had much to talk about as they walked down the street together.

In appearance, Philip presented quite a contrast to his friend. He was taller and darker, and had the thoughtful air of a student. Naturally quiet and reserved, he was called proud by those who did not know him; but Walter knew him better than to think that. He was characterized by singular sincerity and unaffectedness; and when once persuaded of the right, held to it with a quiet determination in the face of all opposition that at once won Walter's respect and admiration.

They had to part soon, as Philip had business to attend to; but they planned for a long ramble in the afternoon.

"College life has improved Philip," thought Walter, as he walked homeward, for there was more heartiness of manner, more enthusiasm, more life about him than he had ever seen before.

Of course, they found plenty to talk about in their afternoon ramble. Walter was anxious to hear Philip's college experiences, while Philip had many inquiries to make about old acquaintances. They had walked some distance, when Philip proposed to rest a while, and making their way across a field, they came to a grassy slope that descended toward the sandy shore, stretching itself out just beneath. They threw themselves down on the green sward.

It was a warm afternoon, and a light haze softened the deep blue of the sky, and hung like a veil about the horizon. No sound was heard save the tinkle of a sheep bell from a flock grazing near at hand, and the musical splashing of the waves as they broke on the pebbly beach. The quiet and peace that brooded over nature threw its spell over our two young friends, and for a while little was said by either of them.

"I shall never regret that I was led to go to Brantley College," Philip said at length; "all the influences there are so good. There were a half dozen or more Christian young men when I went there. We held a prayer meeting together; others joined our little band, and there was a great revival last winter both in the college and in the village."

"Yes, I heard about it," said Walter.

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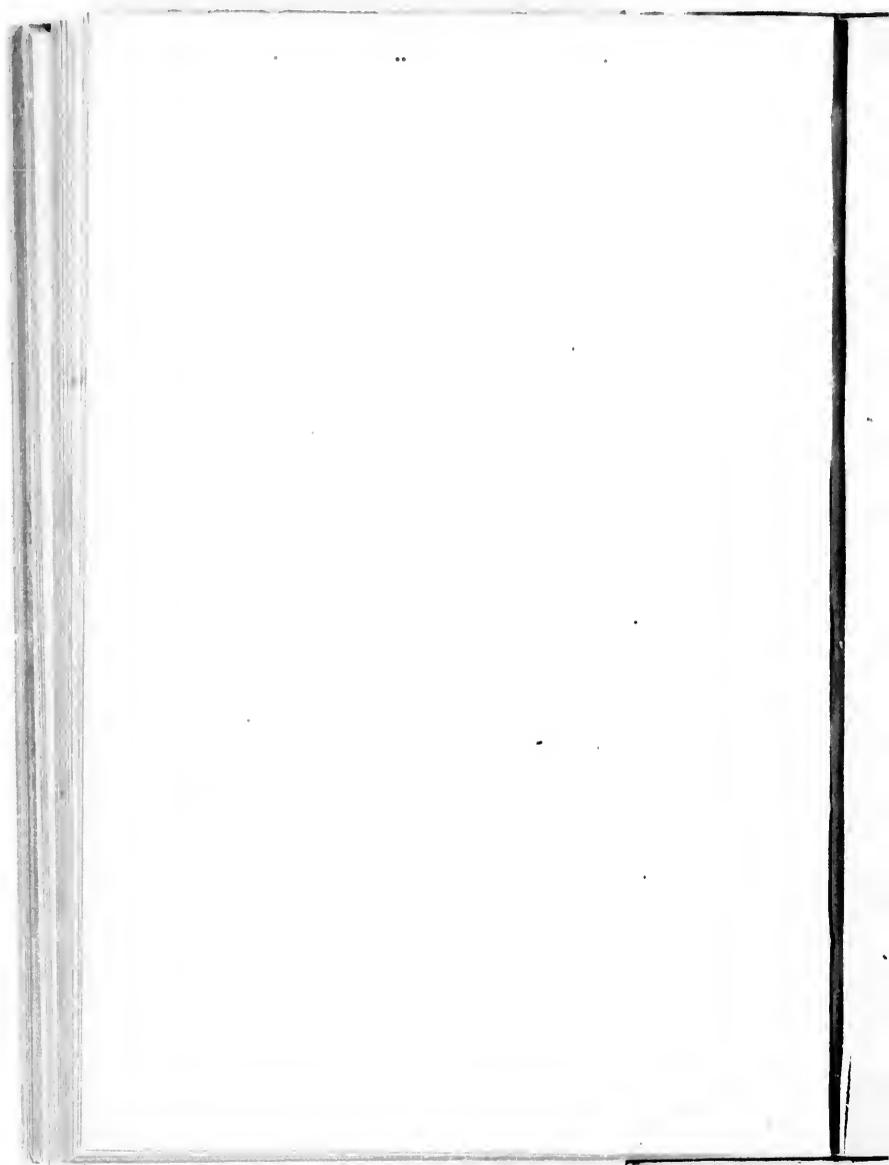
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"Not only did many then begin the Christian life," continued Philip; "but I think every one of us was quickened and revived. I know for my own part that life seems very different from what it once did. You know, Walter, I used to do things because it was my duty; but now I cannot tell what gladness it gives me to serve my Master. I can truly say, 'The love he has kindled within me makes service and suffering sweet.'"

As the young man spoke, such a light came into his face as Walter had never seen there before. After a moment's pause, Philip continued:

"There is such reality, such satisfaction in it. I used to feel it hard to abstain from worldly amusements which I did not think were consistent with a profession of religion; but now they seem so poor—so paltry! I wonder I ever cared for them. Oh, Walter," turning his dark eyes on his friend, "he that drinketh of the water that Christ gives 'shall never thirst.' I believed it once; I know it now."

Walter pondered: Was this the reason for the change in Philip? He remembered his friend as he was when at Knowlton? Philip had always been a good boy, and when he joined the church which he attended no one was surprised; and afterward he continued on the even tenor of his way, never very enthusiastic, but always in his

place at the Sunday and week-day services. Walter felt in a dim way that his friend had gone beyond him into an experience to which he had not yet attained. He did not know that he had ever felt unsatisfied. Life seemed full of pleasant things, and as yet he knew not the powerlessness of even the best earthly joys to satisfy the deeper longings of the soul. Something like this he said to Philip.

"You cannot live long in a world like this," replied his friend, "without having felt soul thirst; and we are all too apt to hew out 'broken cisterns that can hold no water.' But soon we find out our mistake, and come back to 'the living fountains.'"

There was a pause for a few moments; then the conversation took another turn. Philip began to speak of the hope he cherished of some day going over to Edinburgh to study. All his mother's relatives lived in Scotland, and he naturally wished to see them and visit her early home. Walter declared that he would go too, and they built delightful castles in the air of pleasant excursions together, and talked about the old country until it seemed to come very near.

Philip looked out to sea with a far-away gaze, as though he saw the land of his dreams; or did his eyes behold another land—a land that is very far off? If the Master

should call him, was he willing to go there instead of over the ocean? Such were the thoughts that passed through Walter's mind. As he looked on that calm, trustful face, he seemed to hear the answer: "Ready, aye, ready." But he quickly dismissed these thoughts. Philip could not die; he looked the picture of health. Yet Walter knew that he inherited that deadly disease, consumption, of which his father had died. Even at that moment Philip coughed slightly.

"We have stayed here too long; you feel chilled," exclaimed Walter.

"Oh, dear me, no," said Philip. But he rose, and they turned their steps homeward.

Walter's friend was warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Harley, who invited him to spend every Saturday and Sunday with them while he taught in the neighborhood. Philip was very glad to accept the invitation; for the place where he taught was rather rough, and everything was so homelike at the parsonage.

Tuesday was a busy day with the Harleys, for the Sunday-school picnic was to be held the following day, and of course Mrs. Harley, who was a teacher, expected to prepare bountifully. Mr. Harley had to go away a short distance for the day on church business; Mrs. Harley rose early to get him some breakfast, as he had to

leave by the seven o'clock train. She planned to have then a long day in which to do her baking. But alas, for the "best laid plans"! the middle of the morning found her on a sofa in a darkened room, suffering all the misery of a severe headache; and the young and rather inexperienced servant, Bessie, was left to finish the baking alone. Somewhat fluttered by not having her mistress at hand to direct, her nervousness was increased when Baby Paul, thinking that he had been good long enough, began to scream, and refused to be pacified.

Away up in his room sat Walter, trying to work out answers to some puzzles in a religious newspaper. He was so interested that he scarcely noticed the commotion baby was making, till he heard Bessie say: "Oh, baby dear, keep quiet, until I get these pies out of the oven;" and then he remembered that his aunt was sick, and there was no one to do anything but Bessie. "I wonder if I could help," he thought. "I'll go and see. I suppose if I could quiet Master Paul it would be the best thing." He found Bessie looking very flushed and worried, doing the work with the baby on one arm.

"Perhaps baby will be good with me," said Walter, taking him somewhat awkwardly.

"I believe he would be good if he was to go out in his carriage," said Bessie.

"All right; wrap him up, and I will take him."

Baby kicked and screamed lustily while his things were being put on, and when at last he was tucked in the carriage, did not look nearly so trim as when Mrs. Harley sent him out.

"What's the difference?" said Walter; "I will only take him into the field."

When the carriage was once in motion baby quieted down, and by-and-by fell asleep; then Walter brought him back. Bessie drew the carriage into the shade, threw the mosquito netting over it, and then ran back to work.

"My! it is after twelve. I'll never get through!" exclaimed Bessie, in dismay.

"Here, give me those raisins; I will stone them for you, while you make the cake," said Walter.

Then he whipped the eggs, and finally took his turn at beating up the cake. He grew very interested in *his* cake, as he called it, and declared he would write home that he had become quite a cook.

Baby did not wake until after dinner, or rather lunch, for Walter said, "Don't bother about cooking dinner for me." Late in the afternoon Mrs. Harley came down, feeling much better.

"You have been such a comfort to me, Walter!" she said. "It distressed me so to hear baby cry and know

that I could not go to him; and after you succeeded in quieting him so nicely, I was able to rest."

The morning of the picnic dawned bright and clear. They were all astir early at the parsonage, packing up baskets, and getting everything ready to start by the train. At the train, all was hurry and excitement. The members of the committee had their hands full, getting the children safely into the cars, and seeing that the base balls and bats, football and croquet sets, were all on board, to say nothing of having the provisions safely stowed away. At last "All aboard" was called, the stragglers jumped on, and the train glided out of the station, and was soon rushing along by meadows and woodlands with its precious freight.

After about an hour's ride they stopped at the station near which were the picnic grounds. The shortest way to reach them was across a stile, and this was chosen by most of the party. Mr. Harley and the superintendent of the Sunday-school were busy seeing that all the boxes and baskets were taken off and put on the wagon that was waiting to transfer them to the grounds. Two of the young men took their stand by the stile, and lifted the little ones across, and helped a party of young girls to climb over, and then sauntered off with them, leaving the rest to get over the best way they could. These

were a number of middle-aged women, some of them with babies, and all more or less burdened with wraps.

Walter, who happened to be standing near, stepped up and assisted them over with all possible gallantry. It seemed a very little thing to do, but it made quite an impression on their minds. "He is the nicest boy I ever saw," said one poor mother to another, "helping us all to get over that stile, as handsome like as though we had been young girls."

Walter was already a great favorite in his uncle's congregation, his genial manner and kindly disposition making him very popular, alike with young and old. All day he was busy as could be. Now swinging the children, now foremost in a game of football, now leading in a race—ready for all the fun that was going, and to help along every one's enjoyment. No wonder that at the close of the day he should say he "had had just a splendid time."

Philip had asked Walter to come out on a Friday morning, and see his school, and stay over night at the farmhouse where he boarded, and then they would walk into Fairhaven on Saturday morning. "That is," he had added, "if you are willing to rough it." Walter was quite willing. So, on Friday morning, his uncle drove him to the little old schoolhouse where Philip taught.

Two score or more of bright eyes turned toward the door as Walter entered. It was the first time he had ever entered a school as a visitor; and as he seated himself in the rickety chair which Philip offered him,—the only one in fact in the room,—a broad smile crept over his face at the mere thought of occupying so distinguished a position. Then he tried to put on a grave face, suitable to the occasion, as Philip called up a class in reading and handed him a book. While the little bright-eyed boys and girls were reading more or less fluently, Walter was taking mental notes of the room—such a funny little schoolroom, with a big stove in one corner, and a little platform for the teacher in another; and on one wall a small and very poor blackboard, on which it was impossible to make good figures. And then the pupils—some very bright-looking and some dull; all of them rather roughly dressed, and ranging from a tall lad of fourteen down to little tots of six and seven.

After the reading was ended, there came a recess. During its progress, Philip and Walter stood in the doorway, watching the children as they raced about.

“How can you teach, Philip?” said Walter. “I never could do it. Is it not tiresome now to spend your days trying to drum arithmetic and grammar and history into the heads of these little scamps?”

Philip smiled. "Yes, it is wearisome sometimes; yet I must say I like teaching. I hope to spend my life in it; not teaching a school like this, though. But even here I have some pupils who interest me very much. That tall lad is really very thoughtful."

"What—the one who does not seem to know what to do with his arms and legs?"

"Yes; he does not show to much advantage in this cramped schoolroom, and he is very rustic, but I am sure he has the making of a good man in him. And there are other boys not here now, in whom I feel a great interest; and if I have been able to help one to step upward toward anything like nobler ideas of life, and a true manhood or womanhood, I shall never regret that I spent this summer here."

After school, Walter went with Philip to his boarding house. It was truly very rough; and as Walter contrasted this abode with the refined, pleasant home to which Philip was accustomed, he wondered more and more how he could put up with it.

"What would your mother say if she knew how you are situated here?" said Walter.

"Well, she does not know; and I am glad she doesn't. I want to earn all I can to help me through with my studies, for my mother has little enough; and it is diffi-

cult to get a better school when one can only teach during the summer months."

"At any rate, you can spend Saturday and Sunday with uncle and aunt."

"Yes," replied Philip; "though I think, after this week, I shall not spend the whole of Sunday with them. There is a small Sunday-school here, but I found the larger boys did not attend. I gathered a class of them, and I do not wish to give it up; so I shall walk out here after morning service, to be ready for my class at half-past two."

"Philip, how can you deny yourself so much that you like?" said Walter, impetuously.

"It is not all self-denial, Walter; I feel it a privilege to work for the Master, and sow good seed as I have opportunity."

Walter said nothing; but his friend's consecration and devotedness made a deep impression on his mind. Ah! who can estimate the power of a life wholly for Christ!

Walter's visit was drawing near its close. He had been for some days thinking over a pleasant plan. The Sunday-school connected with his uncle's church was sadly in need of books. Walter thought how much he would like to give something handsome toward getting a library; but how to do it was the question. He did not

want to ask his father for money, as he wished it to be his own gift. At length a thought occurred to him. He had begun to save a part of each month's allowance, so as to have plenty to spend on Christmas gifts; for he delighted to give handsome presents to all his friends. Now the thought came, Could he not devote this money to the Sunday-school, and set brain and hands at work to contrive little inexpensive gifts for his friends, which might be all the more valued because of being his own handiwork? He began to plan these gifts; and his uncle, who was clever at devising pretty and useful things in wood, gave him many good suggestions. Walter did not, however, tell his uncle of his intended gift to the Fairhaven school, as he wished it to be a surprise.

The afternoon before he left Fairhaven, he was sitting with his uncle, who was telling him of the difficulties his church had to contend with, the members being for the most part poor, and unable to contribute very much toward its support.

"I wish I had plenty of money, I would do so much good with it," said Walter.

"Use faithfully what you have; that is all that is required of you now," said his uncle. "Do not wait until you can do great things, but seize every small opportunity of doing good; but that indeed I know you

do. I know of some one we shall miss very much when he is gone."

"I am very glad you think so," said Walter, a glow of pleasure mounting to his face at his uncle's kindly words.

"After all," continued Mr. Harley, "we cannot call anything small. A trivial action may have a wonderful power for good or ill."

"I have come to think that lately more than I used to," said Walter.

"And then do not forget that *being* is as important as *doing*—is, in fact, essential. Be brave and patient and kind and gentle and courteous, and you cannot fail to help others, as well as yourself. Some may be entirely shut out from *doing*, none are debarred from *being*. All of Christ's followers may glorify him."

"Yes," said Walter. "I know one must *be* good before he can do good."

"That is it," replied Mr. Harley. "Be sure and build up the Christian character which shall lie back of all your works, and make them effective; and that you can do now, each day."

Something just then brought Ned Brookes into Walter's mind; and he told his uncle his difficulties with regard to his classmate, ending up with, "I cannot see that it is my fault that he prefers the company of those

other fellows. I cannot appear to be what I am not, nor seem to think a great deal of a person when I do not."

"I think, Walter, your difficulty comes from failing to understand Ned; and perhaps you not only fail to understand him, but do not even try to do so. You dwell on those points in his character which are unlovely, while you entirely overlook the good qualities he no doubt possesses. Perhaps, too, his surroundings and bringing up may have been different from yours—not so favorable in many respects. This you should take into account, and be more lenient in your judgment."

Walter looked thoughtful. "He has not much of a home. His father drinks, and his mother is not one who would have much influence over him, at any rate," he said.

"Then how very different is his situation compared with yours. Can you wonder that his views of life are not correct, and his maxims selfish and worldly?"

"I never thought of it in that light before, uncle," said Walter.

"If you try to understand him, putting the best construction on his words and actions, you will soon be able to feel kindly toward him, and you will meet, in time, a response; and you are the more bound to do

this when you remember that he is a young Christian brother."

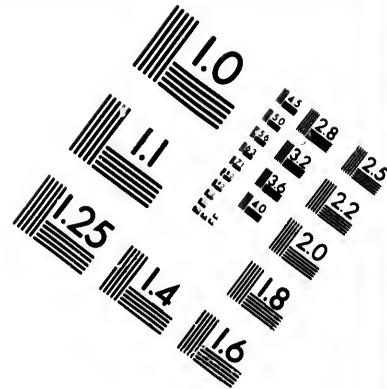
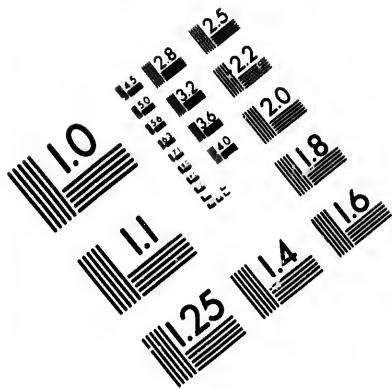
"I see it is my duty," said Walter, "and I will try when I get back." And then he set off to bid good-bye to little Jamie, as he was now speedily to return to his home.

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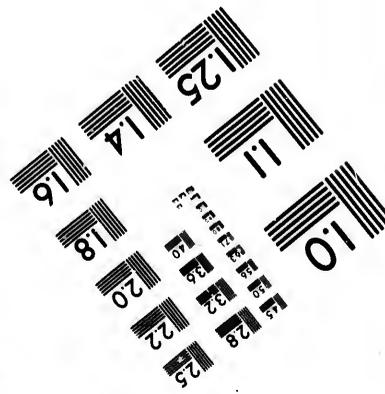
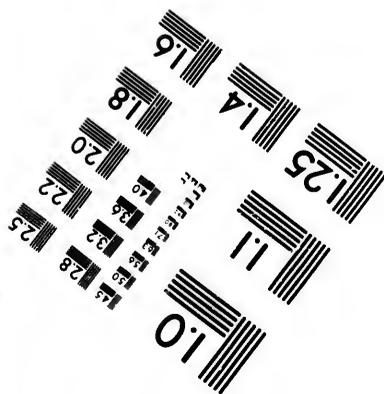
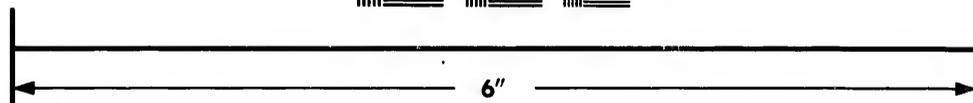
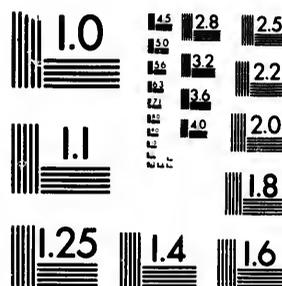
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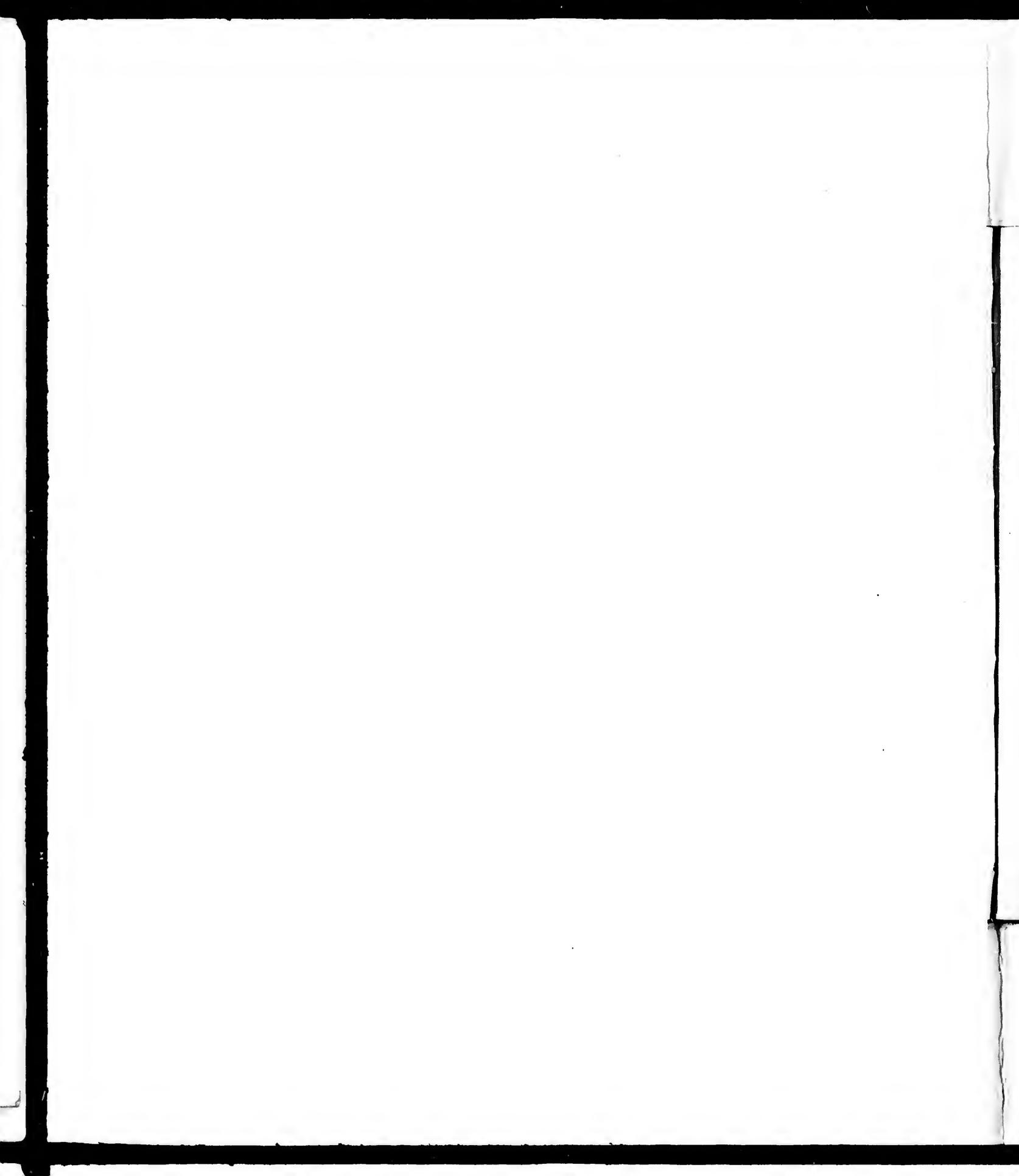
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CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD AND THE HOME-COMING.

THE day came for Walter to leave Fairhaven. The morning was bright and beautiful; and away out, as far as one could see, the waves were dancing and sparkling in the sunlight.

Walter felt sorry to say good-bye; and as the train bore him rapidly onward, leaving far behind each familiar haunt, he felt that among his pleasantest recollections would be that of his visit to Fairhaven.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when he alighted at a small station far inland, where he found in waiting Jonathan Stubbs, who worked the small farm for the Misses Harley. With him was Carrie, dancing with delight to see her brother. Soon they were driving along the quiet country road in the old-fashioned carriage that had been in the family for years.

The road wound along through pretty scenery, and on every side stretched well-kept and highly-cultivated farms. At length they reached the old homestead. His aunts were waiting at the door to receive him. Miss Matilda, tall and stately; Miss Constance, delicate and nervous. Dear

old ladies, how warmly they welcomed him! How genuine their delight to see how tall and fine-looking he was growing!

They ushered him into the drawing room. How cool and quiet and shady it was, with a faint odor of dried rose leaves pervading the air! Yes, it looked just the same, with its handsomely carved mahogany furniture. The quaint little bookcase stood in one corner; the old piano, that belonged to Grandmother Harley when she was a girl, in another; the little French clock on the mantel, and the vases and ornaments were placed as they always had been; and, looking down serenely on all, the portraits of the old ladies' father and mother, taken in their youth.

Life went on very quietly and methodically in this home, presided over by these two aunts. There was no rush, no hurry. The work was always done, yet no one appeared very busy. It was a veritable haven of rest, where the noise and tumult of the busy outside world never came. There was but little change in the household from year to year. Rebecca, the maid servant, who had grown old in their service, still presided over the kitchen. The two old ladies themselves did not seem to grow older. Active yet in works of benevolence, they might often be seen visiting the homes of the needy or

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sorrowing, and on Sunday were seldom absent from their places in church.

Walter duly answered all his aunts' questions. He was rather amused when they asked him if he would not like to rest after his long journey. Little did he know of weariness; and he soon proved it by running off with Carrie to see the household pets, and chasing her all around the garden on the way.

"What spirits the dear boy has!" said Miss Constance.

"Just like his father, at his age," returned Miss Matilda, her eyes following him admiringly.

In the evening, when the lamps were lit, the two old ladies wished to have some singing. "It is so seldom that the piano is opened now," they said. So Walter and Carrie sang together, Walter playing the accompaniments on the piano.

"Now we must have a hymn or two to finish with," said Miss Matilda, producing an old church hymn book. And they all joined in singing.

Miss Matilda and Miss Constance had been good singers in their day, though now their voices were weak and quavering. The two aunts were delighted. To them, an evening spent in this way was a pleasant change from the knitting and reading, with which they generally beguiled the hours.

"Those old tunes are so much superior to the jingling tunes they have now," said Miss Constance. "Don't you think so, Walter?"

"Why no, I don't, aunt," said Walter, frankly. To say the truth, he thought them very slow.

"Well, it is natural you should like the tunes you hear nowadays, being young. I suppose I like these because they are the tunes father and mother used to sing; and we used to sing them in the choir."

This led to many reminiscences of old times; and Walter wondered, as he listened, whether some day he would be telling of the good old times when he was young.

As they were sitting at breakfast next morning, Miss Matilda said:

"You must call on Mrs. McLean, Walter. She was inquiring when you were coming, and would, I am sure, be disappointed if you did not go to see her."

"I will go this morning," he said in reply.

Mrs. McLean was an old friend of the Misses Harley. She had been totally blind for some years, and was so afflicted with rheumatism that she could not walk; yet a more cheerful Christian it would be difficult to find. Walter could remember, when he was a little boy, how he liked to go with his aunt to call on Mrs. McLean,

who would talk so pleasantly to him, and always give him some nice cake.

He set off about the middle of the morning, and soon reached the house, which was half a mile distant. He was ushered into the cheerful sitting room, and there, sitting in an easy chair, supported by pillows, was Mrs. McLean, talking to a friend. She turned her face toward the door with a bright smile as Walter was announced.

"So ye have come, Walter, my boy," she said, with a slight Scotch accent; "ye dinna forget an old friend. How tall have ye grown since ye were last here? Why, ye are quite a man," as she raised her hand to his head. "I remember when ye were but so high," letting her hand drop to the arm of her chair; "and is your hair dark or light, and your eyes, are they blue?" And so she tried to form a mental picture of him; and then she had many questions to ask him about home.

Walter asked after her health.

"I suffer very much sometimes with the rheumatism; the last two nights I scarcely slept at all," she replied.

"How can you bear it? It must be dreadful!" said Walter.

"I think of precious texts and hymns I have learned, and then I almost forget my pain."

"Well, Mrs. McLean," said the other visitor, rising,

"I must go now. I hope you will be better of your rheumatism."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lincoln; I trust I may be, if it is God's will. I am sorry you lost so much by the fire. We must believe that all such trials are sent for some good end."

"I suppose it is all for the best," replied the lady. "I cannot see it, though."

"It might have been worse," said Mrs. McLean, gently.

"Oh, it might have been worse. It was bad enough, though, as it was. Well, good-morning."

Walter glanced from one to the other. On the one hand, a woman of means, in the enjoyment of good health, fretting over the loss of a small part of her possessions; on the other, the blind, crippled invalid, shut out from all beautiful sights and a constant sufferer, uttering no murmur, throwing no shadow over others. And he felt the great difference between them.

"And are ye grown too big, Walter, to take a bit of Jeannie's Scotch cake?" said Mrs. McLean, after the lady had gone.

"Never too big for that," replied Walter.

Mrs. McLean rang a bell, and when the stern-looking maid appeared, said: "Jeannie, just bring in some of the cake ye baked yesterday."

While Walter was eating his cake, he made some inquiries as to the extent of the loss sustained by Mrs. Lincoln, a lady whom he knew to be quite well to do.

"One wing of their house was burned a week ago," replied Mrs. McLean, "and she lost some things she valued. I feel very sorry for her; for she has never had much trouble, and she frets a good deal about it."

"I should think she would consider her troubles scarcely worth mentioning in comparison with what you bear," said Walter.

"Well, dear, we need the Lord Jesus to help us bear the lesser troubles just as much as the greater. It does not do to forget that. I was right glad to hear that ye had taken him for your Friend, Walter. He is a good Friend; dinna be afraid to trust him. Bring the little vexations and tangles of every-day life to him, and he will unravel them and make them plain; and bring your joys, too—he will make them brighter and sweeter. 'He will make thee exceeding glad with his countenance.'"

As Walter said good-bye to the old lady, he felt how real must be the Christianity of one who was thus joyful in suffering. He realized, too, how grateful he ought to be for the health and strength he enjoyed, and the blessings he too often accepted as a matter of course.

Walter could only spend one day with his aunts. The next found him and Carrie on their homeward way.

It was pleasant to be home again—pleasant to hear mother's gentle voice, as she welcomed them in; pleasant to see father's bright face, as he said: "Well, it is good to have the children home again." Bertha danced about for joy, and even Winnie joined in the glee and laughed merrily.

Cousin Flora looked much better and happier, Walter thought, and was as pleased as any one to welcome them back again. She was indeed better, and able to help Mrs. Harley in many ways; for the summer was a busy time at Elmwood. Every morning Flora watered the house plants, and arranged fresh flowers in the rooms; often, too, making up a bouquet, or filling a basket with fruit for some friend, to whom Mrs. Harley thought it would be acceptable. Flora was to leave in a week or two, but Walter no longer found her stay wearisome.

They were out, one pleasant afternoon, in the phaeton, driving along a shady road. Walter had grown quite used to the slow pace; and "Fan," the horse, seemed to prefer it on these hot August days.

"It is too bad you have to go so slowly, Walter," said Flora. "I shall soon be gone, and then you will have a fine time."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Walter; "and I dare say 'Fan' prefers it."

"Perhaps so," said Flora. "'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.' Do you know, Walter, I can never be thankful enough for coming here this summer? I am a great deal better in health; but that is not all—I have found Jesus, and life is so changed. It is so much easier to bear any suffering I have—and I do really feel very miserably sometimes. But now I have One to whom I can tell all my troubles, and he always helps me."

"I am so glad," said Walter. "I thought you looked much happier."

"Indeed I am. I was so miserable, so unhappy when I came. I wanted to come here rather than go anywhere else, because I knew your father and mother were Christians, and I thought perhaps I might get some good; and every day I longed more and more to have the peace and real joy that I saw you all possessed. Then I had some talks with your dear mother, and she made it all so plain to me; so I came to Jesus as I was, and I believe he has received me." Her face shone with a calm, quiet content as she said this. Then she added: "I want to thank you for all your kindness, Walter. Looking back, I think I have often been exacting and fanciful, thinking only of myself; and I am sure it must have been hard for you,

so active and full of life, to put up with all my notions. I felt sure you did it because you were a Christian boy, and it made me long to be a Christian too."

"It does not seem as though I did anything," said Walter; "not more than I ought to do, anyway."

"I am going to fight selfishness," continued Flora, earnestly. "It will be a hard fight for me, but I know Christ will help me; and the future looks bright to me now."

Walter did not say much, for, boy like, he did not know what to say; but his heart was full of happiness at the thought that in any way he had helped another toward a Christian life.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

NEW INFLUENCES.

THE hot August days passed away, and now came tranquil, dreamy September. The weather during the first week proved so delightful that some of the young people came to the conclusion that they must have a picnic. The Harringtons were the chief movers in the matter; Walter also worked hard to get it up, and the anticipations of all were raised to a very high pitch regarding the pleasures they would enjoy. These anticipations were in a large measure realized; but mingled also with the experiences of the day was that which brought something quite new and ultimately very helpful to Walter.

The day of the picnic was sultry, and in the afternoon clouds gathered. The young people all enjoyed themselves very much, and scarcely noticed the gathering clouds, till, while they were making merry over the bountiful repast spread by the girls, a distant rumble of thunder warned them of an approaching storm. They hastily packed the baskets, and started for the boats and canoes. They reached a place of shelter just as the first

drops were falling, so the girls escaped a wetting; but those of the boys who had to secure the canoes, etc., were thoroughly drenched, Walter among the number. It was some time before they could start on their homeward way, and he reached home completely worn out.

In the morning he felt stiff, and ached a good deal, but had a merry story to tell of their adventures. As the days passed on, however, he did not by any means enjoy his usual good health.

One afternoon he came home from school feeling particularly wretched: his back ached and his head ached. He was quite disgusted to think he should only feel fit to lie on the sofa. He pulled out his books, and resolved to study his lessons, so that he could go to bed early; but it was no use. When the tea bell rang he hardly felt strong enough to go down; but, as his father and mother were away spending the day with friends, he thought he must take the head of the table.

"What is the matter, Walter?" said Carrie; "you don't seem a bit like yourself."

"I have such a headache. I shall go to bed as soon as tea is over," he replied.

It seemed lonely without mother. He began to grow impatient for her return. He went up stairs and lay down, but did not feel any better. His head grew very hot,

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and he tossed about restlessly, and his desire for his mother increased as his fever heightened. How eagerly we turn to mother when ailments or troubles come! And for her touch at such times the passing of the years scarce diminishes our longing.

When Mrs. Harley came home, she went to Walter's room to see if he was up. She found him in a high fever, tossing from side to side, and muttering incoherently. He roused a little when his mother spoke to him. He remembered afterward that, in reply to her anxious inquiries, he had tried to tell her how ill he felt, but was not sure that he said exactly what he meant. Then he remembered seeing the family doctor, and he knew he must be very ill. He had an indistinct idea that his father was in the room all night; that his mother was in and out, and that he took medicine; and then he saw the doctor's grave face again, as he bent over him and felt his pulse; and all was mixed up with strange dreams.

By-and-by the fever left him; and then how weak he felt, so unlike the Walter of two weeks before. He had scarcely ever known what it was to be ill, and it was a trying experience for him. He began to feel a real sympathy for Cousin Flora, and thought how dreadful it must be to feel so wretchedly all the time.

He did not feel much better when he was able to get down stairs. He was so languid and listless—easily irritated, and worried if the little ones made a noise, or were fretful; and he often dolefully wondered if he ever would be strong again. It was quite humiliating to him to find out how much of his good temper and sunny disposition had been the result of perfect health. Perhaps it was a lesson he needed to learn, especially at this time; for when he was away he was such a favorite that he returned home with quite a good opinion of himself. So, in thinking of himself, he had gotten away from his Saviour. Now, in his weakness, he turned eagerly to the Rock of his strength. He was very grateful too, that in him he found refuge, and that in clinging to his promises there was no lack of rest. The Lord had indeed been to him a very present help.

"Was I dangerously ill, mother?" he asked, one day when he was strong enough to talk.

"Yes; the doctor thought you seriously ill that night, and for a day or two we felt great anxiety. It would have been so hard to give you up, darling; but God spared us that trial."

"Do you know, mother," said Walter, after a pause, "I was so glad when I was so ill to know that it was all right with me whatever happened. I thought how

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"Yes, indeed, dear," replied his mother, "if, when in health, you trust and love Jesus, your motto will be, 'Ready, aye ready'—ready to live for him, ready to die, if that should be his will. And the way to be ready to die is to live for him. He who has given us grace for the one will not fail us when the other comes. His rod and his staff will comfort then, as they help now."

Now that Walter was beginning to feel better, he wished for something to occupy his time; so he was very pleased to receive a kind letter from Flora, with a number of Christmas and New Year's cards which she had collected, and now sent to him that he might fill a scrap album for sick Jamie; and Walter found it quite an amusement to arrange them, and paste them in.

The days seemed to Walter to pass very slowly; but some of the boys came up nearly every day to see him, and this made a pleasant diversion. There was one, however, who never came even so much as to inquire after him, and that was Ned Brookes. What was the reason? Ned was friendly enough after the holidays;

indeed, rather pleasanter than usual. Walter felt hurt by it; then he remembered that Ned was somewhat diffident, and perhaps had inquired of the other boys. But when he went back to school, and Ned greeted him as indifferently as though he had never been absent, Walter felt the slight, or what he deemed the slight, keenly. "How can I care for him, when he cares so little for me?" he thought. "At any rate, I can make no advances." So the gulf between them widened.

About this time Walter formed a new acquaintance. Lawrence Orme, a nephew of Judge Harrington's, had lately come to Knowlton to study law. He was, of course, frequently at his uncle's, and was soon introduced to Walter.

Lawrence Orme was an agreeable young man, of polished manners, easy in conversation, and withal very intelligent. He read largely; and was a keen observer of men and things. He kept himself well informed on all the topics of the day; and, as he had plenty of lively wit, his conversation was at once interesting and amusing. Lawrence was undoubtedly clever; and many predicted that he would make his mark in the world.

Walter admired him. Lawrence soon perceived that, and it pleased him; so the two became friends. Walter liked companions older than himself, and was always

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very much influenced by them. Lawrence liked to gain power over others—to influence them to think and act as he did. It was no wonder, then, that he soon began to have an influence over Walter. Was his influence for good? Often Mrs. Harley questioned this within her mind. Once she mentioned her doubts to her husband.

“Why, Alice,” he replied, “I feel very much pleased at the friendship between them. There can be nothing against Lawrence; he is moral and high-minded, and then he is intelligent and refined. He is just the one for Walter, now he is growing into manhood.”

Mrs. Harley sighed. “There is something about him,” she said, “that leads me to distrust him. I cannot help feeling that there is that connected with him which he would not have us know. I fear he will not help Walter's Christian life.”

“Oh, as to that,” returned Mr. Harley, “he may not be a decided Christian. I do not know that we can judge about that, either. I think he has Christian sentiments; and I am sure he would not hinder, if he does not help. Have you ever heard him give expression to any views to which you would take exception?”

“No,” said Mrs. Harley, hesitatingly, “I cannot say that I have; but there is something about him which I cannot define that I do not like.”

"You are over anxious, Alice ; if Walter always has as good associates, I shall be perfectly satisfied."

Mrs. Harley said nothing more ; but she was not satisfied. With her woman's quick instinct, she felt rather than knew that Lawrence Orme's influence would be directly opposed to true Christian living ; and she was right. Lawrence was very careful and guarded in his remarks before Mr. and Mrs. Harley, but in the presence of his young friends he often put forth very unorthodox ideas. It was true he was moral, and would be counted religious by some, since he always attended church once on Sunday ; but though he observed outward forms, he had never submitted his heart to God, and preferred to guide his life by his own maxims rather than by those laid down in Scripture.

Walter had learned that "all Scripture is given by inspiration" ; but Lawrence very coolly set aside whatever did not suit his own ideas. His idea of life was to have as good a time as possible ; and consequently he ridiculed the idea of denying one's self for other's good. As might be expected, he had little sympathy with the great moral reforms of the day. For himself he could keep clear of gross evils, and if others were too weak to do so, so much the worse for them ; he did not see why people should make such a fuss about it. In fact, to live an

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earnest, Christian life was in Lawrence's eyes to be a fanatic, while the sensible people, in his estimation, were those whose religion did not hinder them from living a thoroughly worldly life. In spite of the views he entertained, Lawrence could admire a good sermon, would speak enthusiastically of some passages of Scripture; but when it came to "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," his proud spirit would not bow in submission.

Walter was not long in finding out Lawrence's opinions. He of course did not agree with them, and often told him so. Yet he found himself more and more, as the days went by, thinking with regard to every action, "What would Lawrence think of this, and what would Lawrence say about the other?" Indeed, Lawrence's influence over him might be seen in many ways.

After Walter's return from Fairhaven he had, at Lina's request, attended a mission service, held at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, in a poor part of the town. He went to take the place of the organist, Miss Dawson, who was away on her vacation. He became interested in the work there, but after his illness he did not feel strong enough to go. Then he became acquainted with Lawrence, and from that time began to lose interest in the mission and its work. Once, not very long after their acquaintance, Walter was spending the evening at

the Harrington's. Lawrence was there, and also Louise Annesly, a gay, lively girl of sixteen, who was visiting the family. In the course of conversation, Lawrence said:

"For my part, I do not care for those young men who spend their time teaching poor children in mission schools, and all that sort of thing. They may be well enough in their way, but I do not care to have anything to do with them. They are not after my style, I assure you. They may be sincere, but I cannot understand them; it seems to me it is not natural for any one to do as they do."

Walter would have expressed a contrary opinion if any one other than Lawrence had uttered such words. As it was, he kept silent, and felt secretly glad that he was not going now to the Stoneway Mission. It was not a very manly thing for him to do, and was little like the Walter of a short time before. It showed how well founded were his mother's fears.

"I think that kind of young men just splendid," said Mary, her bright eyes flashing. "Is it not better to use one's time and talents to help others upward, than to live only for self? For my part, I think so, and I admire any one who does it." As she looked then, her admiration was something any one would value; and Walter

was not insensible to the influence her brave stand exerted.

"I think they could not help very much the little urchins I see coming out of some of the schools," replied Lawrence. "Time and talents are thrown away on them, in my opinion. Give me the jolly fellow that enjoys life, and is always ready, of course, to give a helping hand to another when in need; he is worth a dozen of your 'goody goody' young men, who would rather go to prayer meeting than to the theatre, and spend their time after business looking up poor young ones in dirty tenements to go to Sunday-school."

"That is exactly what I think, Mr. Orme," exclaimed Louise Annesly; and a little laugh followed, indicating how extremely funny she thought it that there should be such young men, or that she should have anything to do with them if there were.

"The young men whom I know engaged in such works are very far from being 'goody goody,'" said Mary. "They are always ready for any sensible amusement. I think it is grand to see a young man an out-and-out, earnest Christian." Mary's cheeks flushed as she spoke, and there was a slight tremor in her voice.

Walter knew it had cost her some effort to say what she did. It seemed to him that her action was as brave

as his was cowardly, that she should speak while he remained silent. But somehow he felt that he could not speak, much as his conscience smote him. Lawrence said nothing. There was something in Mary's earnest words that silenced his flippant remarks.

"Come, Miss Louise," he said, anxious to turn the subject, "we were to have some music, were we not? I believe you promised to sing for me."

Miss Louise could not remember any such promise, and required considerable persuasion before she would allow herself to be led to the piano.

Walter stood a little aside, silent and grave for him. He felt that he had not been true to his colors. He had let slip an opportunity for avowing his Master, and he felt ashamed of his cowardly silence. He admired Mary for the stand she had taken. It was quite a surprise to him; for all the influences surrounding her were worldly in tendency, and he had never heard her speak out so decidedly before.

One Saturday afternoon, shortly after this, Walter was walking into town, when he chanced to fall in with Bennie Harris. Ever since he had become acquainted with Lawrence Orme, Walter had been rather more distant toward Bennie. He began to think that Bennie, although a good enough boy, was not stylish and genteel

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enough for a companion. On this particular afternoon, Bennie had on an old suit of clothes, and Walter found himself hoping that they would not meet anybody he knew. But, as fate would have it, just as they entered the town, Lawrence Orme came round a corner, and with him a very stylish-looking young man. Walter wished Bennie in Jericho, as he noticed Lawrence, with a quick glance, take in his companion's outfit. After they had passed on, Walter grew suddenly abstracted, and Bennie had to do the talking. They had reached the principal street when Walter saw in the distance Louise Annesly, with two or three other young ladies. He could not meet them; so, as he passed a stationery store, he said:

"I believe I must go in here and get some pens." And bidding Bennie good-bye rather abruptly, he entered the store, with a sense of relief not unmingled with shame. For a few moments he did not notice the small boy who was waiting to serve him, and when he did, could not at first remember what he had intended to buy. "Oh, yes; pens," he said; and he began to look over, and select them very carefully.

Just then Lina appeared. She had been at the farther end of the store, looking over some music. Walter's first thought was "Would Lina be ashamed of any of

her friends because they happened to be poorly dressed?" He felt sure she would not. "But then Lina is so good," he said to himself. "She does not feel like other folks." Lina came up with a pleasant, cheery word, and Walter was glad to see her. It effectually turned his thoughts into other channels.

"I am so glad I met you, Walter," exclaimed Lina, as they went out of the store together. "I see you so seldom of late. We are going to have a social next Wednesday evening for the people of Stoneway Mission, and we shall have music, and readings, and refreshments; and I have been wanting so to see you to ask you to sing something for us."

Walter was in a penitent mood just then, and anxious to do something to satisfy his conscience; so he quite readily consented. He was by no means pleased with his conduct of late. He would like to be at peace with himself if the cost were not too great.

"We want to gain a hold on our young people in the mission," said Lina; "and we thought it would be pleasant to have a social evening for them. We hope to get more of them to attend our mission school. You will do what you can to help us, will you not? You are just the one; you are so easy and sociable."

"I cannot promise. In fact, I do not think I have

any talent in that line," returned Walter, who was afraid of committing himself too fully to this mission work.

"When are you going to help us sing again at our Sunday afternoon service?"

"Perhaps some time," replied Walter. "I do not feel strong enough yet. You cannot imagine how tired I am after Sunday-school!"

This was quite true; for Walter was not as strong as he had been before his illness. Yet his disinclination to go was so great that he could not help feeling glad that he had so good an excuse for staying away.

"What is the good of this mission work, anyway?" he continued. "These people are surrounded by so many bad influences that you cannot expect them to be much benefited by the little time you and others can devote to them. It must be almost impossible for them to be Christians whose everything is against them. It would almost seem that one had better spend his time and work where there is more promise of results. Work among such people must be discouraging, to say the least."

"Why, Walter," said Lina, quite surprised, "you are forgetting the divine side of the question. 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.' It is only his grace that enables any one to live a Christian life, how-

ever favorably situated; and that grace is sufficient in all circumstances. For my part, in spite of all the difficulties we meet with in our work, I have not felt so discouraged as in trying to work among the pleasure-seeking, gay butterflies of richer circles."

Lina looked rather sadly after Walter, as they parted at her door. His indifference pained her; and without hesitation she connected that indifference with one person, and that person was Lawrence Orme.

Two or three days after this, Walter met Lawrence.

"By the way," said Lawrence, in the course of their conversation, "who was that countrified-looking chap with you when I met you on Saturday?"

"Oh, one of the boys," returned Walter, carelessly. "And who was your chum?"

"Oh, a fellow that has some style about him—Mr. St. Clair. He is a lucky one; as he is a gentleman of leisure. He is here on a pleasure trip, and is stopping at the Staunton House. I am going to see him now. I shall not be long. Come with me. He is a very nice fellow, and I should like you to meet him." They very soon reached the hotel, and were at once shown up to Mr. St. Clair's room.

That young man was reclining in an easy chair, smoking a cigar, and reading a novel. He received his vis-

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WALTER HARLEY'S CONQUEST. 201

itors very pleasantly; and, of course, after the first greetings, offered them cigars, which Lawrence accepted, but Walter declined.

"You have not begun to smoke the weed yet, Mr. Harley?" said Mr. St. Clair. "That pleasure is in store for you, then."

"My young friend has some conscientious scruples about smoking, I believe," said Lawrence, lightly. "But he will get over that in a year or two."

"Oh, yes, he must indeed," said Mr. St. Clair. "It would never do not to smoke cigars, at least. Come, make a beginning now, won't you?" he continued, persuasively.

"I would rather not, thank you," said Walter. But his cheeks began to burn, and he felt very uncomfortable.

It had always been easy for him to stand out against smoking among the boys at school, where he was a leader, but here it was a different matter. His companions evidently thought him very odd for refusing. He began to wish himself away. Lawrence and Mr. St. Clair puffed away, and talked, and seemed quite to forget Walter, who felt as though he were counted by them as a mere boy. A half hour passed before Lawrence made any move to go. At length he rose.

"Mr. Harley lives at Elmwood, the place you admired

so much. We passed it on Saturday, you remember," said Lawrence.

"Ah, yes; a delightful place," said Mr. St. Clair.

Walter, of course, invited him to call with Lawrence.

"I shall be delighted," replied Mr. St. Clair. And so they parted. Walter was by no means comfortable. He seemed to himself to be drifting still farther from what after all he most valued. He had not forgotten the conquest he had resolved to make, but just now it seemed imperiled.

As Walter was walking rapidly home, he almost ran against Mary Harrington, who was coming out of a store.

"Walter Harley," she said, as they walked on together, "you have been smoking."

"Not I," said Walter. "But I have been cooped up in a room for half an hour with two fellows who were."

"Cousin Lawrence?" said Mary.

"Yes, and his friend, Mr. St. Clair."

"Lawrence is such a confirmed smoker," said Mary. "I don't like it a bit. I think it is horrid. I am so glad you are against it."

"It is hard, though," said Walter, "to take a stand against a usage so common. Perhaps I feel it more diffi-

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cult now than I will when I am older. It seems singular not to do as others do; and one does hate to be singular, especially when so many think it a harmless habit."

"Yes, worldly people think many things harmless that are not so. But I cannot see how any one who is a follower of Jesus can indulge in such a habit. And it is better to win the approval of our Master than that of the world, is it not, Walter?"

"I am afraid I forgot that this afternoon, or I would not have found it so difficult to say 'No.' I have too often been ashamed lately to show myself on the Lord's side. You do not know how much you helped me by your words the other evening."

"Did I?" said Mary. "I am glad I helped any one."

"Yes, and you have helped me this afternoon. I tell you, Mary, if there were more girls like you, who would always speak out on the side of everything that is good and pure and noble, there would be more fellows who would try to live right."

"Would there?" said Mary. "Well, I am sure I always will." Then she went on to tell Walter that her father was going to send her to a ladies' college in the spring; and she felt as though that would be a beginning of the preparation for her life work.

Walter felt a natural regret at the thought of losing so pleasant a companion. He realized too, more than Mary did, that they would never be boy and girl together again. And who could tell how far apart their lives might be!

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE CRICKET CLUB.

AS winter came on Walter became involved in a round of parties and social entertainments that quite put all thought of other things out of his mind.

"Walter," said his mother, one evening, "could you not go to prayer meeting to-night? It is a long time since you have been there."

"I could not, indeed, to-night, mamma, I have so many lessons to study. Perhaps I will go next week."

"How is it that your lessons never trouble you when it is a question of going to some place of amusement?" said his mother, quietly.

"Now, mother, surely I would not be a natural boy at all if I only went to prayer meetings. I would be like the boys in the Sunday-school books—too good to live."

"Did I say you were to go only to meetings, Walter? You know full well that I wish you to enjoy all that is worth enjoying; but how is it when your amusements, or so-called recreations, take up so much of your time and strength, that you *never* can go to prayer meeting?"

"To say the truth, I would make more effort to go if

they were not so dull," returned Walter. "They are not half so interesting as they were. You know how it is, mother. About the same ones take part at each meeting; there is very little variety in the prayers, and the singing usually is anything but inspiring, to say the least. And then you know there are so few who attend."

"Yes, I know. But are you sure that the change is not somewhat in yourself? Our good pastor always says encouraging helpful words. If there are not many to hear them, could you not bring some of the absent ones back again? If only a few take part, it is all the more reason why you should go and say a few words."

"Well, the fact is, I don't care to speak, for I do not always act just as I should—that is, I am not perfect, you know; and I think I will have more influence over some if I do not take such an open part. Some have a prejudice against such things."

His mother made no reply. After a few moments' silence, she said:

"How are you getting on about the cricket club? Do you expect to have one next summer?"

"Yes," replied Walter, growing animated at once. "We will certainly have one then. We mean to talk it up this winter."

"Oh, you intend to speak your views out openly, do

you?" said his mother. "Would you not have more influence over those who do not favor the idea by taking a neutral stand?"

Walter looked at his mother comically.

"Now, mother, it is too bad to catch me in that way. I really ought to be studying this lesson. I will think up an answer to your question by to-morrow." And Walter buried himself in his books, while his mother left the room, and in solitude poured out her anxieties before that Heavenly Friend who had proved a present help through all her life, pleading that her only son might live a life that should be wholly consecrated to the service of Christ. She had become very sensible of the change in Walter. She knew too, whence that change had largely come, and that she had not been at fault in the estimate she had formed of Lawrence Orme's character and influence. What remedy to apply was not so clear. And so her anxious mother heart carried her boy to him from whom wisdom is promised, and whose grace is ever present in the time of need.

That cricket club came to the front again in Walter's mind, and he began to urge it upon his classmates. The boys soon became enthusiastic, and a meeting was called for organization.

Much to Walter's disappointment, when the night of

the meeting came, he was unable to be present, as he had a severe sick headache. He could not go to school the next day, and awaited with impatience news of the doings of the previous evening. Bennie Harris came up in the afternoon.

"What news about the cricket club?" said Walter.

"Oh, it is formed all right," replied Bennie. "Arthur Somers is president, and you have been made secretary and treasurer."

It must be confessed that Walter was surprised and considerably disappointed to find that he had not been chosen president. He said nothing, however, and Bennie continued:

"I do not see why you could not act as president. I am sure almost all the boys wanted you, and we expected you to be."

"Well, I could not act as president unless I was chosen, you know, Ben," said Walter.

"Why, you would have been, only Ned Brookes was canvassing for Arthur, and he told the boys that you had said to him that you did not wish to be president; that you would not be able to attend the meetings regularly."

"I never said any such thing," said Walter, an angry flush coming into his cheek. "I do not know what Ned

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means by saying so. But then it is of a piece with the unfriendliness he has shown toward me lately."

"I did not believe you ever said that. I was sure you would be willing to act as president."

"I remember now," said Walter, "that one day, when I was feeling so wretchedly after I had the fever, some one mentioned the cricket club, and I said, 'You will have to go ahead now, Arthur, I do not feel able.' Ned Brookes was standing by; but he might have known better than to suppose that I felt in that way now. It was just an excuse, no doubt. He does not like me."

"He said Arthur Somers would not lead us into so much expense as you would."

"Oh, what nonsense! As though I could do anything without the consent of the club. I suppose Ned thinks that he can easily make Arthur do anything he wants him to. Arthur is too easily led one way or the other to make a good president. Well, it relieves me of a good deal of responsibility; so I don't mind."

But he did mind, and kept brooding over what he termed Ned's meanness. Walter had been foremost in promoting the formation of the club. Not unnaturally, he expected to be president; and it was hard to see another, whom he honestly believed would not do so

well, put in the post of honor. When he told Lina about it, she placed the subject in a new light.

"I thought you would have been president," she said; "but, after all, it is better that it is Arthur, is it not? He is very diffident, you know, and lacks confidence in himself. It will bring him out; and I have no doubt he will do well."

"He may, if he does not listen to Ned Brookes."

"But is it not well that there is some one for president who will listen to Ned? Has he not as much right as others to express his views? and ought not his opinions to have some weight?"

"Yes, if they were not so queer."

"Perhaps he thinks the same of your ideas."

"No, he just opposes for the sake of it. He is growing as disagreeable and selfish as he can be."

He did not think just then that his bearing toward Ned had possibly something to do with their relations. Perhaps, too, Walter would have felt differently if he could at that moment have joined Ned and Mr. Harrison, who were walking together, and could have overheard their conversation.

"It is no use trying any longer; everything is going to wreck and ruin in our house, and all through drink." Ned spoke in a hard, bitter tone. "I suppose," he con-

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tinued, "they all think me a cross-grained mortal; but perhaps some of the others would be no better than I am if they were placed in the same circumstances. It is easy enough to be good-natured when everything is pleasant around one. There is Walter Harley. He has everything he wants. His father is highly thought of, and he has a good chance in life. Of course, it is easy for him to be agreeable. He is never very pleasant to me, though."

"To tell the truth," Mr. Harrison said, "you and Walter misunderstand one another. He is hurt because you are cold and distant toward him; and now, I think, he feels aggrieved because you opposed the formation of a cricket club." For Ned had not at first been in favor of such a club.

"Well, I would have liked a cricket club as well as any one, only I knew it meant expense; and we have no money to spare—not a cent; for father is getting deeper in debt all the time, and I do not know how it is going to end." The gloomy look that Ned so often wore deepened. "I used to hope father would reform: I have given that up long ago. I do not see why I am placed where everything is against me. It is hard to live right with such influences around one. I feel sometimes as though I would give up trying. I have wanted to do

right and be a true man, and I want to now; but sometimes it seems as though I might as well give up."

"Come, Ned, you must not be so discouraged," said Mr. Harrison. "Your difficulties may become helps to you if you meet them in the right way. The trials that beset you are doubtless the very ones needed to develop true manhood in you. God has a glorious plan for each one of his children. Will you let him carry it on by what means he sees fit, and so become a vessel unto honor; or will you mar it by your fretfulness and impatience, and so fail to become what you might? The trouble is you look at others more favorably placed than yourself, and then you think you are harshly dealt with because you are not so favored. How can you expect help and grace while you cherish this spirit of repining and rebellion?"

"I do . . . always fret," replied Ned; "sometimes I feel simply discouraged."

"But you have the promises, Ned. Has not God promised to be with his people? And he who has God with him must surely come off conqueror."

"I am not good enough to claim the promises," said Ned, sadly.

"Ah! there you make a mistake. The most blessed promises are conditioned on our need and weakness, not

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"I fear I have wandered away from him," said Ned, in a low voice.

"Then, my dear hoy, come back now; do not wait any longer. 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord.' That is a promise for you. And hope on yet about your father, and pray for him; and bring all your troubles to your Heavenly Friend, and your burdens will be lightened. God bless you, my boy." And Mr. Harrison pressed his hand warmly.

"Pray for me," said Ned.

"Do you suppose I can ever forget to do that for 'my boys'?" Mr. Harrison answered.

And so they parted: the faithful teacher, to go on his way with deepened interest in one whose conduct had often puzzled him; the burdened lad, with new courage and hope.

If Walter could have known all this, his sympathies would have been instantly awakened, and he would have forgiven everything. But he did not know; so he kept on thinking what a mean, crusty sort of a fellow Ned was, and resolved to give him a piece of his mind at the first opportunity. Of course, the feelings he cherished influ-

enced his bearing toward Ned. And so the breach between the boys widened.

But, after all, Walter wanted to do what was right; and the more he thought of it the more he felt that the best way was to say nothing. To tell Ned just what he thought about him would be, at the best, but a petty self-gratification. So far he went, but no farther. He still felt indignant at Ned.

It so happened that the very first day that Walter was able to go to school, he saw Ned on the road ahead of him. Ned was walking very slowly, so Walter knew he must overtake him. The battle raged in his heart anew. However, he resolved to say nothing, but to be just distant and cool enough in manner to show him what he thought of him. Then, quick as a flash, came the thought: "That is a half-and-half way of doing; that is not the Christlike way of forgiving, and loving, and passing by a fault." There were many contending thoughts in Walter's mind, but I know this one must have conquered; for it was a very cheery "good-morning" that Ned heard a few minutes later; when, looking up, he saw Walter Harley's beaming face. Walter passed on with a gladness in his heart such as only he knows who "ruleth his spirit," while Ned's heart grew light: it was to him a token of good in his upward

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struggle. From this time forward there was no lack of kindly feeling between the two boys. Each helped the other too. Ned had qualities which Walter lacked; and he in turn, from what he was and from his more favored surroundings, gave many an inspiration to the struggling boy.

CHAPTER XX.

PHILIP'S RETURN.

DECEMBER had come. The first fleecy snowflakes had fallen, covering the brown and faded earth with a fair, white mantle. Pond and stream were bound fast in their icy fetters. The trees stood bare and weird-like, and yet did not seem otherwise than in keeping with the scene as they stood in relief against the wintry sky. Almost all signs of life had vanished from field and wood, and winter had fastened a grip on nature that only the spring sunshine by-and-by would make him let go. There was an attractiveness in it all to one who loved nature; but it was an attractiveness that would make the warmth of home all the more grateful.

Mrs. Harley sat in the cosy library at Elmwood busily sewing. Carrie was perched by the window, looking, not at the snow, nor at the little snow birds hopping about the avenue, but was watching for Walter. She had something very important to tell him, and she could not even tell mamma what it was. At length Walter appeared, striding along through the snow. Then came the stamping of feet at the doorway, and Carrie ran to meet him.

"Oh, Walter, you can never guess what I want to tell you!" she cried, and she looked very curiously and eagerly at her brother as he glanced smilingly down upon her. She was a winsome little maiden, and her brother was very fond of her.

Of course, Walter did a good deal of guessing, but failed every time, and at last Carrie had to tell him.

"Philip is coming home on Monday," she said.

"Why, his vacation does not begin yet, does it? Who told you, Carrie?"

"Elsie told me," replied the little girl. "It is not vacation yet; but Philip is not feeling well, and he is allowed to come home and rest, for he is away ahead of his class."

"Hurrah!" And Walter tossed up his cap. "Mother, Philip is coming home Monday," he said.

"So that is the secret, Carrie, that you were so anxious to tell Walter?" said Mrs. Harley.

"Yes; isn't it lovely?" said Carrie.

"It is the best news I have had to-day," said Walter.

Elsie was Philip's younger sister, and was devotedly fond of her big brother. Carrie and Elsie were fast friends, and whatever pleased Elsie pleased Carrie; so she too was delighted at the prospect of Philip's return.

Monday came, and with it came Philip, looking rather

worn and tired, yet as earnest and animated as when Walter saw him in the summer. There was something, however, which aroused a fear in the mind of the younger boy. He could not help thinking of that beautiful day when they lay beside the sea, and that far-away look came into Philip's face; when there flashed upon the mind of his friend the thought of the "land that is very far off," rather than Scotland, which just then was the goal of the ardent young student's hopes.

In the days that followed, Walter was often with his friend. He did not know why it was, but he never could be in Philip's company without feeling that he was made better; that every aspiration after that which is good was strengthened—that, in fact, he was drawn nearer to Christ; nor was he the only one who felt the influence of that Christlike life.

Why was it? Perhaps this had something to do with it. Nay, let us not use the word perhaps! The evening before Philip returned he had taken out the well-worn Bible, and read these words from 1 Chron. 16 : 43 : "David returned to bless his house." And then he asked his Heavenly Father that he too might return to bless his house, and to be a blessing to all whom he might meet.

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be vouchsafed? The following weeks testified to the answer that came.

Philip had many inquiries to make of Walter concerning the church work. Were the younger members still zealous? How was Stoneway Mission getting on? etc.

Walter was obliged, with some shame, to confess that he had not been very active himself lately, and so had not much to tell.

Philip looked rather disappointed, and said:

"Has the work become uninteresting, Walter?"

"I do not know that it is uninteresting. I could not do much for a while after I had the fever; and then—well, I got out of the way of it. There are so many other things to take up one's time and attention."

"And the other things are more important?" questioned Philip.

"Perhaps you might not think so; but I really do not know how to avoid these engagements; for instance, I have been asked to quite a number of parties. I could not very well refuse, and they are pleasant too."

"Gay parties with dancing, I suppose?" said Philip.

"Yes," returned Walter, a little hesitatingly. "There are very few parties without dancing: one need not dance, though."

"It is rather dull unless you do, is it not?"

"Rather," said Walter. "Then I practiced for amateur theatricals. That took a precious lot of time, I can tell you; but that might be counted a good work, as it was for the benefit of St. Urban's Church."

Philip smiled.

"I do not think a church can do much Christian work on those lines," he said.

"Well, I was asked, and could not refuse. One must use one's talents, you know. There will be a rush of all such engagements after the New Year, and I cannot see how I can avoid them. One might as well be out of the world as to refuse to engage in such things; and I cannot see the harm in them, either."

"And then," said Philip, "you like them? You enjoy these things better than mission work, or Sunday-school teaching, or prayer meetings?"

"Yes," said Walter, frankly, "I do; and I often wish it were otherwise. I would like to be a decided Christian—wholly on the Lord's side."

"You find yourself thinking what the world will say of your actions, do you not?" questioned Philip. "And more and more look at things from its standpoint, and fail to see them as God sees them."

"Yes, perhaps so," replied Walter, thoughtfully.

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asures have already worked in you. Of course, you are thrown into the society of people whose thoughts, aims, and principles of conduct are directly opposite to those of the true Christian; and your Christian life must be weakened by their influence."

"I am afraid it is as you say, Philip; but, as I said before, I do not see how I can help it. It would be very hard to decline invitations on a religious ground."

"No doubt it would require some moral heroism," replied Philip; "yet, if your hands were filled with work for the Master, you would find that you had no time for these other things; and, after all, it is not very hard when we have Jesus to give up something for him. You will find all along, Walter, as you go through life, it must be one thing or the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon; a life of devotion to Christ and a life of devotion to the world cannot be blended in one. And, oh, Walter! I wish you could feel, as I do, how worthless worldly honors, or pleasures, or riches are, compared with Christ!"

"I believe you are right, Philip," said Walter.

"Is not that the teaching of the Bible all through?" "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," is surely the privilege of all Christians to say."

"I wish that it might be true of me," said Walter;

"yet I am so afraid that I shall yield when the temptation comes, and grow cold and half-hearted."

"Let us make it our prayer, then, that you may count the service of Christ your highest joy, and enter on the new year in a spirit of consecration to him."

The answer came, but in a way they little expected.

In the days that followed, Walter spent many happy hours at Philip's home, becoming better acquainted with the other members of the family than he had ever been.

There were three besides Philip. Lottie, a gay young lady of sixteen; George, a headstrong lad, just turned twelve; and Elsie, a gentle little girl, about ten years old. Mrs. Ray had been a widow for eight years, her husband, Colonel Ray, falling a victim, while yet in the prime of life, to consumption. He left his widow in comfortable circumstances, and she was thus enabled to send Philip, her eldest son, to college.

Mrs. Ray, naturally reserved, went through every changing experience with outward composure, and few perhaps guessed how strong were her affections.

Philip, since his return, had been the life of the family; and though his mother said but little, it was evident that her thoughts and hopes were centred in her eldest son. She had bestowed much of thought and means upon his

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enter active life, her hope became more intense. Some-
times the chill of a fear would creep into her heart; but
yet it did not seem possible that anything could happen
to her boy.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

THE glad Christmas season was near, and Walter's hands were full of work and his heart full of thoughts for others; for he did want to make as many as possible happy at this Christmastide. So many things his skillful fingers had made, it was little wonder he surveyed them with real pleasure. Toy furniture for his sister's doll house; brackets and book racks, and so forth, for older friends. Nor were absent ones forgotten; for there was a home-made scrap album, and a handsome ship for invalid Jamie. With much labor and patience, he had made a table for Nurse Brown; and when Lina covered it, and hung around it a drapery worked by her own deft fingers, it looked very pretty, and they knew it would be appreciated; for Nurse Brown dearly loved pretty things. And then it was such a pleasure to be able to surprise Uncle George with twenty dollars for his Sunday-school. And the pleasantest part of Christmas was Uncle George's letter of thanks.

Another thing happened that made Walter's heart glad. He had begun to take an interest in the prayer meetings

again; worldly amusements had less fascination for him; the things pertaining to the service of Christ had far more. Then, as is always the case, his heart went out toward others. When the fire is bright on the hearth all about it will feel its warmth. One day he said to Bennie Harris: "Won't you come to meeting to-night, if Philip and I call for you?"

Bennie readily consented. Philip spoke that evening, and Walter wondered if he had Bennie in mind as he was speaking; for Walter had told Philip about him.

Bennie was more than usually quiet on the way home, taking no part in the conversation. That an impression had been made upon him was evident enough, and so his friends left him to his own thoughts.

The next Sunday was the Sunday before Christmas. Walter had felt more than usually interested in the Sunday-school lesson. After the close of the school, as he was walking home with Bennie Harris, something prompted him to say:

"Ben, cannot you receive Jesus as *your Saviour* now?"

"Oh, Walter," replied Ben, his face lighting up, "I have accepted him. I see it all now. Philip's words came home to me that night; and I saw, what seems so simple now, but what I never could see before, that it is simply taking Jesus at his word. I knew I was sinful

and needed salvation, but I did not seem able to come. I have come now, and I want to unite with the Lord's people on the first Sunday of the new year.'

"I am so glad," said Walter. And then the two boys walked on in silence; but a new bond of sympathy had been formed between them. Henceforth they were indeed brothers in the Lord.

Christmas was a bright, beautiful day. And such a happy day for Walter! His little gifts had given a double pleasure that was keener than usual. He had thought of each one especially as he had wrought for him or her; and they had recognized the thoughtfulness, and it had added much to the intrinsic value of the articles bestowed. Yes; it was an unusually happy Christmas for Walter.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton, and Lina and Rob, took dinner at Elmwood. Then in the evening they all went down to Stoneway Mission, where there was a Christmas tree, and a supper for the children. Before the children were dismissed, the superintendent and Mr. Harley and Philip Ray each spoke a few words, reminding them of the great event that Christmas celebrates.

Walter never forgot that night. He never forgot how his friend looked, as, leaning over the desk, he spoke of the great gift God the Father gave to the world. Long after-

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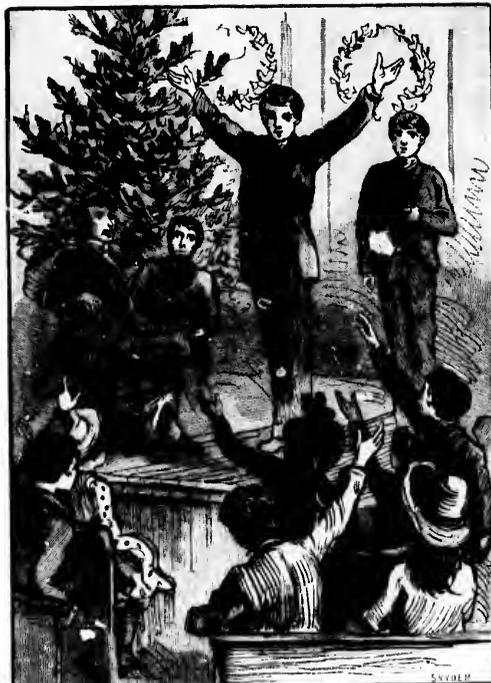
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ward he could see that pale, spiritual countenance, bright with a glory not of earth. Long afterward he could hear Philip's gentle, persuasive voice, as he urged the little ones to give their hearts to him who gave himself for them. Such a hush fell on the assembly, such a serious, earnest look stole over the upturned faces, as they listened breathlessly to his words; for Philip had already won their hearts. And when, at the close, he said: "How many will begin the journey heavenward now? I want to meet you all there. Won't you raise your hands?" very many little hands were raised; and Philip, standing there with hand uplifted, seemed like one drawing them upward and heavenward.

No one can estimate the influence of that scene on those little folks. The spiritual face, the earnest words, the upward gesture, each had a meaning which after events, in some at least, helped to make an abiding memory.

It was the evening of the day after Christmas. Walter had felt listless and almost depressed through the day—something unusual for the gay, happy-hearted boy. Perhaps it was the natural reaction after the hurry and excitement of Christmas times. However that may be, now, as evening came on, Walter wandered restlessly from room to room, unable to settle down to anything.



Reaching the library, he picked up a Christmas number of a favorite magazine and tried to read, but it was no use; and he wandered off again, this time up stairs and along the hall, to a window that looked out to the eastward.

It was a dark, cloudy night, and a south wind sighed among the leafless branches of the trees. Something in the unrest of nature seemed so fascinate Walter; for he stood a long while gazing out down the avenue, with its line of shadowy trees tossing their long arms restlessly to and fro in the fitful wind. Walter started nervously, as a sudden gust made the old elm near the house creak and groan. The spirit of unrest apparent without had crept into his heart, and somehow a dim foreboding of coming ill mingled with it.

"What an old woman I am!" he exclaimed, impatiently. "I will go to my room this minute, and study. The very idea of being so nervous when we are all safe and well!"

Just at that moment he saw a light gleaming through the trees. Some one was coming up the avenue with a lantern.

"Who can be coming at this hour?" he said, half aloud.

The person passed on up to the house, and as the door

bell rang, a faint dread stole over Walter. He reached the stairway just as the door was opened. He knew the voice well. It was that of Mr. Williams, a man who lived near Mrs. Ray, and did gardening for her. His heart seemed to stand still, yet he felt no surprise as the man told how Master Philip had been taken suddenly with bleeding at the lungs. "And Mrs. Ray, she wanted me to come for you, sir," he said, speaking to Mr. Harley. "Master George has gone into town for a doctor."

"Father, can I go with you?" cried Walter.

"Yes, my son," was the reply. And in a few moments they were following Mr. Williams down the avenue.

Soon they reached Woodbine Cottage, Philip's home. How quiet and lonely the house looked! How strange it seemed to cross the threshold with softened footfall, to speak in subdued tones! The familiar hall, always so bright and cheerful, seemed strangely altered to-night to Walter—so dreary and uninviting it looked with its dimness and silence.

Lottie came forward to meet them. The doctor had just come, and was now in the sick room.

"Philip," she said, "had been taken very suddenly, having appeared to be in his usual health during the day. The attack had been as severe as it was sudden, and the gravest apprehension filled them all."

Poor, gay little Lottie: she was completely broken down. Walter could not bear to see her grief. He went into the parlor and sat down. How still and lonely the room looked where they had spent so many pleasant hours of late; and Philip,—Walter could almost see him there,—the life and light of all. Then he shivered as the thought came. What if Philip should never enter this room again? But he would not think of it. Philip *must* get better—he *could* not die.

He was roused from his reverie by the doctor's footsteps. Dr. Stanley came down, looking grave and anxious, but said little. Mr. Harley accompanied him back to town to get medicine.

Mrs. Ray came down stairs for a few moments. She greeted Walter calmly, gave some directions to Lottie, and then went back to watch by her son's bedside.

Shortly after, George came in with Mrs. Rogers, a very dear friend of Mrs. Ray. She was one of those people who know just what to do in a house of trouble. She put her arms around Lottie and kissed her, and then began to talk cheerfully to her.

"It will not do for you to give way to your grief so, dear," she said. "You will have to be your mother's right hand now. There will be many things you must attend to, for she will have to be so much with Philip.

This attack of your brother's may not prove serious, and I hope we may soon see him among us again." And as she thus talked, Lottie grew calm again.

Mr. Harley now came with the medicine, and as there was nothing more they could do, Mr. Harley and Walter returned home.

It was long before Walter could sleep, so many thoughts came crowding into his mind. But they all resolved themselves into this: Philip *cannot* die, he *must* get better.

CHAPTER XXII.

LAST WORDS.

DURING the days that followed, Walter was much at Woodbine cottage; for Philip liked to have his companionship, and often asked for him. After the first day Walter's buoyant spirits began to return. Any slight improvement in Philip's condition seemed to Walter a sure indication of his ultimate recovery, and he began to talk of what they would do when Philip was able to go about again. Philip said but little, and Walter sometimes noticed a troubled look on his face.

The third day after his attack Philip looked brighter and more cheerful than Walter had yet seen him. His friend became buoyant at once, and was as hopeful as before he had been depressed.

"Oh, you look ever so much better, Philip; you will soon be around again," he said.

Philip smiled.

"I cannot say, Walter; but one thing I can say now, that, come what may, all is well. At first I could hardly be reconciled to the thought of dying. Life is attractive to the young. I never expected to have a long life; but I

had hoped for a few years, at least, of usefulness; and then, mother—I felt as though she needed me. Walter, it has been such a struggle to give up all; but now I can say, 'He doeth all things well.'"

"Oh, Philip, you will get better; you must not think of dying yet," said Walter; "we cannot spare you. I should not wonder if you became as strong as I am yet. There is so much before you; so much that you might do. Oh, surely you must get well and be about among us again!"

"I wish it might be so, Walter. I would like to live, and yet I have thought very much since I have been lying here that if I were to recover only to be laid aside frequently, and unable through illness to do my life-work, it would be better, far better, to be taken away now."

"Some have recovered from attacks like yours, and become strong men," said Walter, "and I believe you will yet. Every one says we cannot spare you. You do not know how your friends feel. They cannot be reconciled to your leaving us. We must have you with us again."

"My friends are very kind," said Philip; "so many have inquired after me. I only wish I could see them; but the doctor will not allow it. But, Walter," he continued, the earnest look in his eyes deepening, "I want

you to give the boys this message from me. I want you to tell them that the Christian life is the best life, the happiest life to live. That now, as I look back, I only wish I had served Christ more faithfully. The last year in my life has been the happiest I ever spent. It is good to serve Christ." Philip's cheek flushed with the effort of speaking.

"It is too much for you to talk any more now," Walter said. "You must rest, or the doctor will not allow me to be with you."

Philip sank back exhausted, and Walter sat watching him with a strange aching in his young heart, lest indeed these might prove his last words.

Saturday found Philip worse again. There were complications, the doctor said, which rendered his case very serious, and made recovery extremely doubtful.

"You have heard the doctor's opinion," said Philip, as Walter took his place by the bedside. He spoke very low, and wistfully, tenderly turned his large, expressive eyes upon his friend.

"Yes," said Walter. He could not say more, for a choking sensation came into his throat, and he looked very hard toward a distant corner of the room, lest Philip should see tears in his eyes.

There was silence for a few moments. Philip took

Walter's hand in his own. Then he said, gently, "Walter, you know we used to read how in time of battle, when one soldier fell, the next one stepped forward and took his place, so that the rank should remain unbroken."

"Yes," said Walter, trying hard to keep back the tears.

"Walter, you must take my place." Slowly the words came, and distinctly, and the solemnity of their utterance helped to carry them to Walter's very soul.

"Oh, Philip! how can I take your place?" cried Walter, with passionate earnestness. "You know I could never hope to be what you would have been; you are so clever, you would be one of our leading college professors."

"You may not occupy just that position, Walter; but you will have money and influence, and you can help some one else who has neither, to fit himself to do the work I had hoped to do—to do it better than I would, perhaps."

Even as Philip spoke, Walter seemed to see a little, longing face, and wistful blue eyes, and could hear Bennie say, "I would dearly love to be a professor in a college." And he mentally resolved to do all he could to realize Bennie's wish. Aloud he said: "I will,

Philip," and the words had to him all the solemnity of a vow. This was the last conversation they had. When Walter came again Philip was too ill to talk, and it was evident to all that the end was not far off.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

"COME UP HIGHER."

IT was the last night of the year, and Walter sat up with his friend. Mr. Harley had at first demurred; for Walter had already been up two nights in succession; but when Walter said, sadly, "I fear it will be my last opportunity, father, and Philip wants me," his father made no further objection. Mr. Harrison shared the watch with Walter that night.

Many thoughts passed through Walter's mind as he sat by Philip's bedside. In the hush and stillness of the room the tick of the clock on the mantel sounded loudly, as it counted off the passing moments. Too loudly, Walter thought, as he realized that with each swiftly passing moment Philip's life was too surely slipping away. He tried to look back—only one short week since Philip was well and apparently full of life. One week! it seemed like months. Now as he sat by his dying friend, how little all earthly pleasures appeared, how trifling the gayeties that he thought he could not give up! Now he felt that the only true life was the life lived for eternity. "The best things are the most enduring," he repeated to

himself. "Then those things cannot be best which we cannot carry away with us beyond the borders of time." And as the New Year came in, Walter consecrated himself anew to the service of the Saviour who loved him, resolving, by God's grace, to live wholly to him.

Toward morning Walter noticed a change in Philip; he quickly called Mr. Harrison. As Mr. Harrison entered the room, he saw at once that the end was near. "It will be best to summon the family," he said, "and I will send for the doctor."

They all gathered in the room. Philip seemed scarcely conscious of their presence. He had bidden each of his dear ones good-bye in the afternoon. He did not appear to suffer much, only moved restlessly. Mrs. Ray sat by the bedside, holding his hand.

Suddenly his face lighted; he looked up with a bright smile; then, turning to his mother, and clasping her hand more tightly, he whispered, "With Christ—far better." A gentle sigh, and the glorified spirit had taken its flight.

But ah! the darkened home! Oh, the anguish, as they realized that their loved one had gone from them never to return!

Walter quietly left the sorrow-stricken group, on whose grief he felt he could not intrude. As he went down the staircase, he almost stumbled over some one.

It was poor little Elsie, who had slipped away as soon as all was over to sob out her grief alone. Walter felt so sorry for her, for he knew she had idolized Philip.

"Don't cry so, Elsie; Philip is much happier," he said. "I'll try to be a brother to you." Then he stooped and kissed the little brow; and from henceforth he felt as though Elsie were his peculiar charge.

The sky was brightening in the east as Walter turned his steps homeward. Some way he could not feel sad; he could only think of his friend's happiness.

When he reached home, he went up stairs. He found his mother in her little sewing room reading.

"How is he?" were her first words.

"He has gone home," said Walter. Then he went to the window, and his mother, knowing he could not trust himself to say more, quietly left the room.

Walter spent a very quiet New Year's. That evening he was alone with his mother in the library, and then he told her of Philip's last hours, and opened to her his heart, telling her his difficulties, his temptations, and his desire and purpose to live wholly for Christ.

He is altered somewhat since a year ago; on his face is the look of manhood, and through it shines the light of an earnest, solemn purpose; for the thoughts and acts of the past year have left their impress on him. At the

beginning of that year he had dimly seen that to do one's daily duties bravely and cheerfully was to be a true hero; now he realized it fully, and the purpose within him was stronger to-day than ever to be a Christian hero.

His mother entered most fully into all his feelings, giving him such counsel as only a true mother can.

At length as the lateness of the hour warned them that they must bring their conversation to a close, Walter said:

"Mother, what motto will you give me for this New Year?" And his mother opening the large family Bible, pointed to these words:

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

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