









THE SELF-MADE MAN.



ALLEN LUCAS;

THE

SELF-MADE MAN.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHARLES LINN," "LIFE  
AS IT IS," &C.

~~~~~ (Chubbuck)  
Dudman, the author of
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ALLEN LUCAS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CORNERS.

ABOUT two miles from the little village of Smithville, in one of our western counties, the turnpike is crossed by a road not much traveled, but of sufficient importance to give that district the name of the Corners. Upon two of the four corners, fine farm-houses are situated, and far beyond, stretch fields of waving grain and meadows of tall, rich grass, or the still richer clover, the perfume of which can not be surpassed by the rarest green-house exotic.

The turnpike leads along to other farm-houses of rather humbler pretensions than those on the Corners, and now and then scattered among them, are little, low buildings,

seemingly of dimensions too contracted to accommodate more than one individual, but literally swarming with the white-headed, bare-footed inhabitants, all unconscious of needing room. As we proceed onward, we shall find the turnpike traversed by a little stream, over which is thrown a log bridge, for the superabundance of timber furnished by the hills beyond, bristling with evergreens, interspersed with other trees bending gracefully beneath their wealth of summer foliage, makes the people cling to the extravagant economy of their fathers, and save the trouble of sawing, at the expense of the valuable material. Here we shall find the impression made by bare feet upon the sand, on each side of the creek, and very likely we may see a half-dozen boys, their linen trowsers rolled up to the knee, wading about in the clear water, quite as happy as the sleeping cow, standing so quietly in the stream below, that you very seldom can catch a tinkle of the bell hung to her neck. Farther down the stream, grow the ash, and elm, with some birch trees almost stripped of the bark by the fore-mentioned knights of the linen trowsers, and a few tall

maples on each side lean towards each other, almost interlacing their branches, and casting an ever-quivering shadow upon the waters below, which here grow broader and deeper, and move quietly and lingeringly, as if in love with the cool breezes wakened by the fanning of the foliage. Nestled down in one corner of a wood a few rods from this creek, is the district school-house, with its large uncurtained windows, and one small door opening under a wood-house, which in winter receives the drifting snow, and in summer cradles many a troublesome insect. This school-house has been built for a great many years, and is not so comfortable as some of more modern date, but it has nevertheless been the nursery of talent and usefulness, as well as the scene of many an idle freak of childish fancy, or the still more idle plans and speculations of the book-hater.

Upon that seat, far in the corner, once sat Allen Lucas, and I believe those very notches in the desk were made by his knife, as he lolled upon his seat and wondered over and over again if noon would ever come. Allen Lucas was not the son of a poor widow,

who "had once seen better days," nor had he any of the other claims upon our sympathy advanced by most heroes of story; he was only the third son of Reuben Lucas, a plain, honest, simple farmer, who, by being always watchful and industrious, contrived at the end of the year to balance accounts, without saving a penny. It made no difference with Mr. Lucas whether his crops were plentiful or otherwise, whether ill luck or good attended him in his family; increased expenditures never made him poorer, nor an increased income richer. In truth, Mr. Lucas was "an easy, well-to-do man," who cared only to be free from debt, with plenty to eat and drink, and his expenses were entirely regulated by his income without a thought of the "rainy day" ahead. His wife managed a small dairy, and sold butter and cheese enough to keep herself and daughters in fineries, but this was so exclusively pin-money, that it was never devoted to anything but fineries. In short, Mr. Lucas was only a farmer in a very small way, and not considered a rich man even in his own little neighborhood, but his family lived very comfortably, and were not accus-

tomed to deny themselves anything which happened to fall within the circle of their humble desires.

Allen Lucas had few peculiarities, and although he was usually considered a "bright boy," evinced no superiority to the rest of the family. He was somewhat taller and stouter than boys of twelve generally are, with broad shoulders and muscular limbs, and on this he prided himself not a little: then, he could wield the ball-club, skate, run, leap, and wrestle as well as any of his companions, and though not always at the head of his class, he was very seldom, if ever, at the foot. He had studied arithmetic for three years, but never got beyond reduction, his success in geography was more creditable to his talent, but grammar was his detestation, and never would have been attempted, but for the pleasure of attending the evening grammar school. Allen was generally very well liked by his teachers and companions, for he carried a cheerful, good-humored countenance, and was not what is generally considered a rebellious or very lazy scholar. True, his sister Mary, though two years his junior, often excelled him,

but Mary had always been considered a very bright little girl, and it was no unusual thing for the oldest members of the school to yield to her. In spelling contests, Mary Lucas was generally the victor, and she was as familiar with every line of her well-thumbed geography, as with the simple furniture of her mother's kitchen. Everybody expected great things of Mary, but they did not expect them of her brother Allen, and so he passed on, envied by many a dull boy who was obliged to labor for the little he learned, often commended for the good lessons which had cost him scarce fifteen minutes' study, and very seldom censured. Allen never dreamed of anything more than getting decently through with the forms of the day, the final object to be gained never once entered his mind, and though his teachers often talked of the advantages of education, and the importance of mental culture, this was all like Greek to him, and he considered it the most favorable time for planning some piece of amusement to be broached to his comrades after school. Such was Allen Lucas at the age of twelve, and such he seemed likely to be for years to come.

a harmless, not particularly dull, but very common-place character. Of what he was capable no one knew, himself least of all, for he had never imagined himself under any obligation to exert his powers only when and where he liked. Allen had never been told that his superior quickness, instead of furnishing him with an excuse for indolence, only rendered an indulgence in it more criminal, and he would have thought it the height of injustice to require more of him than of others.

The school at the Corners had generally been furnished with teachers, if not of the first order, who at least enjoyed some reputation, but they had been contented to pursue the usual routine, measuring their duty by what was expected of them, rather than by what it was in their power to perform. The teacher, who merely fulfills his contract, may not suffer the upbraidings of conscience for not doing more, and his salary is his reward. It is all he deserves. But O how much richer the reward of him who seeks a higher object, who labors to accomplish what none but a teacher can accomplish. When the man, who to-day stands with a group of listening

boys around him, and marks the flushed cheek, the glistening eye and the swelling bosom, has grown old, when the warm blood which now animates his frame and makes his tongue eloquent has become sluggish, when his eye grows dim, his hand tremulous, and he feels that he must soon lie down and teach his last, great lesson, this will be far from being the least pleasing of the remembrances that cluster around the heart, to soothe him whose grave lies between him and his only future. Then, when he looks upon the glorious fruit, though the dew of the last life-breath were freezing upon his lip, and his heart were subsiding into its last stillness, a delicious thrill must needs be awakened by the thought, "the seed was of my own hand's planting." To look around upon a happy community, made happier by the influence of the virtuous and gifted who cement and make it strong; to see the philanthropist employed in disseminating noble principles, enlightening heavy hearts, and elevating debased spirits, and be able to look back upon the time when his intellect and heart received the first impulse and remember with

how much difficulty his nature was moulded; even to mark the manly struggles of the victim of misfortune, the self-sustaining power which prevents his becoming a vagabond, and remember that but for days and days of unwearied effort, that man would have been weak and helpless, is a priceless reward which but one class of the many devoted to doing good can claim. It is of more worth than all the yellow dust that ever glittered before human eye, and exhaustless, because the sunshine, that it casts about the heart now, is only the shadow of the treasure which is laid up in heaven. Above all others, does the teacher need a clean heart and active hand, but if that heart be cold, or if but one finger of that hand prefer self-service, let its owner stand aside, for he is all unfitted for the holy work.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW TEACHER.

ALLEN LUCAS was in his twelfth year when Mr. Thorn, who had taught the Corner school for several winters, and gained a little purse thereby, concluded that keeping a grocery at Smithville would be more profitable, and therefore a new teacher was engaged in his stead. Mr. Thorn was a great favorite, and so his successor was naturally enough regarded with suspicion, and when he ventured to engraft a few improvements upon the old tread-mill system, he was met on every hand by the most strenuous opposition. Mr. Dawson was a thorough scholar, and had been self-educated: thus he knew how much the human mind is capable of accomplishing by its own unassisted efforts, and he felt more anxiety to arouse the dormant faculties of his pupils, than to urge them forward in their studies. He wished to fit them for action, at least suf-

ficient for them to appreciate in some degree the labor before them, lest the labor should be but ill-performed. The accomplishment of this purpose required such a thorough revolution, that many persons, among whom Mr. Lucas was not the least formidable, regarded him with a suspicious eye. If Mr. Dawson had been a selfish man, he would not have mortified the pride of Mary Lucas by making her conscious that all her attainments were mere parrotry, nor would he have incurred the hatred of John Smith, whose father owned the largest, if not the best improved Corners farm, by putting him in a class more suited to his actual attainments than his years. Selfishness would have induced an opposite course, but Mr. Dawson felt an unfeigned interest in his work. Still Allen Lucas lolled upon his desk and cut notches with his knife, and watched the shadow in the window and wondered if noon would ever come, but he did not slide along so easily as formerly, for his face often burned beneath the glances of a reproving eye, and his lessons failed to elicit one word of praise. After a few weeks Allen began to dislike Mr. Dawson

and Mary was decided in pronouncing him a "poor teacher," proving her position, by asserting that she did not know half so much as when she attended Mr. Thorn's school. Still Mr. Dawson went on as if unconscious of the petty storm about his ears, and soon the suspicions of people were laid, and their prejudices wore away, for they found their children animated by a new spirit, and were not long in discovering that a richer vein was perceptible in the young intellect than had before been touched. Mr. Dawson had gone below the mere mechanical, and had put in operation the reasoning faculties. He had taught his pupils to think, and they could not fail to remember. Among those least benefited by this state of things were Allen and Mary Lucas, for while the former could skim over the surface and avoid absolute disgrace, he was contented, and Mary was too indignant at the thought of relinquishing the honors she had worn so long, and too anxious to mask her deficiencies under a show of words, to set about actual improvement. Mary supposed words to be the actual substance, rather than the vehicle for its exhibition; the

mystery of meaning beneath was to her an idle tale, and she was positive that knowing anything "by heart" was quite sufficient for all reasonable purposes. Allen however did improve a little, at least in outward seeming, but it was only sufficient to escape the charge of dullness, and maintain his former standing in the school.

Mr. Dawson was very fond of visiting the different families at the Corners, becoming acquainted with the ordinary occupations of the children, and mingling in their sports; thus, his influence was everywhere felt, and he became familiar with the workings of their hearts. His own feelings were yet green within his bosom, and he did not affect that coldness and distance of manner, nor that indifference to innocent amusements, which often passes for dignity, and rears itself as the most formidable barrier to improvement of any kind. He who loves his fellow men will sympathize in that which interests them, however trivial, and sympathy is the right hand of the philanthropist. One day, after skating for half an hour upon the smooth surface of the mill-pond, far up the creek,

and getting up a snow-balling party on the way back to the school-house, for the sake of giving the little fellows, who had been mere lookers-on, their share of sport, Mr. Dawson sat down by his desk, and, as usual on such occasions, his pupils, one by one, gathered around him, until not a loiterer remained without. Even Allen Lucas was in this group, for Mr. Dawson's stories were more interesting to him than his books, and when he had become animated by exercise, he always told his very best.

"I shall not tell you a story to day," said the school-master, and as he spoke there was an expression of quiet humor, which his pupils had at first mistaken for ill-nature, or "something bad," they could hardly tell what, lurking in his fine, black eyes, and playing about the corners of his mouth.

"No story!" "no story!" repeated the younger scholars, in tones of disappointment, until the outer one being far enough off to venture on such a remark, whispered, "I think it's too bad." By what process of reasoning it was decided to be too bad that Mr. Dawson should withhold a gratification he was by no means bound to grant, I can not

say, so I will leave the matter to those school-boys who from imagining that they can not do too little, come to the very natural conclusion that their teachers can not do too much, and never dream of being grateful for the most self-sacrificing favors. The older scholars however knew Mr. Dawson too well to believe that he would disappoint them, so they winked knowingly at each other, and remained silent.

“I will give you a fable,” resumed Mr. Dawson, “which, although it may not be so interesting as our Indian story, may afford some amusement.”

“A fable! why, that is a story, Mr. Dawson.”

“Right, Liph,—now can you tell me how it differs from the stories I have told you before?”

“Why, fables are *big stories*.”

“They are *wrong stories*,” said little Abby Stillman.

“They are *fish stories*,” added Liph.

“No, *animal stories*,” said Julia May, “for Æsop’s fables are all about wolves and lambs, and foxes, and other animals. Fables are stories that are not true.”

“Are all stories that are not true, fables?” inquired Mr. Dawson.

“No, sir, not the kind of fable that you mean,” said Allen Lucas.

“All stories that are not true, of course may in one sense be considered fables,” said a soft voice in low, measured tones, “but a true fable always conveys a hidden moral.”

Mr. Dawson smiled on the speaker, one of the boys whispered, “Robert May thinks he knows everything,” and the circle drew closer together, and stood and sat in the attitude of listeners. “I must forewarn you,” said Mr. Dawson, “to look out for the moral, for I shall leave the application to you.” The boys looked at each other as though a very little alarmed, for Mr. Dawson had his own way of pointing out faults, and not an individual who was conscious of doing wrong, felt for a moment safe. Nor did his smiling lip reassure them, for unless the fault were of that class which requires a solemn and pointed rebuke, he always wore that same expression, as if utterly unconscious that some poor offender was wincing beneath his seeming playful touches, and choking in the vain attempt to

swallow his own blushes. Mr. Dawson however did not seem to observe the looks of his auditors, but proceeded with his fable.

“Down by a river’s side, a careful goose had made her nest among the sedges and ferns, and there, one sunny day in spring, she left her helpless family in their bright yellow livery, and went away in search of food. On her return she found a stranger nestled among her little ones, which were all stretching out their long necks towards him, and joining their shrill voices in a concert of sounds that nothing not belonging to the goose family ever conjured up. As soon as the mother goose had an opportunity for making observations, she found this stranger had wings and a head and feet not altogether unlike her own offspring, and was clothed in a natural coat of feathers, which proved him beyond the shadow of a doubt, to belong to the extensive race of birds. To be sure his feathers were of an ugly gray, his beak was hooked suspiciously, instead of extending forward flat and honest, like the bills of her own little ones, and his toes were divided and furnished with long claws, instead of being connected by that

beautiful, fan-like web, which would enable him to paddle across the water, like a living fairy-boat. Mrs. Goose did not at all like her visitor, and she at once extended her curved neck in a very snake-like manner, and hissed altogether too powerfully for a snake, but just as she was on the point of proceeding to extremities, she discovered that the poor stranger, which was yet a nestling, had met with some misfortune by which he had been badly bruised, and in consequence was utterly unable to move. Now the goose, notwithstanding her noisy, bustling way, is really a benevolent bird, and so she took the stranger under her own wing, and fed him with her own food, and made him so comfortable that he felt quite at home in the family.

“The gray eaglet, when the eyry was broken up in which he had been lodged, was too young to remember anything about it, and not being at all aware that his destination was the sky, he wandered around among the green sedges, and through the tall meadow grass, with his companions, trying his wing only when he came to the clear stream on which they floated, and then he would hover about

them, until they stepped upon the sand, and were ready for another excursion. True, when the fern was unusually tangled, and his pathway became laborious, he would show the admiring and curious goslings how much more easily he could accomplish a short journey than they, but otherwise he seemed to be perfectly contented by equaling them. The young eagle did not know what it was to fly away in the pure, blue sky, as free as the cloud that floated above his head, and there was nothing to induce him to make the attempt, so in time his nature became tame, and he loved to crouch in the barn-yard, and listen to the clamors of silly geese, and, although conscious of being less earthly than they, he had too long been accustomed to groveling things, to feel that his natural superiority only rendered his position the more degrading. One day, after the eagle had attained his growth, and become very goose-like in his nature, as he was digging in the mud for worms, he was startled by the whiz of a wing above his head, and, on looking up, he discovered a bird above him, so like himself, that he was obliged to look back upon the ground to

become assured, that it was not the reflection of his own form, as he had often seen it on the water. Again he looked at the bird, which wheeled and circled above him for a moment, and then, as if disdainful of such a near approach to earth, spread out his wings and mounted upward—up, up, clear away—plunging into the liquid ether, until he became a mere speck upon the blazing sun. Again he came a little nearer earth, waved his wing in wild triumph, and went careering through the air, now lost behind a dark cloud that was just hovering on the verge of the horizon, and now far away in an opposite direction, basking in the burning sun-beam, and seemingly tossing the drifted clouds like snow-wreaths on his wings. The eye of the poor eagle kindled at the sight, and he felt every feather bristle, and every muscle stretch itself to its utmost tension, as he watched the gyrations of the noble bird, and when at last he saw him hovering over a wild, craggy height, and then plunging into its bosom, as though its darkest recesses were all familiar, he started, like a man awakened from a long, night-mare dream. With a scream of joy he expanded

his wings and rose upward for a little, but as a puff of wind came past him, he veered from his course, and was nigh losing his self-command; making a strong effort, however, he preserved his balance, fluttered his wings again, struggled with another current of air, then sank back to earth exhausted, and hid his head under his useless wing. Poor bird! he had been content to fold his pinion, because his associates did not fly, and now it was too weak to bear him up, and though his eagle nature was so awakened that he loathed the earth, and longed to track out his way among the clouds, he knew that he was doomed to crawl about like a creeping reptile."

"I should think that he might have learned to fly yet," interrupted one of the listeners.

"Perhaps he might," said Mr. Dawson; "being a *young* bird, very likely he might."

"But an eagle *couldn't* be so kept down," said another; "you could'nt tame an eagle and make such a goose of him."

"Is man then inferior to a bird?" said Mr. Dawson, with one of his peculiar smiles, "that his high spirit can be kept down, his aspira-

tions tamed, his whole nature degraded, and he made the slave of circumstances?"

The boys too, smiled, and glances of intelligence were exchanged among them, but as Mr. Dawson said no more, they dropped away to their seats, one by one, and soon the ringing of the bell announced the arrival of the school-hour.

CHAPTER III.

THE EAGLE AROUSED.

BEFORE the bell had ceased ringing, Allen Lucas was at his usual seat in the corner, but his books were untouched, and he sat, tracing one after another parallel lines on his slate, as though his life had depended on bringing the art to perfection. Slowly the lines were drawn, and if they curved or crooked in the least degree, as slowly obliterated, while one class, and then another, and another went through with their usual exercises, and sat down to their respective duties. The hour for the afternoon recess came, and still Allen Lucas was working away as industriously as ever. The noise made by his companions as they went out partially aroused him, and he allowed the pencil to slide from his fingers, and then his head drooped, and he sat in a posture of deep musing until they returned.

“You are getting quite too goose-like,” whispered a lively little fellow, making a very unsuccessful effort to stumble over his feet, which were by no means in the way. Allen’s face colored, but no smile came to answer the quizzical grin of the boy, and he again had recourse to the slate. The next moment Mr. Dawson passed.

“I have no lesson, sir,” said Allen, without waiting to be questioned, and as if determined to cut short the business of conversation as much as possible. Mr. Dawson smiled, and leaning over the desk so as not to be heard, remarked cheerfully, “*You* at least are not too old to learn to fly.” Again the red blood mounted to Allen’s temples, and he leaned his head forward until it rested on the desk, while his thoughts came tumbling on, one after another, disconnected, and almost unintelligible even to himself. “I *could* learn, yes I know I could—a school-master—no, I hate school-masters—doctor—pah! Lawyers are all alike—all a pack of rascals, so I’ve heard uncle Pete say—no, no I wouldn’t be a lawyer, and as for standing behind a counter all day as poor Jack Dean has to, and grow pale

and hump-backed—dear me ! I should tear those flimsy things all to pieces. Then what's the use?—farmers don't want learning. A farm like 'Squire Smith's, level as the floor, and not a stone nor a bush—but 'Squire Smith isn't anybody—great, cross—John 'll get the farm, but I wouldn't be John Smith, that I wouldn't—just like one of our oxen. I'll go out west, I'll clear the land—I'll—I'll—yes, just like the oxen ; trudge, trudge, all day long, thinking of nothing but work, work—then supper and bed—provender and stable—eat, drink and sleep, that's all—I don't care about being an ox. But what's the use of learning? I wonder what wise people *think* about—I *can* learn, and if I can I ought to, may be—at any rate Mr. Dawson thinks so, but I don't care for that. I *can*—yes, I *can*, and why should'nt I? I can beat all the boys at ball, and I should be a fool to throw like a girl—yes, I'll show them what I can do, I'll go at it like Robert May—to think of Bob May's beating me, and he never skated a rod in his life ! I'll show them !” and Allen threw back his head, and his eye sparkled, and his cheek glowed with a new and strange

excitement, but how long he might have gloried in his untried powers can never be known, for just then a reading-class was called, and he was obliged to join in the exercise. Never did Allen Lucas make such blunders in reading before, never did the boys laugh so heartily at mistakes, for they sounded doubly grotesque from such a source, and never were Mr. Dawson's black eyes so very brightly black, and the curl at the corners of his mouth such a very decided curl; but above all, never, not even when telling his best stories, was his voice more entirely free from the severity of the school-master than on this occasion. That day the reading lesson was somehow very short, and the class dismissed much sooner than usual, and it so happened that Allen Lucas had all the afternoon to make marks on his slate if he had chosen that very simple mode of spending time. But he did not choose it, neither did he sit down to ruminate to little or no purpose, but, picking up his arithmetic, he turned to the very dry, comprehensive, and I shall have all school-boys on my side of the question when I say incomprehensible *rule*, heading the examples

for practice in reduction, and endeavored to fix his attention upon it. Now everybody acquainted with the book in question, the only system of arithmetic used in common schools some dozen or twenty years ago, knows that these rules, so far from explaining the principles of the science, seem placed there for the express purpose of being explained by them, and after the young student had managed by his teacher's aid, to get through with the examples for practice, if he could discover any connection between these and the rule, or could discover that the latter had the least bearing on the former, the credit was undoubtedly to be given to his organ of association. As for Allen Lucas, he had never got so far as that, though he had probably rattled off the words of the rule as fast as his very brisk tongue could move, more than a hundred times. But why reduction ascending and reduction descending required different processes, was a question he would have considered utterly preposterous, for, had'nt he tried the sums? and did'nt division bring the answer when multiplication wouldn't? To be sure, his father, who had never studied arithmetic, and knew nothing

of figures but what he had picked up in the transaction of his very circumscribed business, often puzzled him with hard questions, but he considered that there was a difference between book-knowledge, and the knowledge gained by trading off beef and corn, and concluded that notwithstanding these puzzlers, he must know a great deal more than his father. As for the rules before-mentioned, his teachers had always told him they were of no particular practical importance, which he interpreted, of no use except to show how far he had studied, and he was sure that as soon as he "could do all the sums," even if he was obliged to look into his older brother's copy-book for assistance, he should be a perfect arithmetician.

Mr. Dawson felt the disadvantage at which he labored for the want of simpler text-books, but he had long ago learned how "to make do," and he succeeded in making these do more than some men have been able to accomplish with the help of our very excellent improvements. Discovering it to be impossible, in the state in which he found his school, to form a class of arithmeticians, and give his

explanations verbally, he devoted his evenings to committing them to paper, and each pupil was furnished with a copy at the time of entering upon a new rule. This simple plan saved much time, which must otherwise have been devoted to repetitions as innumerable as tiresome; but it was not allowed to take the place of those verbal instructions, which add weight to the best written rules. Allen Lucas, whose partiality for reduction seemed to be directly in the way of his advancement, had one of these copies in his pocket, but, though it was written in a round, fair hand, that nobody but a school-master could write, he had failed to decipher it, and had expended on excuse-making twice the amount of ingenuity and labor, that, otherwise directed, would have sufficed to make him acquainted with a whole system of arithmetic. In truth, Allen had somehow gained an unaccountable dislike for this little scrap of paper, and so he sat puzzling his brain over the words that were intended more as a definition than explanation, until his brain fairly ached with the unusual effort. When at last night came and school was dismissed,

Allen Lucas was among the first to find his way to the door, for he dreaded meeting Mr. Dawson, a fear, by the way, utterly groundless, as he was never officious, and had as much consideration for the feelings of a boy as those of a man. He could not, however, withhold an encouraging smile, as Allen's eye for a moment met his when he was passing out the door, and there was something so full of confidence and hope in the smile, and earnest, unselfish interest in the whole expression of his face, that Allen's fingers involuntarily crept towards the pocket that contained the neglected paper.

That evening, when Mr. Lucas' family had all gathered around the blazing fire, Mr. Dawson's explanation was introduced by Allen, as if accidentally, and duly canvassed. Allen read and re-read it, and John and William and Mary all talked it over and found it so simple and yet so important, so "just the thing," as they said, that they wondered they had never thought of these things of their own accord. At last the old farmer joined the group, who, slate and pencil in hand, were rejoicing in their newly acquired

knowledge, and declaring that now they could "see some sense in it." The old man stood for a few minutes, looking over their shoulders, then taking the paper containing Mr. Dawson's explanations between his thumb and finger, he adjusted his spectacles with the other hand, and peered at it very intently, his lips moving slowly all the while, as if he were weighing the quantity of the words, as well as scanning their meaning. At last he seemed satisfied, for laying down the paper, he resumed his seat, took a heavy draught of cider, lighted his pipe, shook his head two or three times, as if to assure himself of its safety, and was ever after heard to declare that Mr. Dawson was "a wonderful man—very wonderful, smart enough to make an arithmetic." "I should think," said John Lucas, as he hung his slate against the wall, "that Mr. Dawson was a good teacher."

"Yes, he must be," said William.

"A very good teacher," chimed in Sophia, a married daughter of Mr. Lucas, who was home on a visit, and had been entertaining her parents all day with the atrocities of the school-master at "White's Mills."

“Ay, ay!” said the father, “a wonderful man—very wonderful man—could make a ’rithmetic—I know he could.” Allen said nothing, and the two little boys had gone to bed, so their testimony was lost, and Mary seemed not to hear the remarks, for it is never pleasant to be in the minority, and she felt that the array against her, backed by the wonderful paper, was rather too powerful to be fairly opposed by her single opinion.

“Don’t you think he is almost as good as Mr. Thorn, Allen?” inquired George.

“Yes; ten times better.”

“Why!” and “what!” and “dear me Allen!” and “the boy is crazy!” were among the exclamations that followed this very decided opinion, for Mr. Thorn had been considered the teacher par excellence at the Corners, and others were called good or bad, as they were like or unlike him.

“Yes,” repeated Allen in a low, thoughtful tone, as if replying to some opposing feeling within, rather than these exclamations, “yes, I am sure he’s a good teacher, and a good man.”

“He may be good enough,” said Mary, nodding her head and shrugging her shoulders, “but one thing I know, I haven’t learned anything this winter.”

“Not to-night?”

“O that is nothing, just what is on that little bit of paper; Mr. Thorn could have told it all in three minutes.”

“But Mr. Thorn never did tell it, Mary.”

“Well, he knew it, I know he did—at any rate he was a good teacher, everybody liked him.”

“I suppose he was, but then you know what made us like him so much better than we do Mr. Dawson. Mr. Thorn didn’t like the trouble of looking into things, and he made the best of everything we did. You know what uncle Pete said about his winking faculty—he winked at pretty hard doings sometimes; he always praised us too, whether we deserved it or not, but Mr. Dawson don’t make his praises so cheap.”

“No, he never praises those that deserve it, but the real blunderheads, he coaxes up to think they know everything. Yesterday I

never missed a word all day, and he looked as cross at me—”

“Mr. Dawson never looks cross, Mary.”

“Well, he didn’t look very good-natured, I can tell you. But when Julia May—everybody knows Julia’s a poor scholar—when she got up next me, he seemed as glad as though something wonderful had happened, and praised her to the sky.”

“And for a very good reason; he knew Julia studied and you did’nt.”

“All the better, I should think, to know how to spell every word without studying.”

“All the easier for you, of course, but I don’t see as you deserve any praise for it. I believe Mr. Dawson is half right in his notions about that, and I mean to study one week as hard as John Smith, just to see what I can do.”

“John Smith has to study hard, or he would’nt learn anything.”

“I know that, but it will be just as easy for me to study as for him, and if I learn more I shall get better paid for it.”

CHAPTER IV.

BEGINNING ANEW.

ALLEN Lucas had not been accustomed to making resolutions and breaking them, until like many young persons, he considered it the merest trifle, so he did not fail to put in execution his hastily formed purpose. If we should set about examining Allen's motive in forming this purpose, we might find it difficult to fix upon one of sufficient importance, but we must remember that "trifles light as air" decide the destinies of millions. It was not the love of knowledge, nor the desire to be useful, nor was it altogether the wish to excel, that influenced him. He had always suspected that he was quite as well endowed by nature as other boys, but now the consciousness of possessing faculties that had never been but slightly exercised, came over him like a gleam of sunlight, and the mere desire to employ those faculties, the

love of action, which had hitherto exhausted itself in a display of physical strength, induced him to make a mental effort. As he expressed it to Mary, he studied "just to see what he could do." The bird finds pleasure in the mere act of flying, independent of any advantage to be gained by it, the boy in the thousand feats of agility that he performs even when alone, the man delights to curb the steed, and when not withheld by a monitor within to brandish the steel, and the student exults in the free use of his noble faculties, even when the end to be attained is not in view. The love of using our powers is almost inseparable from the possession of them, and this is a kind provision, making every effort its own immediate reward, and reserving the greater reward for moments of calm thought, when we are more capable of appreciating it.

Allen Lucas turned the leaves of his arithmetic over, again and again, and fluttered them between his fingers, and made a great many more parallel lines on his slate, before he could conclude to go back and commence with Simple Addition, and then he sat a long

time over the rule, which he could repeat word for word, dreading to ask Mr. Dawson for his explanation. Finally he read it over, slowly and carefully, pausing between the words to weigh well their meaning, and as he proceeded, a smile stole to his lip, and a look of intelligence shone from his eye, for he saw nothing there beyond his own comprehension. All this time Mr. Dawson had been watching his motions, but he would not appear to do so, for he knew that there was no surer way of effacing a good impression, than by showing an officious triumph, or even in some cases, gratification. Very humble indeed must be the man, who can bear being told, particularly when the mind is in a course of revolution, "I have succeeded in doing you the good I intended—to me you are indebted for these thoughts and feelings." The boy is a man in miniature, with as much pride, as much sensitiveness, as much jealousy, and less judgment to balance these qualities, and therefore, is there the more danger in endeavoring to play upon the delicate chords of his mind, lest, by touching a wrong one, the whole should be deranged.

Some teachers, thinking self-love a reprehensible quality, never hesitate to mortify it; but this is not a quality that can be crushed by being trampled upon; it grows the ranker beneath the foot that would break it down, and loses its poison only when hedged in by virtuous feelings and principles. I would not pretend to vindicate all the petty feelings that find a resting place in the bosom of childhood, but he who does not respect them, despite their whimsicalities, and sympathize with them, even in their foolishness, never can gain the key to their hearts, to do them good. Even a child's nature is a deep, deep study, and he, who but partially understands it, is liable to neglect the good, and to make sad blunders in curing the evil. A bad habit is not broken up by one lecture, or one whipping, or one hour of calm reasoning and kind exhortation. A diseased moral nature can not be cured by outward means, without corresponding action within. A fault is cured, plucked up by the roots, when the child's own hand undertakes its extermination, but the teacher, unassisted, only lops away the green, leaving it to spring up at some future

day, stronger than ever. The best lesson a child can learn, is to examine his own heart, and rely upon his own power of self-control, assisted only by Him who furnishes that power. He who would prop up a character by other means than its own internal strength, only weakens it, and sad are the consequences, when these props are taken away. I would not dwell so long on this point, but for the fatal mistake committed, both by parents and teachers. Because children are capricious, impulsive, always arriving at wrong conclusions, and at the mercy of every one who chooses to play upon their tender feelings, they are often supposed to be utterly incapable of self-government, and are forbidden to do one thing, and commanded to do another, because their elders know what will injure or benefit them, better than they do themselves. The child is set down to the study of dead languages, and is expected to comprehend, or at least to *remember* difficult sciences at a very early age, but when capable of this, moral teaching is made mere baby-talk, and no wonder that he turns disgusted from these lessons, loses his regard for truth

and virtue, and is restrained only by the strong arm. It is the duty of parents and teachers, to make children know and feel their faults, to watch carefully, and discover if reformation is attempted, to encourage and sustain by delicate and cautious means, to show the beauty of moral greatness in its true light, and to point out the effects of the most trivial incident upon the character, but the child must be made to feel that the mighty work is his own, and fully worthy of his greatest exertions.

Mr. Dawson had studied the construction of the human mind attentively, and he had not one set of rules for the man and another for the boy, for he knew that the same springs of action are in both. Yet he was far from bringing all down to the same standard, as if every mind was cast in the same mould, and differences were faults. When Allen Lucas asked hesitatingly, and with evident trepidation, if he might be allowed to review his studies before proceeding any farther, Mr. Dawson did not inquire why, nor raise objections "for the sake of trying him," nor congratulate him upon dis-

covering his deficiencies, he merely gave his assent kindly, made a few remarks upon the necessity of being well grounded in the fundamental principles of a science, offered his assistance whether in school or out, in explaining difficulties, and passed on. Yet Allen felt that his new resolutions were understood and all his efforts appreciated, and from that moment there was the most perfect confidence established between the teacher and his pupil. But this could not have been, if Mr. Dawson had injudiciously interfered, for Allen knew that the struggle had been in his own bosom, the effort and triumph his own, and however much credit he was afterward inclined to give his teacher, the least appearance of claiming it at this time would have alarmed his jealous self-love, and very likely induced him to show that he was not so tame and easily influenced as might be supposed. That day Allen went through with his recitations admirably, surprising even himself by the wonders he performed: he asked questions and expressed opinions, not always correct, but yet worthy of correction, and exhibited so much real interest in the subjects discus-

sed, that Liph Green, the lively little fellow before mentioned, very demurely gave him to John Smith as an example of a passive verb changed into an active one.

The week of trial passed away, and several others followed it, and Allen Lucas began to discover that though learning was a very pleasant thing, nothing worth the possession could be gained without severe labor; that none who would obtain the real ore is exempt from the drudgery of digging for it, and sometimes he would grow tired, and feel a strong temptation to relapse into his former idleness. Mr. Dawson knew that such moments would come, and he watched carefully for them, but not believing in the modern mode of turning study into a mere amusement, he did not always present something new, thus humoring the intellectual nature, as some parents do the caprices of a petted child. Sometimes he saw that a change of employment was necessary, to prevent actual disgust, but he always took every occasion to deprecate this mode of treatment in general, and Allen soon learned the danger of yielding to feelings of weariness, as well as

to other difficulties. As he proceeded rapidly and surely in his studies, it was plain to Mr. Dawson, and others who took the trouble to observe, that his whole character was undergoing a change, his perceptions were clearer, his notions more correct, and his principles firmer. Yet this natural result of the discipline to which he subjected himself, (it was not the mere love of action that led him to study now,) was only commenced, and Mr. Dawson often labored to show him, that this winter did not close his efforts, and that nothing less than a steady advance through life, ought to satisfy an immortal nature.

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT MAY, AND OTHERS OF MR. DAWSON'S PUPILS.

AMONG the boys who attended school at the Corners, was a black-eyed, pale-faced stripling of about the age of Allen Lucas, but much smaller, and yet, from a certain sedate, thoughtful expression of countenance, apparently much older. Robert May was the only son of a farmer in rather humbler circumstances than Mr. Lucas, but he was very far from being the only child; a fact well known to all the gallant beaux and envious belles in the neighborhood. His six sisters were all round, rosy-cheeked damsels, full of fun and frolic, and not particularly noted for talent, or in any way ambitious of deserving such notoriety. They were vain of their personal appearance, and the ready ingenuity, the talent for invention, the activity and resoluteness which characterized them, was dis-

sipated on vulgar or trivial pursuits. They had early imbibed a fondness for display, and they exhibited it in decorating the house, in their dress, and in all their actions, but it was a petty kind of vanity, and seldom spoiled the smile on their lips, or the good feeling in their hearts. To be sure, they pouted to display their red, ripe lips, and frowned just a little, to intimate how their eyes might sparkle, if they should happen to get angry; but the cloud never lasted above five minutes, and they were really generous and obliging. As for taste and good sense, people did not look for them in the May's, but they expected gaiety and mirth, and were not disappointed. Robert had three sisters older than himself to pet him, and his parents, like parents in general, who have but one son, set them the example, meanwhile wondering why the little fellow should be so pale and puny. The sisters cared little for wintry winds or deep snows on their own account, but Robert was carefully guarded against them, until he became old enough to be ashamed of his girlishness, and throw aside the cloak and muffler; but even then he preserved a settled disrelish

for active sports. Perhaps it was this peculiarity, combined with a desire to distinguish himself in some way among his companions, that led him to set a higher value on mental attainments, for he had always disputed with Mary Lucas the title of "best scholar." Robert May was considered a prodigy of learning by his parents and sisters, and they had talked so much to him about being "a great man," that he was early convinced his destiny was a high one. Quiet and studious, none dreamed of the ambitious feelings that lay beneath this modest demeanor, and Mr. Dawson, observing as he was, suspected them least of any, and took a peculiar interest in one who was himself so easily interested. Robert was by far the most promising of Mr. Dawson's pupils; for he not only studied, but seemed to understand and love his studies, and from the books, which his kind teacher lent him for perusal in the evening, he gained enlarged views of life, and much useful information. Yet he never became sufficiently interested to forget himself, and never, in moments of his greatest enthusiasm, did he lose sight of that future elevation towards which

he believed himself surely advancing. It was early decided by Mr. May, that Robert should be a scholar, and so he was allowed every advantage within their limited means and encouraged by praises, and the most flattering pictures of the proud future. Allen Lucas had always been rather fond of quizzing Robert, for what he considered his morishness, and on the other hand, the proud student regarded with something very like contempt the careless idler, who thought more of being able to ride an unbroken colt, than he would of being qualified to sit in the presidential chair. They had never quarrelled, but, the one shy, artful and selfish, the other bold, frank and generous, they were too utterly unlike in character, to be on terms of intimacy. Even after Allen had overcome his indolent habits, there were so many points of difference between them, that, but for Mr. Dawson's interference, they would never have been friends. Mr. Dawson was a great promoter of social happiness, and he always endeavored to make his pupils feel how empty, cold and unsatisfying is that heartless enjoyment, which results from mere selfish

gratification, unattended by kind acts and generous feelings.

Mary Lucas had no right to the name of "best scholar;" indeed, her memory was the only quality that brought her in competition with Robert, but this often gave her a temporary advantage, which was the basis of her reputation in school, and made her appear in his eyes something very like a rival. This winter, however, changed the face of things, Mary took a retrograde motion, and the whilom rivals were the best friends in the world, at least when a third party was absent. Mary was much given to low conversations with the grave student in the corner opposite Allen's, but she sometimes turned off very suddenly at the sound of a certain merry voice, for Liph Green (who would think of calling such a complete embodiment of mischief, Eliphalet?) had got a new handled, and a "brand-new" penknife, that would cut up a quill admirably, and above all, could write just the most comical three-cornered notes, that no one but herself had the ingenuity to open. Liph Green was never idle, every moment was employed, for if nothing

better offered, he could make pewter six-pences, and wooden jack-knives, but his lesson was usually the farthest of anything from his thoughts. No one bent over his book more assiduously, and no one's lips moved faster, but there were no words upon them, and the roguish little eye, over which the lid drooped so demurely, instead of resting on the book, stole just a hair's breadth below it, and watched the motions of the truant fingers. The employment of those fingers depended upon the materials with which their owner supplied himself in the morning, and never was a pocket so loaded down with inventions of every kind as his. For Liph, Robert had the greatest dislike, even hatred; for he was, like all shy persons, peculiarly susceptible to ridicule, and the irresistible drollery of the young jester's manner, and the good humor that was always evident, even in his practical jokes, could not atone for the impudence of making our student the subject of them.

Such were some of the young minds over which Mr. Dawson exercised control, and whose whole after course might depend upon his slightest word or action. To say that

Mr. Dawson was fully conscious of his responsibilities, with our knowledge of his character, tells at once a tale of ceaseless and untiring effort; and to say that he was amply rewarded by success, proves the accomplishment of a vast amount of good. Yet he could not lay the spirit of mirth that was bounding in every pulse of Liph Green; he could not create in Mary Lucas a love for the labor of thinking; he could not prevent Julia May's eyes wandering from her book to the showy ribbon about her neck; and he could not add life to the snail-like patience of John Smith, who would sit his six long hours over a lesson in geography, and then remember but a single fact. There were Lizzy Parker, as sweet a creature as ever breathed, and very teachable withal; and Fanny Blair, a notable devourer of books; and Richard Lucas, who, although it was his first winter at school, evinced surprising quickness; and the amiable Joseph Warren, so strictly conscientious, and loving his books, because Mr. Dawson said he ought to love them, and these relieved the shadow that his want of success in other cases, sometimes

cast upon his spirits. Yet of all his pupils, there was not one in whom he had such perfect confidence, as Robert May. Perhaps he loved Allen Lucas better, for there was a tie between them, that no one who has never given its first impulse to an immortal nature, and no one who has not been thus acted upon, can comprehend; yet he trembled for him, and dreaded to go away, lest with him should depart his influence also. But he had no need to fear: Allen had tried his powers, and he never could grow weary of exercising them; he had taken one draught of the waters of knowledge, and it had created a life-long thirst; he had given a little glance to the field spread out before him, and his heart swelled, and his hand even now longed, to busy itself in *doing*.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. DAWSON'S LAST STORY.

THE winter passed rapidly, and the day before the school closed, Mr. Dawson sat down to his desk to tell his last story; for the next day's leisure was to be devoted to advice and leave-taking. Allen Lucas, with the hair flung back from his full, high forehead, his mild, but unshrinking eye fixed upon the speaker, and his lips parted in the attitude of a listener, was the most striking figure of the group; but next him, a stranger would have turned to Liph Green, perched high upon a writing desk, the very position of his foot and curve of his fingers, to say nothing of the rogue, twinkling in the corner of either bright eye, and lurking in every dimple of his face, indicating the spirit within, and contrasting somewhat oddly with the stolid figure of John Smith below. Then there was Julia May, playing with the soft, flaxen ringlets of

Lizzy Parker, and Joseph Warren, setting a fine example of attention to the younger boys, who loved him for his kindness and generosity, and little Abby Stillman, sitting at Lizzy's feet, and looking up at her, instead of Mr. Dawson, and still beyond and around, rows of faces of more or less intelligence and beauty. But there was one, with little about him to attract attention, who did not lose one word of the interesting story. A little aside from the others, with his elbow resting upon the desk, making the stoop in his shoulders very conspicuous, and his small, black eye sometimes raised to Mr. Dawson's face, and sometimes falling, as if from sheer habit, upon a large volume which lay open before him, sat Robert May, his face growing every moment more thoughtful, and the pale red spot in the centre of his cheek deepening, but with nothing else to betray the ambitious hopes that were swelling in his bosom. Mr. Dawson observed these tokens of interest, but he mistook their source, or he would not have added fuel to the flame that already burned but too high.

“Of my first teacher,” said he, “I have no recollection, except that he used to pat me affectionately on the head, when I had been good, but some of my school-mates I can remember distinctly. Among these, William Edwards was my favorite, because he was almost as big as a man, and always took good care that none of the little boys should be hurt. He did not belong to the district, but had come a weary way for the privilege of attending a good school, and he found one of a first-rate order. It was on one of the stormiest days in January, that a lad, about sixteen years of age, called at the house of a farmer in the neighborhood, and first making particular inquiries respecting the school, the qualifications of the teacher, &c., asked to be directed to a family where he might work for his board. The stranger could not boast a robust frame, but he spoke very confidently of his strength, and so Mr. Gilbert, the old farmer, concluded to give him a trial. I have some slight recollection of William Edwards’ first entrance into school, and can distinctly remember his calm, manly bearing, when some thoughtless boys ridiculed his patched

and thread-bare coat. Indeed, I am sorry to say that he met with more ridicule at first, than kind consideration for his circumstances. He heeded it but little, however, and pursued his studies night and day, with an assiduity which would have worn out any one, not finding variety in active employment. The fresh morning air cooled the fever of night study, and the care that he was required to bestow upon the sheep and cattle, relieved his mind, and exercised his limbs. He never spoke of his friends, and when a little boy once asked where his mother lived, he pointed one hand upward, and with the other, dashed off the tear that sprang to his eye. Questions about his father, he seemed loth to answer, but the flush on his cheek, and the drooping of the eye-lid, as if in shame, when Mr. Gilbert produced the cider mug, and urged him to drink, sufficiently betrayed his secret. He said that he had no home, but when Mr. Gilbert offered him a place at his table and fireside, he gently refused; and when urged, he proudly answered that he was no beggar, he would work for his bread where he could do so, in pursuance of the

plan of life he had marked out for himself, but he would accept of nothing that his own hands had not earned. William Edwards could not have found an individual better calculated to further his plans than our teacher, who lent him books, and devoted much of his leisure time to him, and finally recommended him to an academy, where he might soon be prepared for entering college. Here he remained about a year, working his way day by day, and then he slung his little bundle over his shoulders, and again went out upon the world a stranger. For years he struggled hard with fortune, now within the college walls, engaged for a term or two in severe study, and now teaching in some retired place, where his services were far from being appreciated, and bending over his books at midnight, striving to keep up with his class. But his health at last failed, and for many months he was confined to a darkened room, and denied the use of books, and the society of friends. Then when he slowly recovered, came a heavy bill, for the homeless can not be attended in sickness without money; and so he taught, and studied, and

struggled on, year after year, and finally the goal was reached: he graduated, crowned with honors. During all this time, William Edwards had not been alone; he had found a friend in every acquaintance, and many, among whom were the officers of the institution of which he was a member, regarded his career admiringly. It was by this means that he easily obtained a situation in a boys' seminary, but upon the first vacancy, he gained the office of tutor in the college where he was educated, and was afterwards endowed with a professorship. Since then, his love of active pursuits has induced him to engage in public affairs, and," added Mr. Dawson, a smile lighting up his whole face, "there are now but few men in our country, that can boast a higher station or prouder honors, than he whose real name in my little sketch I have thought proper to conceal under that of William Edwards."

"He must have had an unusual share of perseverance," said Allen Lucas, drawing in his breath, as if fatigued by the mere act of listening, "I can't see how a man could keep up his courage so long."

“Perseverance will accomplish wonders,” said Mr. Dawson; “William Edwards arose by a constant succession of efforts, some of them no greater than several of you have made this winter; decision is necessary in such cases, for you will always find that it requires a much greater effort to decide on the performance of a difficult duty, than really to perform it; I don’t mean by this, that it is more common to persevere than resolve, for facts show directly the reverse, but mountains diminish to mole-hills before us, when, spade in hand, we stand up determined to level them.”

“Then Robert May will have a pretty easy job of it,” whispered Liph Green, loud enough to be heard perfectly well by everybody present, and yet with his forefinger pressed mysteriously to his lips; “he decided on being governor long ago.”

Robert May bit his lips, and turned his back upon the group, muttering as he took up one book after another, and examined the title-pages, “he *may* be more than any of you dream.” Liph Green, with all his lightness and folly, seemed to be endowed with the

gift of second sight, as far as character was concerned, and it was the consciousness of being too well known, that made Robert so exceedingly uncomfortable in his presence, and added bitterness to his hatred.

“And what is your decision?” inquired Mr. Dawson, laughingly.

“Mine! O I hate ‘great efforts,’ and always look out for the easiest part; so I do difficult things without deciding.”

“I am afraid it is the only way you will ever do anything,” Mr. Dawson thought, but he did not say so, and merely answered, “Frankly acknowledged, my boy, but this looking out for the easiest part, never makes sterling men.”

“I don’t see,” said Allen Lucas, “how we boys can decide on what we will be, till we find out for what we are fit.”

“You can not,” replied Mr. Dawson; “you can decide now upon fitting yourselves for taking a part in the world, and for this every faculty of body, mind and heart requires the highest cultivation; you can decide that your lives shall be virtuous, that you will always support good principles, and make yourselves

useful to your fellow-men; then in a few years you will decide upon a vocation; but not until you are old enough to discover what is best adapted to your characters, tastes and circumstances. Nothing so injures a man's stability and firmness of character, as deciding this matter when too young, and making a mistake."

"Well, I shall be a farmer," said a hale, stout, square-shouldered fellow, who looked as though the flail and sythe would be mere toys in his hands.

"I think—I should like—to be a—a school-master," remarked Joseph Warren, with much timidity, and casting a furtive glance at Mr. Dawson, as if to discover whether such a predilection was considered too great presumption.

"I mean to be a circus-rider," said Liph Green, springing from the desk like a monkey, and vaulting on the one opposite.

"Liph!" "Why Liph Green!" were the simultaneous exclamations.

"Circus-riders are very bad men," remarked Mr. Dawson, seriously.

"No, a sailor—I would rather be a sailor,

after all—now see me climb the shrouds,” and much more to hide his confusion than display his activity, he caught hold of the bell-rope, and disappeared in the loft.

“Poor boy!” sighed Mr. Dawson involuntarily.

“He don’t mean it, sir,” said Allen Lucas, in a low tone; “it is all fun, and he is one of the best hearted boys in the world. He’ll be steadier when he gets older.”

Mr. Dawson looked up with a pleased smile, but he was more encouraged for the pleader, than him for whom he plead; for Allen observed that the next moment he shook his head sorrowfully. Our young student had looked sufficiently into the future, to understand the source of this sorrow; and from that time forth, as if to repay the kindness that the school-master had shown to him, he exercised the care of an elder brother over his wild and reckless friend.

The last day of school is usually made up of smiles and tears. Even those who have anticipated it with the greatest pleasure, are the first to weep at the reality; for then comes a full realization of past enjoyments—

all past—little associations broken up—the connecting links between young hearts marred, if not dissevered. The school-boy does not say all this, but he feels it, and hence his sadness; yet he knows little of disappointment, he thinks upon the change, and hence the counteracting joy. He would not tell you so, but he feels that the brotherly tie, between him and his school-mates, is a brotherly one no longer, and during the summer, when they meet in the field, or by the road-side, there will be an awkward shyness between them, for the summer school, being for the little ones, does not gather them all into one family again. But sadder than usual, and much more quiet, was the last day of the school at the Corners this winter. Mr. Dawson was loved and respected by his pupils; he was not above the weakness of feeling himself, and feeling is very infectious. Some of the older boys, who thought it beneath their dignity to show anything like softness of heart, put a bold face upon the matter, and although almost choked with the effort of keeping down a something, that felt very much like a nutmeg grater in the throat, they

did keep it down, until Mr. Dawson's voice showed that he too was suffering under the same infliction, and even then they did not wholly yield, till his face was entirely lost in the folds of his pocket-handkerchief. Then there was such a time! Oh, you never saw the like! and poor Lizzy Parker—how she sobbed, until it seemed as though her little heart would break, and how Allen Lucas, with a self-control quite new to him, comforted her, telling her that Mr. Dawson had promised to write him letters, and she should see every one of them. And then how gentle and sorrowful Mr. Dawson's face looked, when the handkerchief was taken away; how soft and low was his voice, and how affectionate the very touch of his hand, as he bade them all good-bye. Then each, without a whisper, passed slowly out the door, and the faithful teacher was left alone, to review the past, and to feel that the book was sealed, that not one line could be dashed out or added to its pages. Thrilling thought to him, who is acquitted by conscience, but to the self-condemned how awful!

CHAPTER VII.

SUMMER STUDY, AND THE NEXT WINTER SCHOOL.

THE spring is a busy time with farmers, and Allen Lucas found but little leisure to devote to his books, after leaving school. He arose early in the morning, as he had always been taught, but the whole family were up as early, and this was no time for study. As soon as breakfast was dispatched, each repaired to his station in the field, from whence he was called only by the dinner horn, and then he again returned, and continued his labor till sunset. Guiding the plough, or laying fence all the day long, meanwhile breathing the cool, pure air of spring, is doubtless healthful employment, but one who has been thus employed, until every limb and muscle feels the consequent fatigue, is ill fitted for mental labor; and it must be a high purpose that will prevent his seeking that rest, which to the laboring man is so sweet.

When Allen sat down in the house at night, he felt a drowsiness creeping over him, and then it required his strongest effort to turn to his school-books. Every Saturday night he trudged off to the village, to look for letters from Mr. Dawson, and it was a proud moment to the whole family when one of these arrived. After the first letter, came a pamphlet, treating of different soils, and a variety of other things connected with farming, and this aroused Allen's interest, which had begun to flag, giving new employment to his evenings, and supplying him with subjects of thought during the day. He compared his own observations with what he read, and talked over these subjects with his father and brothers, and often asked the old men of the neighborhood questions, gathering from their conversation much practical knowledge. Next, Mr. Dawson sent a small treatise on geology; it contained only the first rudiments of the science, but it was very useful to Allen, for he carried out the subject beyond the information given in the book, raising the cover of the green sod upon the hill-side, and reading the lesson as God

stamped it there. That summer, Allen felt that a new world was around, and a new sky above him; his soul was animated by new emotions, his mind was unshackled, and his eye unsealed. He discovered that earth is one vast book, and every page of it presents a lesson rich in its simplicity, yet reading on, on, to infinity; its simplest thesis limitless and incomprehensible. Allen had been awakened to the study of this vast book by looking into those made by men; and he knew that he needed all the aid which they could give in comprehending it, yet he loved to study this the best.

When the next winter came, Allen was better prepared to appreciate the blessings which it brought, and he entered upon his studies with a high relish. Mr. Dawson's successor was well versed in all he professed to understand, and fully qualified to teach, not only the branches required in a district school, but many higher ones. With the whole theory of teaching he was familiar, and having an agreeable address, and a polished exterior, he promised to equal, if not excel, his predecessor. In childhood, he had at-

tended a school much like that at the Corners, but afterwards, his parents removing to town, he had received instruction in an academy, designed expressly for boys. Here he had made no mean use of his time and opportunities; and in consequence, had gained an education superior to the generality of young men in his circumstances. Emerging from this school, and without a definite object in view, he had turned to teaching, as the most respectable and lucrative manner of filling up this niche of time, and had found his way to the Corners, where, by underbidding Mr. Dawson, he obtained his situation.

Mr. Leonard did not conceal his object in teaching, and professed to believe no man would pursue such a calling but for money, pronouncing all who professed a higher motive, hypocrites. He was not idle, during the six hours a day which he had engaged to devote to his school, but when they were over, he felt like a freed prisoner, and, turning as soon as possible to other subjects, did not allow the duties of the day to trouble his thoughts till nine, the next morning. The

difference between the two teachers was felt by the whole school: it was evident, even to the dullest, that Mr. Leonard did not care for their actual advancement, that he was more pleased to see the hand of his watch pointing at four, than to hear the best lesson that ever was learned; and soon, the most of the children grew listless and idle. Mr. Leonard was, however, *stricter* in some respects than Mr. Dawson; for it is much less trouble to flog a boy than to reason with him; and the latter mode of treatment is generally of sufficient efficacy to exact obedience. Physical strength should be the last resort in government, for although a very convincing mode of argument to the weak, the truths thus inculcated are strangely evanescent. Mr. Leonard would have been the gainer, as well as his pupils, if he had chosen to exert his moral power instead, but he adopted the course that seemed easiest for himself, and poor Liph Green was not the only sufferer.

Mr. Dawson had always make a wide distinction between errors resulting from accident or carelessness, and those which evinced a lack of principle; but Mr. Leonard had no

severer punishment for a deliberate falsehood, than for an involuntary laugh. Poor Lizzy Parker, whom nobody had ever found guilty of intentional offense, was one day convicted of whispering, and obliged to sit one whole hour on a block of wood, like a criminal in the stocks, because she had ventured to take the head of a little girl, crying from homesickness, upon her lap, and attempt to soothe her. How her face glowed with shame, and drooped upon her bosom, as she found herself subjected to the same punishment, and seated beside a rude, coarse girl, who in a fit of passion, had struck a little sister in the face. Lizzy never broke a rule again; yet her loving heart had received a check that frightened, though it could not chill it. Simple and guileless, she trembled at her own kind feelings, supposing there must be something wrong in exercising them, and yet impelled to do so by their irresistible strength. But the influence, which on the gentle Lizzy was only temporary, was differently felt by others. The older scholars were indignant; for the sweet child, who never thought of herself while anything remained to be done

for others, was under the particular care and protection of each member of the school ; and no one could be injured half so easily in person as through Lizzy Parker. The older scholars lost confidence in Mr. Leonard, and the younger ones confounded the two offenses, and lost the distinction between actual wrong done from a bad motive, and a trivial error, made error by circumstances, and the result of mere thoughtlessness. Yet Mr. Leonard was not a cruel man, he never punished unmercifully, and he would have been shocked at the idea of breaking down the distinction between right and wrong, or between pardonable folly and actual crime.

Liph Green improved but little this winter in knowledge, and still less in moral strength. His volatile spirits continually carried him to extremes, and between rejoicing over a new resolution, and breaking an old one, he received floggings enough to tame any nature that was tameable. Though his feelings, excitable as the mercury of the thermometer, indicated the state of the moral atmosphere about him, yet the wild partridge is not more

free and tameless, than was the boy, who, even while suffering for one of his ridiculous freaks, could not resist the opportunity to perform another. Under Mr. Leonard's instructions, Mary Lucas regained some of her lost reputation, and Robert May made rapid progress, for he needed books more than an instructor, and the opportunity to study more than assistance in his studies. This was very much the case with Allen Lucas, also; yet he often felt the need of that sympathy for the pleasures as well as difficulties of his pursuits, which, as it was no part of his contract, Mr. Leonard did not feel himself bound to accord. Perhaps the self-dependence which Allen was obliged to exercise this winter, strengthened his character; but Robert May did not need it, for he had already too little sympathy with others. Mr. Leonard, however, was a competent teacher, as far as instruction was concerned; and as Allen had imbibed a fondness for mathematical sciences, he made such a beginning as enabled him afterwards to pursue them without assistance.

"How I wish Mr. Dawson was here to tell us a story!" said Liph Green, one day after the morning school had closed.

"Mr. Leonard would tell one, I dare say, if he didn't go home to dinner," replied Mary Lucas.

"It is lucky for us that he does go," answered Liph; "if he was here, we shouldn't have the privilege of speaking a loud word."

"Well, I wish Mr. Dawson was here all the time," said Julia May, pouting her rosy lip, "he always let me make figures on Robert's slate after I'd learned my lesson, and used to tell me sometimes that they were almost as handsome as Robert's."

"And he didn't *call you up*, did he, Julia?" said little Abby Stillman, looking coaxingly into her face, as if to say, "see how sorry I am that Mr. Leonard did."

"No, indeed he didn't call me up, for such a little thing as marking on a slate—Mr. Dawson wouldn't do that."

"He would, if marking on a slate was against the rule," said Mary.

"But he wouldn't make such a silly rule," was the reply.

“For my part I think it is a very good rule,” said Mary, who was freed from the observance of it by studying arithmetic; “I don’t see what all the little girls want of slates.”

“I am almost as old as you are,” said Julia, drawing up her shoulders with a wonderful attempt at dignity; but before she could proceed farther, she was interrupted by Allen Lucas.

“I think they are of a great deal of use, Mary, and I wish all the younger children in school had them. It is a good way of employing their time; for they can not study to much advantage, and they get very tired and forget almost as much as they learn, when confined to their books constantly. Then they make by this means a good beginning in writing.”

“Then you would have them all scribble on a slate, I suppose,” interrupted Mary, “whether Mr. Leonard allows it or not.”

“Oh no, Mr. Leonard sees both sides of the question, and we only one, so we can not tell how many good reasons he has for acting as he does. At any rate, he has a

right to make as many rules of that kind as he chooses, and we ought to obey them."

"Of course you'll say so," said Julia, pettishly, "for you can make as many figures as you please."

"And sometimes more," said Allen laughing. "But it is of no use, Julia, to complain of Mr. Leonard, and find fault with his rules, and it only makes us unhappy. We couldn't expect to find another Mr. Dawson, and whoever comes to teach, or whatever he does, we must take care that our part is well done, and then we shall never suffer much wrong."

"I don't think that Lizzy Parker was a bit to blame, when Mr. Leonard made her sit on the dunce-block," interrupted one of the older girls. Allen hesitated, for he did not like to condemn Lizzy Parker, but he soon cleared his voice and proceeded. "Lizzy was not to blame, for she didn't think anything about the rule, but her whispering was a violation of it, and Mr. Leonard was bound by his word to punish her."

"But," continued the girl, "what use was

there in making such a promise? Mr. Dawson never did."

"No, Mr. Dawson made the punishment discretionary, and that was doubtless the best way; but it caused him a great deal of trouble."

"Why, I am sure he kept as orderly a school as we have now."

"Yes, but he used to inquire into everything that was wrong, and find out all about it; and that must have been a very difficult task, and taken up a great deal of time."

"Mr. Dawson never was afraid of his time," said another of the boys, "and would have staid in the school-house all night, if he could have helped anybody by the means. But Mr. Leonard must clear the house at four o'clock, and the minute the last boy gets out he follows and locks the door."

"Well, one thing I know," said Liph Green; "I can cheat Mr. Leonard, and will, every time I can get a chance."

"Cheat him? how?"

"Why, he don't believe a word I say, so there is no use in telling him whether I did a thing or not. If he catches me at it, he

will whip me, and if he don't I will have the fun of cheating him."

"How do you know he don't believe you?"

"Why, he don't believe any of us; he asks questions, and tries to make us cross ourselves, and yesterday when I got so sleepy, and promised I wouldn't step my foot out of the shed if he would let me go and cut wood, I could see him peeping out the window every time I stopped for breath, as though he thought I would be gone. I declare I'd a great mind to run with all my might."

"Why didn't you?" asked Julia May.

"And so prove him in the right," said another.

"I did scare him some, making motions, and I stopped so often to make him come to the window, that at last he called me in."

"So you gained vastly by scaring him, as you tell about," said Allen.

"Yes, but I'll make up another time. I can look on my book and whisper, and he never would find it out in the world. I didn't dare do that when Mr. Dawson was here, for you know he always asked at night, and

denying it would be a downright lie; but Mr. Leonard never thinks of asking, because he says boys are not to be believed. Oh, I can cheat him in a thousand ways."

"Well, what good will it do you?" asked Lizzy Parker.

"It will be serving him right."

"But it will do you no good," said Allen seriously, "and, even if you wished it, which I am sure you do not, him no harm. I own that it is not pleasant to be watched every minute as though we couldn't be trusted, but that is no reason why we should make ourselves unworthy of trust. Let us remember what Mr. Dawson used to tell us so often, that our actions here will have an influence which we shall carry out into the world with us; and when we act we should not merely decide what will serve our present purpose, annoy this person or please that one, but what is right, and will help to fit us for the part we shall have to act in the world. Just think of it, Liph—you must neglect your books to deceive Mr. Leonard, act against your conscience, and in the end gain nothing but evil; for such a course would make you

sly, artful and false, and neither you nor I can tell where it would end."

"How well you remember what Mr. Dawson said!" answered Liph, "now I had forgotten every word about it; but you are right, I know, and I wish I could be so good and sober. It is such fun to plague Mr. Leonard though!"

Conversations like the foregoing were very common in school this winter, and they were not without a good tendency, for the influence of Mr. Dawson's precepts was not lost, and there was a self-rectifying principle at work in some minds, that communicated itself to others, and if it could not reform, did much to check the dangerous feelings and principles, that otherwise would have gained the ascendancy.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE OF LIPH GREEN.

THE ensuing summer, as Allen was older and more trustworthy, he was allowed many privileges that he had not before enjoyed; and he found that by laying out his work regularly, and paying great regard to punctuality and order, he could gain a great deal of time for study. This time, as may well be supposed, was not wasted. He now read a great many books, particularly those recommended by Mr. Dawson, with whom he still kept up a correspondence, and whose hints were invaluable. Robert May, much to the expense of his sisters' ribbons and laces, was sent away to a seminary of learning, and poor Liph Green, light as his spirit had ever been, was well nigh sunken in troubles.

Close by the creek, or river as it was usually designated, and nearly a quarter of a mile from the road-side, was a pile of logs,

flung together something in the shape of a house, with a little enclosure on one side, bounded by a zigzag fence, closely resembling an old fashioned mammoth bow, rounding out from the crown of a bonnet. There was but one window in the house, and that had no glass in it, but was covered with a white muslin cloth during the day, and boarded up at night, if the weather was cold, but if not, it was left open. The floor was made of loose boards, that rattled at every step in summer, but in winter they were carefully corked, with old rags. The door was low and narrow, and everything about the premises had such a diminutive appearance, that this might have been mistaken for a residence belonging to the famous Lilliputians. In the enclosure before mentioned, were, at the proper season for them, a few hills of beans, a few more of potatoes, a little bed containing beets and carrots, then beyond these some young cabbage plants, and mingling here and there, might have been discovered the whitish green leaves of the poppy, and now and then a bursting bud arose, or a crimson blossom flaunted in the morning sun, and

cast its honors to the earth at evening. Close by the door, a thrifty bean vine had been trained upward, till it had reached the eaves, and on the other side was a cluster of hollyhocks; and still further along, arose some giant sunflowers, towering high, and wagging their heads to every breeze, as if in mockery of the seeming toys around them.

A little while before this rude dwelling-place was constructed, a poor creature had come to the Corners, with a baby in her arms, and leading by the hand a little boy, who clung to her side and hid his face in her gown when strangers were near, but bounded before her like a playful kitten, turning back now and then to laugh and clap his hands in the face of the baby, as soon as they were out again in the free streets. She told a sad story. She spoke of plenty and happiness in a far-off land, of the restless spirit which had made this seem not enough, then of a dreary voyage across the seas to a goal that to her unenlightened imagination was an earthly paradise, of folding him who had guided her thither in his shroud, and laying him in a stranger's grave, and then of an-

guish, followed by want and loneliness, by sickness and anxiety, until the bitterness of death was passed, and nothing but thoughts of her children prevented her from lying down beside her husband and ending her sufferings there. But these kept the mother's heart from breaking, and she had toiled along from door to door, bearing her infant on her bosom, until at last she had penetrated into the heart of the country. She did not beg for anything but work, and though the people at the Corners were little accustomed to having their labor performed by others, they could not resist the eloquence of real sorrow, and poor Mrs. Green went from house to house, washing and ironing, and performing many other services in which the wives and daughters of the farmers were by no means ashamed to join. But sometimes she had nothing to do, and then of necessity she had nowhere to stay, so some kind-hearted men of the neighborhood concluded to roll together some logs from the hills, and give the stranger a home. The spot by the river's side was selected because the materials might be more easily conveyed

thither, and as it was much more picturesque than a place by the dusty road, the poor widow gained in tastefulness what she lost in convenience. But once settled in her humble abode she cared little for inconveniences, and soon her cheerful temper triumphed over all her sorrows, and, merry as the lark that she always saw rise from his nest in the morning, she caroled her songs all through the day, and at night lay down beside her two children, contented and happy. She did not suffer from cold nor hunger, for the broken wood from the neighboring forests kept her fire blazing brightly, and she earned enough by her labor to obtain a decent support for herself and children. The eldest of these children, the fun-loving Liph Green, was old enough to be useful in a variety of ways ; and little Nannie in one, at least, for the pretty lisper drew the neighboring children to the hut by the river-side, and their mirth served to beguile its mistress of many a wearisome hour. Thus passed almost two happy years, happy enough to be envied by some of the most favored children of fortune, but before the last was completed, there open-

ed upon the earth a beautiful spring; the trees budded, the birds came back to their old haunts, and the strong winds died away into gentle breezes, but these were all unnoticed by poor Liph Green. Alas! that childhood should not be exempt from sorrows! Heavy indeed must have been the burden that could make a young heart unmindful of the beautiful things of this bright earth, and benumbing the influence that could quiet the pulses, in which the tide, bursting from the fountain of a joyous heart, coursed but too rapidly.

Mrs. Green had gone out one warm spring morning, thinly clad, and before night, the sun was hidden, a slow, drizzling rain descended, and the wind grew cold and piercing, but she was unconscious of the change, until made aware of it by the chill that made her whole frame shiver, on emerging from Mr. Smith's heated kitchen. She, however, hurried home as fast as possible, thinking all the time of the blazing fire upon her humble hearth; but this time Liph had neglected his duty, and not a fragment of the broken wood, which he usually obtained from the adjoining

fields, had been gathered. Covering his sleeping sister with the rug, he had seated himself on the hearth beside her, and was straining his eyes over the few glowing embers, to shape the arms of a miniature wind-mill, with which he intended to astonish his mother the next morning.

“Are you cold, mother?” he inquired, as she crouched beside him on the hearth, and then, without waiting for an answer, he drew the few coals together, and, crossing the pine sticks upon which he had bestowed so much labor, over them, he ran out the door, and soon returned with a heavy armful of wood. But the rain that had fallen, had made everything too wet to burn; so poor Mrs. Green was obliged to go to bed wet and cold, with no unusual share of covering to atone for lack of fire. In the morning, when she attempted to rise, her flushed face and blood-shot eye alarmed poor Liph, and when he saw her fall across the foot of the bed, and laugh, and shriek, and jabber unintelligible things, and sing wild snatches of songs, that he had never heard her sing before, he took little Nannie in his arms, and without daring

to look behind him, ran with all his might to the nearest dwelling, screaming at every step, that his mother was going to die, and he had killed her. Mrs. Green was sick only two days, but during that time she had the kindest of treatment, and as much attention as the wealthiest in the neighborhood could have commanded; for her cheerfulness, her good-humor and faithfulness had gained her many friends, and even if it had not been so, this was not a place where the poor were left to suffer. But no care can stay the failing breath, when the spirit has been called away, and soon the mother of poor Liph Green was stretched cold and still upon the bed, with her icy hands folded on her breast, her white lips moveless, and her eyelids pressed down by weights under the glazed lid beneath. Little Nannie clambered up by the old chair that stood beside the bed, to kiss her, and went whimpering away because her kiss was not returned; and the passionate Liph, beside himself with grief, sobbed and shrieked aloud, telling every one that spoke to him, it was his own work, he had done it all. Liph Green never thought of his own

fate, or little Nannie's, when he saw his mother laid in the grave, and all that night and the succeeding day, some one of the kind neighbors staid at the hut and took care of them, but finally, they began to talk of removing the children, and spoke to each other in whispers, of which poor Liph could only guess the meaning. He soon, however, found that they talked of removing him and his little sister to the county poor-house, and he told them he would not go, he would not be shut up in that dreary building, when he could work for his bread, and he would go hungry and cold, and take his earnings to support little Nannie, before he would part from her; at any rate, he would try, and if he failed, they would starve together. Allen Lucas encouraged Liph in this determination, and went all over the neighborhood in search of somebody to take charge of the helpless little one, who laughed and prattled, all unconscious of her lot. It was towards evening that the two boys, each holding a hand of Nannie, ventured to stop under the trees that shaded the door of Mr. Moreton, an English gentleman, who had within a few weeks pur-

chased the corner farm opposite Mr. Smith's. They knew little of Mr. Moreton, except the name, and the few other unimportant particulars that country neighbors will always glean; but they had seen no little children on the premises, and so concluded that he could not make the objection urged by others to receiving poor Nannie. While they were hesitating whether to make the application, they were accosted by a fine, intelligent looking man, and Liph entered at once upon his sad story. He spoke with the simple pathos of true feeling, while the unconscious Nannie put out her dimpled hands to catch the tears that rolled from his cheek, or played with the crape about her own neck, and, before he had finished, the gentleman had drawn nearer, and placed his hand upon her curly head, holding with the other the head of his cane for her inspection. It needed only a few words from Allen Lucas to make Liph's account intelligible, and Mr. Moreton, who seemed to feel a deep interest in the orphans, perhaps more so for being their countryman, promised Liph that while he made himself useful, neither of them should want a home. Oh how grateful

was poor Liph Green for such a promise ! and how he hugged little Nannie, and laughed and wept at the same moment, and talked of his mother and of the poor-house, and then threw up his arms and boasted of his strength, and declared he would work as long as he lived, for whoever took care of Nannie. The family of Mr. Moreton consisted only of himself, his wife, and a widowed sister, and so the pretty child was a welcome inmate, and would have been spoiled by the two ladies, if she had not possessed that happy elasticity of temperament, that makes all dangerous influences rebound perfectly harmless. As for Liph, he could not carry a clouded heart in the midst of so much sunshine ; so though he went often to his mother's grave and wept over it, yet he was usually as joyous as ever, and often made the walls of the farm-house ring with his merry shout. Allen Lucas loved Liph Green as a brother, and went often to his new home to see him, and Liph told so much of the wondrous knowledge of his young friend, and Allen was always so modest and sensible, that Mr. Moreton regarded him with no small degree of interest,

and often joined in the discussions of the two boys, for the mere purpose of drawing out his talents. He soon discovered the bent of Allen's mind, and brought him books from his own library, the contents of which were eagerly devoured; and after awhile, the library door was thrown open, and Allen passed in and out, as though it had been his own. Mr. Moreton's library contained a choice selection of books, and Allen, after touching upon a few lighter things, turned to the English classics, and entered at once upon a new and a glorious field. By slow degrees, his mind had been prepared for just such works as these, and it is no strange thing, if the plough and hoe were a very little neglected, and the pillow sometimes untouched, as his whole soul was absorbed in his new pursuits. But after awhile he received a letter from Mr. Dawson, warning him against the state of feverish excitement which his mind betrayed, and with a strong effort, he calmed himself, read less and thought more, and finally became as orderly and industrious as he had ever been. The winter following, Allen Lucas did not attend school, for he

found that he could learn more in Mr. Moreton's library ; and as that gentleman had discovered Liph Green's peculiarities, he was glad of the opportunity thus offered to carry on his education without exposing him to temptation. At first, Allen overlooked Liph's lessons, and studied with him, but every day he became more and more interested in his task, and before another spring, he was duly installed in the office of private tutor to his heedless friend, and little Nannie.

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CHAPTER IX.

CHOOSING A VOCATION.

“Seventeen years old to-day!” said Allen Lucas, as he seated himself on a large stone, half embedded in the thick golden moss, and the other half extending out into the water. For nearly three years he had spent most of his time in Mr. Moreton’s family, devoting only the early morning to labor on his father’s farm, and an hour each evening to the instruction of his little brothers, but now, Liph was to throw aside the books which he did not love, and Nannie was old enough to require other teachers. Allen sat for a long time, resting his forehead on his folded hands; then breaking a fragment from the stone, he threw it into the stream, and gazed intently on the bubbles that rose to the surface and disappeared. “Very like, very like!” he muttered, rising with a half impatient gesture, then slowly shaking his head and compressing his

lips, he stood gazing down upon the waters, as they glided smoothly over the white sand, or leaped, and foamed, and sparkled in miniature anger, when they met with an obstruction. "Seventeen years!" he repeated musingly, "and in seventeen more I shall be a man, my character formed, my habits fixed, my destiny in this world decided—a busy man in this busy world! independent of control or guidance, doing whatever I list, and answerable for everything. Thirty-four years! the very meridian of life, the time when men most glory in their strength and power! as many more years will bring me to this, or—" Allen's tongue faltered with the alternative, but his eye wandered across the adjoining field to a green spot of earth newly encircled by its simple white fence, and already pillowing two or three who but a year since walked forth among the living. The face of the youth grew solemn, but not sad, as his thoughts took a different course, and dwelt for a moment on his own dissolution. But the being whose foot is just pressing upon the verge of proud manhood, whose every pulse bounds with a consciousness of strength, and whose

veins thrill with the rushing of the red life-current within, can not long listen to thoughts of death and the grave ; he *knows*, but he can not *feel*, that the strong arm and the true foot will ere long fail him, and that the thoughts and feelings, which raise him above the other living things he sees around, will go away, and leave the form in which he now glories, less than the idiot, less than the reptile crawling at his foot, in no wise superior to the coffin which contains it, and the mould with which it shortly mingles. Allen's eye rested for a moment upon the humble church-yard, and his thoughts upon the grave, and his own dissolution, but it was only for a moment, and he again repeated, "a man ! a busy man !—aye, I will be a busy and a useful one."

So wrapt had the youth been in his musings that he did not hear a quiet step, nor know that any one was near, until a light hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice low and melodious, but strangely cold, said, "I have been at your house looking for you—where have you been hiding all day ?" The speaker was a tall stripling, with a frame very unlike the muscular one beside him, a step light

and undecided a small, white hand, and stooping shoulders. His face, but for its extreme pallor, would have been handsome; his forehead was broad and already marked with scarce perceptible lines that a few years would in all probability cut into deep wrinkles, his eyes were deep-set, bright, black, and piercing, his mouth small and feminine, and his thin lips, when not speaking, were always drawn close together with an expression particularly uninviting.

“I have been very idle to-day,” was Allen’s reply, as he again seated himself upon the stone. Come sit down, Robert, and I will tell you what I have been thinking about. A fine seat this, and handsomely cushioned,” he added, pressing his hand on the soft moss.

“I suppose you have been thinking of the one grand subject,” said Robert May; “it wouldn’t require a magician to read either of our thoughts at present.”

“Do you know that this is my birth-day?” asked Allen.

“No, I leave such matters to aunt Biddy,” said Robert sneeringly.

“But our ages are so near the same that we can always tell each other’s by our own—three weeks ago yesterday, you were seventeen.”

“Shall you be ready to enter college with me?” asked Robert impatiently.

“Then you have decided on going?”

“Yes, that was a settled point long ago, but I have been fretted to death in making the arrangements—no books, no money, no nothing. I declare it makes me angry when I see rich people wasting their thousands—what under the sun is Mr. Moreton to do with that Liph Green?”

“Liph is a pretty good scholar for such a happy, don’t-care sort of a fellow as he is, but he lacks application, and Mr. Moreton thinks it is best to cast him on his own resources for a while. He has purchased a large tract of western land, and Liph is to earn his title to it by cultivating it.”

“Cultivating land! but no matter, it will be all one to him. Cobbler or statesman—he never would know the difference.”

“You do Liph injustice,” said Allen warmly, “he lacks strength and stability of char-

acter, but he has correct views of life—at least Mr. Moreton thinks so—and there is so much romance in his disposition, that he will always move in a sunny little world of his own, and find beauty in what to others is stale and common-place.”

“Very likely,” said Robert sarcastically, “and for that reason, I would advise him to be a cobbler. He could sing at his stall all day long, happy as cobblers always are, and make himself very useful too, undoubtedly.”

“Far more useful than those who despise him!” said Allen indignantly.

Robert was about to retort, when there came a short, musical laugh, from the wild cherry tree above their heads, the leaves rustled, and a shower of white blossoms descended upon the ground and stream, and then an agile figure came swinging down upon one of the branches, and dropped himself at Allen’s feet. Both of the conversationists were startled a little by the unexpected vision, both attempted to speak, stammered, colored, and were silent.

“Oh go on,” said the new comer, “don’t let me interrupt any sport—pick up the glove,

Bob. Ha, ha! an interesting subject for young gentlemen to fall out and quarrel about."

"Not a very important one, Liph, to be sure," said Allen Lucas, smiling, and laying his hand upon the curling locks of his friend and pupil.

"You are the only one that would say it to me," answered Liph Green, acknowledging the caress by a gentle inclination of the head, "and yet you think it least of any one."

Robert May, his thin lip curling, and his small, black eyes glittering like those of a snake, folded his arms, and struck into the path that led to the turnpike.

"Stay, Robert," said Allen, extending his hand in token of peace, "you haven't heard a word of my plans yet, and they are all changed since our last conversation."

"How changed?"

"But first tell me about yourself—what has troubled you?"

"Want of what some folks are fools enough to throw away—means." Liph Green sprung to his feet, provoked more by the contemptuous glance thrown upon him, than by the

words; but receiving a look of disapprobation from Allen, he contented himself with shaking down another shower of blossoms, then folding his arms, he stood leaning against the tree, and kicking the turf with his heel.

“That is a common want,” said Allen, with a good-humored smile, “the gifts of fortune are as unequally distributed as other gifts, and for wise ends, undoubtedly.”

“It may be wisdom to give money to men whose highest thoughts are of gilded carriages and fine establishments, while those who are thirsting for knowledge—”

“Are endowed instead with the superior power of obtaining it without money, and making themselves worthy of the possession by the process,” interrupted Allen.

“Umph! the process of *getting* I should think hard enough, without any additional labor.”

“We find, however, that the additional labor makes strong men—the more we do, the more we are capable of doing.”

“Well, I shall have enough to do, I can tell you. Father isn’t quite sure that he can furnish me with the needful, but I think

if he and the rest of the family are economical, they can save enough, particularly as Fanny has agreed to teach."

"Why, I didn't know as Fanny was prepared to teach," interrupted Allen.

"Prepared!" said Robert sneeringly, "female teachers are not required to be very *blue* now-a-days." Allen made no reply, but his mind, accustomed to examine consequences, did not stop at the sacrifice that the sister would make, and he wondered how Robert dare, merely for his own sake, put in motion such a train of evils. "At any rate," resumed Robert, after a moment's pause, "it is decided that I shall go to college, for nobody can be educated without, but the point that remains yet to be settled, is what profession to choose afterwards. However, that must depend upon circumstances, and, (between ourselves,) what seems to offer the best opportunity for rising in the world. Because my father is a farmer and a poor man, I am not bound to follow the plough all my days—the greatest men have arisen from nothing, and I know that what others have done, I can do."

“Our circumstances are very similar,” said Allen thoughtfully, “and I can sympathize with you with all my heart.”

“What did you mean just now, when you said you had changed your plans?”

“I have concluded to forego the advantages of a collegiate education.”

“That is the last thing I would do,” remarked Robert quietly, “every young man in our country can be well educated if he chooses.”

“And I mean to be well educated,” said Allen; “I have been looking too high, however, and must now strike out a humbler path.”

“What need is there of it, Allen? I am sure you are better off than I am. Here you have been earning money these three years, while I have been spending it, and now you are as well—yes, better educated than I am.”

“I should like to finish—may be I shall sometime, but I can not go forward as you will.”

“Why not? I thought you more lion-hearted than to shrink from a task, because there are some difficulties in the way.”

“I have not been much accustomed to shrinking,” said Allen, raising his head with a proud consciousness of self-dependence, that no manly nature will bear to hear questioned; “I have already overcome some difficulties, and am prepared to combat more, but it is ill-judged to make sacrifices greater than the object to be gained will warrant.”

“In this case it would be impossible to do so—no sacrifice is too great to make in such a cause.”

“Not even a poor old father’s comfort,” said Liph Green, who had been for a long time biting his lips, and twisting himself into various shapes, longing to interpose a word, and yet afraid of displeasing Allen. “You needn’t shake your head at me, Allen, everybody knows that old Mr. May is working himself to death, for the sake of sending his lady-son away to school.”

Robert curled his lip sneeringly, and, as if disdainful to answer, continued addressing Allen. “No man has ever attained to any degree of eminence that halted and trembled even before great sacrifices—”

“I do not tremble,” interrupted Allen, “before any sacrifice but that of principle, but there are others I would not make—I halt only to examine.”

“Mary says your father is willing to defray your expenses at college.”

“Yes, willing, but not able. My parents are kind, and would do anything in the world for me; and my brothers are all generosity.”

“Then do tell what romantic notion makes you throw away such opportunities.”

“It is a very unromantic one, I can assure you. Think of my father, at the time of life when he ought to be sitting at his ease, cared for by his sons, sweating in the hay-field, my brothers denying themselves the just reward of their own industry, my mother and sister bringing in their hard-earned mite, and my younger brothers removed from school, and sent out in the field to dig—do you call that a romantic picture?”

“Mary says they would willingly do all in their power for you, and surely the sacrifice is small, in comparison with the good result.”

“If the self-denial were my own, it would be, but justice forbids one of a family to appro-

priate what belongs to the whole. Although my father does not see it, and would not knowingly do wrong, yet this would be rank injustice to his other children, particularly as two of them are yet in school, and would be obliged to leave it if he should give all to me."

"Quite a hero, I declare!" said Robert, laughingly, "but there's one thing yet remains. Such an independent, industrious young gentleman as yourself, can have no objection to working your way along, as many a fine fellow has done, who got to the very top of the hill at last."

"Not in the least, Robert, if such a course were best. It is what I always intended to do, and I have not yet quite abandoned the intention. I have decided on going to a trade, and hope I shall be able to employ private teachers; but if not, a judicious course of reading, and a knowledge of mankind will do much towards fitting me for my sphere."

"A trade, Allen! and so you have been studying year after year, and gained the reputation of being the best scholar of your age in the town, for this. To what branch

of mechanics do you intend to apply your wondrous knowledge? shoeing horses, or making ladies' dressing-tables?"

"I might be more useful, and perhaps, do myself as much honor in either, as I should to crowd myself into a place for which I am unfit; an incompetent lawyer is vastly inferior to a good blacksmith."

"You are very modest. Though, perhaps you did not mean to insinuate that the science of law is above your comprehension?"

"No, I did not. I do not suppose it to be above my comprehension—at least, more than every other science—but I might be a thorough student, and still, a very unsuccessful lawyer."

"And so, doubting your other abilities—"

"Pity some other people wouldn't doubt their abilities," interrupted Liph Green.

"No, Robert, my other abilities are untried, and it is no fear of failure that has induced me to become a mechanic. It is simply choice; a taste for the arts, and a love of active pursuits, with strong muscles and industrious habits, particularly a love for manual labor, would do much towards inducing

even you, with all your prejudices, to abandon your high plans, for a trade."

Robert shook his head. "No, I would correct such a taste, I would have self-control enough to make myself whatever I thought best to be."

"So would I, but my judgment goes with my taste in this matter. The learned professions seem to me to be full; a young man of mere ordinary talents I think, can succeed better elsewhere."

"And one of superior talents?"

"Had better follow the bent of his inclinations. If there is nothing to prevent his studying a profession, and he prefers it, let him do so; or if he has a taste for the mechanical arts, I see no reason why it should not be gratified."

"But, Allen, think—if you take this foolish step now, it will be a great many years before you will amass a fortune, however successful you are, and you will be an old, worn out man, before you rise above your business."

"I never intend to rise above it, I hope to rise *in* it."

“And take it up with you,” said Robert, laughingly.

“No, I have chosen an art too high for me to ennoble.”

“So ho, Mr. Modesty! I begin to see more clearly—an artist, eh? which is it, painting or sculpture?”

“Neither, and yet it was a favorite art with Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians.

“Architecture, eh?”

“Yes; do you think I shall be disgraced by it?”

“Oh no, not by architecture, but to come away from Greece and Rome, and talk plain, every-day English, I must say, I do not think Allen Lucas, the poor carpenter, will ever arrive to a station of very great honor.”

“But everybody shall say he is a good carpenter. I tell you, Robert, we need skillful mechanics, and there is no class of men, next our statesmen, that can do their country so much honor as these; if they will but improve their talents. Think of what mechanical genius has done for us, and then think what remains undone. If I learn the art of building, I do not intend to be satisfied when

my term of service expires, that will only be the introduction, and I intend to practice and study, and study and practice; until I see if something can not be done to improve our anomalous style of architecture."

"What ever put this wild notion into your head?" asked Robert May.

"I have read a great many works on architecture of late, and Mr. Moreton is quite enthusiastic on the subject—he has described to me St. Paul's, and Westminster Abbey, and a great many other European buildings. I should like to visit the Capitol, at Washington."

"I mean to *visit* it before a great many years," said Robert, with a covert smile.

"I hope you will," was the reply, "but I suspect it will be well for both of us to remember our liability to disappointment. We have set our marks high, and it would be very singular if we should both reach them."

"I, at least, have one encouragement," said Robert, "more than you; mine is a well trodden path, and you will have to break your road, if you go beyond the great thoroughfare."

“Be it so,” said Allen Lucas, rising, “I should delight to be a pioneer.”

“Just what I was thinking of,” said Liph Green. “I have a great fancy for the far west, and if you will go with me, you shall try your hand at cutting down trees, and then upon a nice log house. O how we would ‘ennoble the art’ there, in the wilderness!” Allen smiled, and cast upon his volatile friend very much such a glance, as a mother would bestow upon a child, whose very faults were rather pleasant to her; for he had been more than a brother to the orphan boy, and felt still more than a brother’s interest in his success and happiness. “Mr. Moreton has fixed the matter just right,” continued Liph; “I shall be ‘monarch of all I survey,’ on my farm out west; and in a few years, you will be hearing of ‘Eliphalet Green, Esq., of Greenville’—no, I leave castle building to you and Bob May—but just give me a start westward, that’s all. I’ve a great fancy for farming, and should like living in the woods, and hunting, of all things.”

“But hunting wouldn’t clear your land,” said Allen.

“No ; what do you think of that, though ?” exclaimed Liph, extending his arm, and displaying a fist, a trifle heavier than Robert May’s. Allen laughed, and placed his own beside it. “What ! do you mean to say it isn’t strong ? just try it then ! come, I can—”

“No matter what you *can* do, Liph, the question is what you *will* do. I have no doubt but steadiness of purpose and perseverance will make your hand as powerful as a sledge-hammer.”

“There you are right, Allen, and I shall have a little log-house, all grown over with eglantine, and a nice garden around it—I shall take all sorts of plants with me—and then I shall cook my own venison—”

“What of your wood-land and fallow, Liph ?”

“O I shall hunt all day, and fish in the lake—”

“But who will clear and break up your land ?”

“Who ?” myself of course. The old axe will ring there, I can tell you, and the scared birds will sail off in the air, and the beasts

will scamper—I shall always keep my rifle by me, Allen.”

Allen smiled, but made no reply, for the party had now arrived at a little brown house, the entrance to which was familiar, and where they were sure to meet Allen's sister, and Julia May, and may be other visitors, of the general favorite Lizzy Parker.

CHAPTER X.

LIZZY PARKER, AND HER FRIEND NANNIE.

THE white violet of early spring, blooming in the lowliest nook, is not more truly a child of nature, than was Lizzy Parker. She was a gentle and dependent creature, always needing support, and always finding it, carrying peace and love wherever she went, and possessing a heart so full of sympathy, that even feelings too deep for her to appreciate, were soothed by it. Lizzy was an orphan girl, but she had never known an orphan's loneliness, for the dear old grandmother, whose silvery hair she braided in the morning, had, from infancy, knelt beside her pillow every night, to ask heaven's blessing on the last, frail blossom, that lingered after all the hardier ones had been swept away. Favorite as Lizzy was among the children, it was not merely to see her, that they applied themselves so industriously to their tasks, in order

to spend a Saturday afternoon at Grandfather Parker's. They used to love to gather around the old lady, as she sat with her knitting in the corner, and listen to her stories of the olden time, or make their mock tea-parties, and invite her to be a guest at the board, or when the boys were present, to follow the old man to his garden, and learn to play the hero, while he "fought his battles over again." There were many attractions to draw young hearts to Grandfather Parker's, but it was happy age returning to its first childhood, with all the human feelings which have been garnered up during a long and blameless life, as fresh as when first awakened, and all the softened affections, which are the portion of those made better by bereavement, clustering around the gentle and pure of this world, that made this almost a paradise for little children. As Lizzy grew older, her visitors did not leave her, for although the good old grandparents became less necessary, they were not overlooked, and many were the muslin caps, or yarn mittens, that found their way into the little 'square room,' nobody but the donor knew how. Many a time, too,

would dear old Grandmother Parker wonder 'what made people so good to her,' for she seldom leaned on Lizzy's arm alone when walking, and never did a Sabbath pass, but some one of her wealthier neighbors called before the door, to drive the old people, and their pretty pet, to church. I do not say but the evident pleasure they gave Lizzy, might have had some share in winning such attentions; but nobody that witnessed the old lady's singleness of heart, simple piety, and universal love, could wonder why people were good to her. The little brown house, which Lizzy called home, was a model of simplicity and neatness, from the old side-board on which shone the row of polished pewter, down to the hearth-rug, wrought with many a quaint device, or the three-cornered pin-cushion, hanging below the very diminutive looking-glass. The two pictures, and yellow canvass sampler that adorned the walls, were stiff and old-fashioned, but Lizzy loved them, for the former were subjects of more vivid pictures in her mind, and the latter she had been told, was the work of her own mother in her girlhood. It was evident, that

poverty had taken up its abode in the little mansion, but not want, for economy and order keep such a visitant at a distance, and bring that comfort to the poor, not always to be found where plenty reigns. Indeed, the old man's pension was their all, but it was enough; so said the pious old lady, and so said the contented Lizzy, but Grandfather Parker, shook his head and sighed; then laid his hand on Lizzy's head, and begged God to take care of the poor lamb when he was gone. In such circumstances, it is not strange, that Lizzy felt a peculiar interest in little Nannie Green, and Mr. Moreton's adopted child was allowed free intercourse with a family, whose every impression must needs be pure and refined.

When they were all children together, it had always been a contested point among the boys, which had the best right to be Lizzy's champion, break a path through the snow for her, or draw her on the hand-sled, but as they grew older, the right of attendance was gradually conceded to Allen Lucas, and, for more than a year before he left home, it was decided by all, save perhaps,

the parties, or one of the parties most nearly concerned, that 'the lamb' would be cared for. But Lizzy, at least, whatever might have crept into the brain of a dreaming boy, never looked beyond the happy present, and Liph Green, and his little fairy sister, and Mary Lucas, and Julia May, were usually with them, so that none but sharp-sighted old ladies, and anxious grandparents, would have seen anything more in their childish intimacy, than they did a few years previous. True, Lizzy shed some tears when Allen went away to learn his trade, but this breaking up of old associations, causes as many tears as ever were shed by parted lovers. About the time that Allen entered on his apprenticeship, Robert May commenced his collegiate course, but the loss of the latter at the Corners was trifling, compared with the void that the absence of Allen Lucas made in every circle. Robert had lived for and within himself, but Allen's first thought was always for others, he was social and sympathetic, and he found his reward in three-fold returns of all he gave, being ever sure of the good wishes of both old and young.

Little Nannie was obliged to bear a double portion of the sorrow occasioned by these changes, for she parted with the kindest, and most faithful of tutors, and the most affectionate of brothers, at nearly the same time. Liph was a daring, enthusiastic fellow; full of warm fancies, and susceptible of deep emotions, but lacking some of the weightier characteristics of manhood. The world to him, was a wide field in which to revel all his life long, and his foot could slip most dexterously along side the thorns, to tread on the ever-blooming flowers. True, he was not a man yet, and his character might undergo a revolution, and it was for this, that Mr. Moreton induced him to endeavor to shape out his own fortunes, hoping that self-dependence might give stability to his character. Liph always looked on the sunny side of an enterprise, talking of its accompanying pleasures, to the exclusion of everything less agreeable, and hence his steadiness and perseverance were very apt to be undervalued. Mr. Moreton, however, knew his capabilities, and did not hesitate to place him in a situation, which the people at the Corners thought quite

too important, for one so trifling and wayward. Perhaps the suspicion of a little secret, which Liph thought all his own, might have aided Mr. Moreton in forming his estimate of the boy's character, for he knew that there is nothing like the prospect of some far-off good, some star on which the whole future centres, to give singleness of purpose, and steadiness of action. And such a star had arisen, when, he could not remember, in the heaven of Liph Green. Young as he was, and careless and volatile, there was one lesson which had sunken deeply into his heart, and the teacher of it was Lizzy Parker. He never walked beside her from the evening lecture, or grammar-school, never talked with her when there was any one else to talk, and never showed his face at the cottage, save when surrounded by a bevy of young misses, and yet he liked no eyes but blue, no ringlets but flaxen, and no face that did not resemble Lizzy Parker's. Even his sister, beautiful as a little Hebe, suffered in his imagination, when compared with his model, for rosy cheeks though ever so full of bewitching dimples, and lips that *could* pout,

though constantly wreathed in smiles, which were as her breath to Nannie Green, and eyes, danced they ever so joyously, or shone they with ever so much soul, that could not boast 'the heavenly blue,' in his estimation, could lay no claim to beauty. And Lizzy—what thought she of Liph Green? It is very possible, nay, very probable that she seldom thought of him at all, for there was not a boy in the neighborhood, that showed her so few attentions, or did not come oftener under her notice. True, she laughed heartily at his witticisms when she heard of them, and always agreed with Nannie, when she called him the best brother in the world, but Lizzy thought everybody all goodness, until she received proof positive to the contrary, and even then she consoled herself with the thought, that they "*meant* nothing wrong." She loved Nannie, because she was an orphan like herself, and the friendship was advantageous to both parties. Nannie had all the faults that accompany superior talents, and quick, intense feelings; she possessed a proud consciousness of her own powers, firmness and decision of character and a high spirit,

the curbing of which occasioned her kind guardian much anxious solicitude. Yet, stubborn and self-willed as she was, Lizzy Parker could lead her wherever she listed, for gentleness always gains a power over such natures; and, though several years younger, Nannie's natural superiority was lost upon her meek and timid friend. Mr. Moreton spared no pains in extending every advantage within his reach, to his promising protégé, and Nannie in her turn, dispensed her new acquirements, as far as in her power, to Lizzy Parker. The departure of Allen Lucas opened a new era in the life of Nannie Green, or as she was now called, Miss Anna Moreton, for he was succeeded by music, and drawing, and dancing, and language masters, and instead of sitting on Allen's knee, she was obliged to play the young lady, and sit bolt upright by the side of a tall, prim governess. Our little heroine did not, however, allow her accumulated duties to dampen her spirits; she romped with the kitten in the winter, and chased the butterflies and birds in summer, and surprised her governess by loving her books as well as she did the free

air, and the thousand attractions of the outdoor world. Mr. Moreton too, was surprised at the depth as well as quickness of intellect which she exhibited, and he took the whole direction of her studies upon himself, and became her constant companion in her walks and rides. By this means, her physical education was not neglected, while her understanding was cultivated to the utmost, her perceptions quickened by being trained to constant observation, and her principles carefully guarded against the encroachments of thoughtlessness, as well as the new theories so dangerous to inquiring minds. There was but one fault in Mr. Moreton's system of education: domestic training, he thought a matter of no moment, and could not bear to see his little paragon busying herself in the kitchen, or pricking her pretty fingers with a needle. Nannie's activity, however, made up in part for the deficiency, and after puzzling her brain over her books, until she had won the usual applause, she would trip across the lawn to Grandfather Parker's cottage, and sit down by Lizzy under the shady elm tree, to be initiated into the mysteries of back-

stitch, cross-stitch, hem-stitch, and the thousand other stitches as familiar to Lizzy, as the A B C. At other times, she would try her hand at some simple cookery, and when Grandmother Parker declared her gruel and toast quite as good as Lizzy's, the pleasure that sparkled in her eye, was not a whit less apparent, than when she had effected the solution of some difficult problem, or obtained the perfect control of her spirited jennet.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SELECT SCHOOL.

SHORTLY after the departure of Allen and Robert, there came a young lady to the Corners, and proposed opening a select school, as a more fitting place for the education of young ladies, than the district school. Mary Lucas was delighted with the proposition, and used all her influence to further the plan, but this was an innovation for which few were prepared, and it was accordingly discussed morning and evening; at the blacksmith's shop, in the hay-field, and at the corn-husking, till at last winter set in, and nothing had been done. Now the young ladies grew importunate, and the fathers were more puzzled than ever. As a relief to their minds, a meeting was called, and the question examined in all its bearings. Some thought it would injure the district school, others said that a knowledge of geography, grammar,

and arithmetic, was quite enough for any girl, others talked of the impossibility of sustaining two schools in such a small neighborhood, while another class deprecated the niggardly spirit and contracted views of their opponents. The debate waxed warm, and the meeting was dismissed without coming to any decision. Those in favor of the new school, however, were determined to carry their point, and immediately started a subscription for that purpose.

Mr. Moreton will be in favor of it, of course," said Mr. May, "he is a great friend to education, and he'll sign a pretty round sum too, I'll warrant me."

Mr. Lucas shook his head. "Mr. Moreton is a friend to education, but he is a thorough-going man, and won't believe in this baby-work. You'd better not go to Mr. Moreton." Mr. Lucas had voted for the school, but he was not at all backward in telling that it was "only to please the women," and his plain common sense had proved more powerful, than the arguments of all the others. Mr. May was suspicious that his neighbor might be right, but there

could be no harm in asking, and accordingly he waited on Mr. Moreton, intending to give him the honor of heading the subscription paper. Mr. Moreton listened patiently to all the arguments in favor of a select school, and agreed to the propriety of establishing one. "If a few families will unite, and obtain a first-rate teacher," said he, "I will not be backward in assisting."

"We have a teacher in view, that I think will give general satisfaction. Mary Lucas knows her well, and she says, she understands all the higher branches. The truth is, the girls are crazy after French—I don't think much of this outlandish gibberish myself, but it's well enough to please the girls—and painting flowers, theorem-painting they call it, and working in worsted, and such-like trash; and they never will be satisfied with any common teacher."

"Um! a very common teacher, I should think, would answer the purpose;" said Mr. Moreton, "does the young lady you purpose obtaining, understand all these things?"

"Yes; I have heard Julia talk about her lamp-mats, and cushion-covers, and other

fineries, by the hour. I don't pretend to know anything about these things myself, but girls will be girls, you know; children will be children."

"Yes, but that is no reason why men should make themselves children too. It is ours to suppress folly, Mr. May, not encourage it."

"To be sure, but then I see no harm in indulging our girls a little; other places have schools, and such girls as Abby Stillman, and Mary Lucas, and Lizzy Parker, ought to carry their heads as high as the Smithville misses."

"Education never elevates an empty head, Mr. May, and I am proud to believe that our daughters have more practical knowledge and sound sense, and withal more general information, than many of their more showy neighbors. It becomes us now, however, to see that they do not retrograde. I am the last one to condemn real accomplishments, where they can be obtained without a sacrifice of the more important branches of learning; but the less we have to do with these make-believe accomplishments, the better."

"But sir, I thought Nannie—"

“Nannie takes lessons of the best masters that can be found, and pursues the solid sciences at the same time, and I take particular care that she goes over no more ground than she investigates, that she is thoroughly acquainted with what she professes to understand.”

“But I heard her saying the other day, that she wished she could remember all she had ever read—that people can never be thorough in anything—that they never understand so much of any subject, but there is more still to be learned.”

“Nannie is a very little girl,” said Mr. Moreton, “to make such sage remarks, but she was right. Our thoughts and conceptions are limited, and when I speak of obtaining a *thorough knowledge* of a subject, I use the phrase as others use it, comparatively. Nannie’s great fault, since she was first able to spell out words, has been reading too extensively, to read what we call thoroughly; but you will perceive that, young as she is, she has gone one step beyond the superficial scholar; she is conscious of her own ignorance and impotence.”

“We don’t expect to give our children such an education as Nannie will have.”

“Then let me advise you to secure the really valuable part, and leave these superficial accomplishments to those, who are foolish enough to spend time and money in securing them. There can be nothing more disgusting than to hear young persons talking conceitedly of sciences with the first rudiments of which they are totally unacquainted; and this is rendered still more painful by the air which they are very apt to assume towards those they consider their inferiors.”

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. May, “it was one of Robert’s favorite sayings, when he was home, ‘a little learning is a dangerous thing,’ but are we to conclude from this, that people who can not know everything, must know nothing?”

“O no, I would have people constantly learning, the old as well as the young—you and I, as well as our children—but I would not have them catching the shadow of a thought here, believing, meanwhile, that they have the substance, and the caricature of an accomplishment there, and after all their trouble, know less than the man who has

stood in the field all his life time, and learned only from his own observation. I would have them understand thoroughly what they attempt."

"I hope that you don't think as 'Squire Smith does, that nothing is necessary but the common branches."

"I think everything is necessary, that can be obtained—everything I mean, calculated to make us wiser, or better, or happier; everything that will elevate our characters, extend our influence, or improve our social qualities. This you will see, embraces a very large field, and one that can not be compassed in a life time. But I would secure the nearest and most important first, and look to it, that we have all that we imagine ourselves to possess."

Mr. May shook his head. "You might, perhaps, convince the girls, if they could hear you talk, but I am sure nobody else can; they have got their hearts set on this school, and I'm of a mind that it would be best to gratify them for a few months. Julia says she can learn French in two quarters—don't you think she can?"

“If she has a phrase-book, she may learn to say ‘bon soir,’ and ‘comment vous portez-vous,’ in that time,” said Mr. Moreton, “and very likely, rival her teacher.”

“Then you don’t approve of the school at all?”

“No, not of such a school. I have seen something of this worsted-work, and theorem-painting—neither require so much skill and talent as are necessary to make a shirt, and are about as improving to the taste, as making cloth rabbits, or counting a hundred all day. As for French and drawing, they are very necessary to an elegant education; but I very much doubt the abilities of your proposed teacher, and I assure you, young ladies can have a very excellent education, without knowing anything of either.”

“What then would you advise us to do?”

“If you think there are children and means enough here to support two schools, you had better obtain a first-rate teacher—not one who makes the greatest professions, but one who acknowledges with equal readiness, what she can and what she can not teach—and establish a permanent school. If, how-

ever, this should prove too great a tax, and I am afraid it will, I will be the first to aid in establishing a young people's library as a substitute. These select schools are increasing very fast of late, and I am glad to see people waking up to the subject of education, but at the same time, they should be looked to very carefully. We are in great danger of encouraging superficial acquirements through these, by employing incompetent teachers. While we deprecate quackery in medicine, we should be careful not to allow quacks to prescribe for the intellect. The itinerating character of teachers, except in our highest schools, lays us open to imposition, and hence we should be doubly careful whom we employ. Individuals and states may do all in their power, and yet we never shall have good schools, until men study the profession of teaching as they do that of law or medicine; until a good teacher can obtain a situation that will be permanent, where he can know that no successor will step in to undo what he has done well, or take the responsibility of what he has done ill. Let a teacher remain, year after year, where he can

watch each new development of the mind to which he gave its first impulse, and he will need no stronger incentive to exertion."

"This would be difficult to bring about, in district schools. There are always some that are dissatisfied, and would be glad to get a new teacher, even before the winter is out; besides, good teachers are in a hurry to get at some other business, and there isn't one in fifty, that would be willing to stay two years in the same place."

"And scarce one in a hundred that is fit," returned Mr. Moreton, "but that one should be so well sustained, that he will not be in a hurry to get at other business; think what would have been the result, if Mr. Dawson had staid here till this time."

"I wish he had; we might have kept him as well as not, for he always said, he meant to spend his days in a district school. There were two or three of us that did try our best to get him back again, but Mr. Leonard offered to come two dollars a month cheaper, and we had to give up. Do you think we are in any more danger of getting poor teachers in select, than in district schools?"

“ Yes, rather more. District school teachers have at least a form of examination to undergo, and trustees are responsible for the kind of teacher they engage ; besides, their professions are not so high, and they are therefore less likely to dazzle the ignorant. I would not, however, have you understand me to disapprove of private schools—good ones are of inestimable value, but they may be rendered very mischievous. Such an one as you propose establishing here, I am certain, would encourage folly and vanity.”

Mr. May turned away, perplexed. By “ gratifying the girls,” he might also gratify his own ambition, but he was now well convinced, that in pursuing the scheme, the money wasted, and time misspent, would not be the greatest evils. He communicated the substance of his conversation with Mr. Moreton to Mr. Lucas, and, as Mary was the prime mover in the affair, and Julia her second, it proved to be an easier matter to overthrow the plan, than the school-meeting men had imagined. A very small, but well selected library was soon after established, under the superintendence of Mr. Moreton ;

this was afterwards increased until it became quite extensive and valuable. "Have you read this book?" or "what do you think of that one?" were questions oftener asked than, "have you heard this?" or "seen that one's new dress?" and there was, especially among the young people, but very little gossip and slander at the Corners.

CHAPTER XII.

COMMONPLACE INCIDENTS.

ALLEN Lucas, with his established character and cultivated mind, formed a striking contrast to the apprentices with whom his lot was cast, but he was too frank and courteous, too unaffectedly kind and generous, to become the mark for malice or envy. He never made them feel their inferiority, and by heartily seconding any scheme for amusement which was right, and as honestly giving his disapproval of what was wrong, he won their confidence, and gained over them almost unbounded influence. Although laboring hard from morning till night, his books were still the companions that he best loved, and he went on, improving slowly and surely as he had done, when the thought of Mr. Moreton's library quickened his step, as he hurried homeward from the field. Yet there were many things to discourage him in his

new employment, he found that the knowledge he had gained from books, was of less use to him than he had supposed it would be, in the art as it is now practiced, and he could but see that his master often set both taste and convenience at defiance. Yet he did not repent 'going to learn a trade,' for he became an ardent lover of his craft, and at every visit he made the Corners, he left upon the little farm-house, still occupied by his father, some remembrancer, until there was an air of simple elegance thrown about it, quite foreign to the original structure. In truth, the Lucas family scarce appeared the same as formerly, for a refined intellect casts its sunlight upon all with whom it comes in contact. Everything about the house, in spite of Mary's high notions, was perfectly plain and simple, and yet any one would have preferred the little parlor with its neat muslin curtains and rag-carpet, to all the gaudy finery that decorated that of the wealthier proprietor of the corner farm, 'Squire Smith. These little matters make more in door sunshine than anybody imagines; indeed, the reciprocal influence of inward and outward

beauty would never be doubted, could every one take a peep at Mary's little private library, and see how the beauty of the spirit was nurtured, and then how it expanded on the bright world without. Still Mary had her dreams of greatness, and her vanity peeped forth not seldom, but she had grown gentle and lovable, and withal, sensible and modest.

Since Allen had decided on learning a trade, he had secretly cherished a plan for his two younger brothers, and indeed, his decision was influenced in no small degree, by this same generous plan. The assistance that he had refused from the family, he was resolved to give them, and he commenced the education of Richard and James, even before the term of his apprenticeship expired. His future intentions, however, were not made known to them, and their strongest inducement to study, beside love for the subject, was to accomplish this before Allen came home, or attempt that because Allen thought it useful.

To all appearance, Robert May sailed smoothly along, and, maugre his reiterated

complaints of the coldness and selfishness of the world, his letters to Allen were full of bright anticipations for the future. But Allen was not the only one who shared in these anticipations. To Mary, they came as golden links in the chain of every-day life—love and ambition both pointed to the same object, and much as she owed her brother, and much as she loved him, there was something very like contempt for him in her heart, when she compared his humbler aspirations with those of Robert May. It was Mary's one fault—who has not more? Ever since Mr. Dawson came to the Corners, Mary had been the confidante of the shy student, and no plan for future aggrandizement could he suggest, but enlisted all her sympathies. In every airy castle builded by the imagination of Robert May, Mary took the deepest interest, twining all the flowers around it, and frequently putting on the top-most stone, till, how neither of them scarcely knew, their interests became identified, and before the young student had spent more than one vacation at the Corners, jests and smiles, and meaning glances met them at every turn, and they were, as by

general consent, left to each other's society. As to the young people themselves, the *I* and *you* were turned into *we*, and brighter than ever, danced hope's gilded meteors in their far-off future. To fit herself to become the wife of Robert May, was now Mary's sole object, the one dream of her nights and days, and to this, everything was brought to contribute. Books and society, and the world of nature, were all laid under contribution; if she went to the neighboring villages, it was *to observe* with an immediate view to her own improvement, if she read a book, it was to prepare herself for his companionship, and if she looked out upon a beautiful scene, her pleasure was heightened by the reflection that she could be pleased, and the evidence thus afforded of a taste refined, and worthy of him. Mary's ambition was all turned into a new channel. The hopes that were cramped and shackled when self was their object, now found a limitless field, and, expanded on a second self, they became more refined, higher and holier.

While Allen Lucas had become master of his craft, and by his daily toil, was assist-

ing his brothers to a thorough education, and the rest of the family were economizing all in their power, to furnish Mary with a respectable dowry, Robert May was still bending over his books with a perseverance worthy of all honor, but with a heartless disregard for the sacrifices others were making for him, that could not be too much condemned.

Years dally not for pleasures or for pains, and at last, Robert May gained the point on which for eight long years, his eye had been fixed. Ere this, however, he had seen the kind indulgent father, who had toiled and sacrificed all for him, within his coffin; his glad, gay sisters had become all unlike themselves, and want, and sorrow and misery had taken up their abode in his once happy home. His mother, who had been an invalid for years, was now entirely dependent on his sisters, and he could do nothing for them. Worse still, Mr. May, who, until a father's pride had made him a recreant to his principles, had boasted that he owed no man a penny, for two or three years past, had contracted debts, that swallowed up the value of the

little farm, and he had left his family entirely destitute of the means of subsistence, farther than their own hands could gain it.

Robert bore his examination well, and was admitted to the bar, but when Allen Lucas, without waiting for the congregation to disperse, grasped his hand, the congratulatory words died upon his lips, for now that the fever of excitement was passed, what had that pale, anxious, care-worn face to do with joy?

“I haven’t heard of any place for me, yet,” he said in reply to Allen’s looks rather than words, “and I am tired to death, with hoping and being disappointed. I hear of a fine situation here, and when I think it almost secure, some puppy, who has money or influential relations, steps in before me, and takes it away.”

“You must be patient—” Allen commenced.

“Patient! ay, be patient and starve! you needn’t look at my thread-bare coat, Allen, I don’t care for that, and may be I shan’t change it these five years, but I can’t live on air.”

“I have no doubt but you will gain a situation, Robert, but you must not wear yourself out with anxiety; talent will discover itself, and sooner or later, its possessor will be appreciated.”

“No, Allen, talent has little to do with making great men now-a-days. Money buys rank, and consideration, and respect; but I am friendless and poor—ay, *poor*—without a single penny to keep me from starving. This day has been the very sun of my life. Fool! how I have longed for it, and lived over and over again all its incidents and—no matter—only wait a little, and I will teach these gray-beards that I am not so insignificant as they suppose.”

“Who? what do you mean, Robert?”

“Do you see that fair-haired fellow yonder, he with the opera-glass? There! now he is quizzing us, the impudent puppy! You heard his answers—do you believe I should have been admitted, if I had given them?”

“Would you change places with him, Robert?”

“No, no! but you see what it is to carry

one's brains in the pocket, and how those venerable judges—”

“Come, come, Robert, you're in a murderous humor to-night, and I'll not hear another word. Mary has been waiting for us this half hour—”

“I can't see Mary to-night—let her be happy if she can, my murderous humor would not make her more so.”

“But her gay one will make you more so; come, I shall carry you off, in spite of yourself,” and drawing the young misanthrope's arm within his own, Allen hurried him away to the hotel, unheeding all remonstrances.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISAPPOINTMENTS THE PORTION OF ALL.

“JUST twenty-four!” said Allen Lucas, as the stage-coach whirled him towards his native place, “just twenty-four! and how I have been prospered! I have obtained my degree without studying a single day within college walls, and have put Dick and Jemmy in a fair way to rival me. They are fine little fellows, and not a penny expended on them will be thrown away. And now for Robert and Mary, poor things! This forever looking on the dark side, is the bane of their life. I wish they were not quite so ambitious, and would be content to begin the world with the little we can give them. The few hundreds father has saved, is a fair portion for one whose first lesson was economy, and I can well afford to set them up in house-keeping—” At the word house-keeping, Allen Lucas became suddenly thoughtful.

It was evident that he was thinking of Robert and Mary no longer, for the disturbed look passed away, and a calm, quiet smile settled on his handsome features. "I will see her to-night," he at last said, starting up, and crushing his hat-crown against the top of the coach; "there is no use in waiting any longer, for my business is prosperous far beyond my expectations, and she is not so aspiring as Mary. I have at last, put everything in the right train, and this is all that is wanting to make me happy." The stage-coach neared the Corners, but Allen did not wait for it to draw up before his father's door. He caught a glimpse of a white muslin dress by the river side, and in a few minutes, he stood within a stone's throw of Lizzy Parker. Lizzy was not alone. A slender, graceful youth, with a face brimming over with mirthfulness, was bending one knee before her, and in a tone of mock gallantry, begging some favor. If the stranger's careless and somewhat outre costume, all corresponding with the green hunting-frock, had not called to Allen's mind the returned Westerner, the face, the figure, and the attitude, could not have been mis-

taken. Lizzy did not enact the queen very well, for she laughed confusedly, and finally, tearing off the velvet band that confined her luxuriant tresses, she threw it towards him, and retreated a few steps, laughing more heartily than before. The youth seized at once upon the treasure, at the same time leaving a hasty kiss upon the fair hand that granted it so ungraciously, and then busied himself with knotting it around a wreath of flowers that lay upon the ground. "That is for her head," thought Allen, "and she is evidently well pleased with the offering," and he drew himself more within the shadow of the friendly elms. Allen waited until the fair violet was crowned with sister flowers, and, arm in arm, the youthful lovers, for such they evidently were, had disappeared among the trees, and then he turned away, and with a slow step, proceeded homeward. "Yes, it is true," he murmured, "I am respected, but no one loves me, and I have toiled and toiled my life long for this—she cares more for his folly than—" Allen paused. Words of bitterness were for the first time for years, hovering on his lips, but he did not speak

them. "No, no," he exclaimed with energy, "I will not be unjust; I love him too, as a brother I love Liph Green, and this shall not destroy our friendship."

Allen made no haste to reach home, for his mind was entirely occupied by another subject. He knew that his early friend had yet a touch of his former recklessness, but the goodness of his heart was unquestionable, and when he remembered his never-failing vivacity, the peculiar grace which characterized his every word and action, the headlong impetuosity with which he would rush into danger, and sacrifice everything for the sake of his friends, together with his warm-hearted generosity, delicacy of feeling, and characteristic integrity, he did not wonder that he had stolen so successfully into the heart of Lizzy Parker. Liph Green, even when a boy, never did or said anything as other people would, and he possessed the art of winning the love of even those who most condemned his actions. He doubtless owed much of this power of fascination, to the dash of chivalry in his composition, and his unceasing flow of spirits; but the warm fountain within, which

gushed forth despite of coldness and unkindness on every human being, was the strongest magnet to draw around him kindred hearts.

“Yes, Lizzy has done well,” Allen at last repeated, “I ought not to wish it otherwise—they will doubtless be very, very happy.” He stood at his father’s door. He placed his hand upon the latch, and then withdrew it—he could not bear to meet the happy faces within, for he had for the first time brought to those who loved him, a heavy heart. There was a rustle behind him, and immediately a light scarf was thrown over his eyes, a little hand all quivering with agitation grasped his wrist, and he was commanded in a whisper to “stand still and *guess*.” He turned and caught in his arms, not Mary, but Nannie Green.

“How dare you?—don’t kiss me!—there, if you do again—I,—I tell you I am a young lady—almost fourteen, yes, almost—‘sweet sixteen’ in two years, think of that.”

“Not fourteen these six months yet—don’t think to cheat me, Nannie; why you would be glad now to sit in my lap, and be rocked

to sleep as you used to. Now don't open those big eyes of yours, such airs are very unbecoming in a young lady, and these long curls—"

"Ha, ha, how I should look with my hair strained up into a comb. I've got some news for you, Allen. Liph has come home, and he is going to marry Lizzy Parker, and they will stay here as long as the old people live—I hope they will live forever! Just think of a wedding—next week it will be, and you have come just in the nick of time—don't be so fidgety about going in, there's nobody at home, they've all gone to Smithville."

"So when I come back, lonely and tired, I find the house empty, and my little pet metamorphosed—"

"No, I will be a little girl to you, Allen, because you played school-master to me once, and you really seem old and demure, but to nobody else I protest. Yes, now I think of it, Allen, you look very old, ten years older than when you were here last, and so sober!"

"I am not very happy, Nannie."

"Not happy!" and every dimple fled from Nannie's face, and her sparkling eye became

soft and humid. "Now don't be frightened, my good little girl, I am not at all miserable, I assure you."

"O don't try to take it back—you are *not very happy*,—that is strange for you, Allen. Come, we will go into Mary's parlor, and you shall tell me all about it."

"I have nothing to tell, Nannie, I am only a little sad as men will sometimes be, you know, without cause."

"Other men may be, but you are never sad without cause, Allen; if I *am* a little girl, I know you too well to believe that. You wouldn't make so good a school-master as you did, when you told me how wicked it was to equivocate."

"Perhaps not—we will let it pass now—"

"Yes, that is the best way, let it pass. You should have said, though, I am unhappy, Nannie, but I can not tell you why, and then I should have pitied you without asking a single question."

"Well, pity me, now; yours is the only pity I would have, but don't say anything to Mary, of my dull spirits."

“No, it would make her very unhappy. Brothers are not very often loved as you are, Allen.”

The young man's face brightened, and he murmured half unconsciously, “yes, I am loved—Mary shall at least be happy—I can give them all now.”

“Allen,” whispered Nannie Green, “forgive me if I am officious, but I feel as though I had a right to say one word to you. You carried me in your arms from my mother's grave, and I sobbed myself to sleep upon your shoulder. You encouraged Liph, when everybody cried out against him for his horror of pauperism, and you have done more towards making him a man—don't interrupt me, Allen, you know it is true, or if you don't, everybody else does; father speaks of it every day. What I owe to you—”

“Excuse me, Nannie, you have said enough of these things.”

“Well, then, I have proved my right to be very impertinent.”

“Say what you please,” Allen began hesitatingly, for he felt sure that all this prelude

could introduce but one subject, "yet remember that there are some things—"

"No, dear Allen, nothing that your little pupil, your pet, your sister can not say to you," and Nannie clasped her little hands together, and lowered her voice. "You are doing wrong, very, very wrong, to wear yourself out for those who will only ask more, those who will never thank you, and never give a thought to your weary limbs, and lonely heart. Robert May is a heartless, bad man—he don't deserve Mary, though, if she will marry him, let her; but, Allen, don't kill yourself for them, don't care for everybody but yourself, and then when your health is destroyed, and your hair grows gray with toil and sorrow—" Nannie's picture was a little too much for her, and again she sobbed herself to sleep on her old tutor's shoulder. When she awoke, it was to find the other arm occupied by Mary, and the room made a very Babel, by the confusion of a multitude of voices. Her first glance was into Allen's face, but the shadow had passed away, and the expression there was one of heart-felt happiness. "Yes," said she, "it makes him

happy to see others so ; he will kill himself for them."

At the first opportunity, Allen whispered, "You guessed all wrong, but, Nannie, don't try to guess again."

A proud flush overspread the child's face, and she drew her hand from his. "Guess, Allen! how can you think me so mean? I know it was not proper for me to say what I did, but I hate propriety when it interferes with better feelings. To think I tried to guess! You have changed, Allen, grown suspicious, and you don't understand me."

"I do understand you, my own darling pupil, I read that kind heart of yours like an open page, and you must not mind one thoughtless word; I do understand you, and am grateful for the unselfish interest—now, do not stand back, biting your red lips, and playing the young lady to me. Nannie, Nannie, I am sad and lonely, my head aches, and my heart is weary—"

"I will be your own little girl again, and always, whatever you say to me. Put your head on the pillow, Allen, and dream of all

the good you have done, and that will rest your heart."

"Is that your own remedy, my sweet physician?"

"O, I never need it—I shall always be happy, where you, and father, and Liph, and Lizzy are."

"There is such a mixture of the child and woman about her, "thought Allen, as a moment after, Nannie was tumbling on the floor, in company with Mary's kitten, "that I believe she is half right in saying I don't understand her. She startles me by her shrewdness, and yet she is as true and simple-hearted as when she used to sit on my knee, and read baby-stories. I wonder where she picked up that notion about Robert—he is ambitious, selfish it may be, but not heartless—no, not heartless—O if he *should* prove so!" Allen's own disappointment had made him distrustful, gloomy forebodings hovered over his mind, and it was with difficulty that he could bear his part in conversation. Early the next morning, he announced his intention of limiting his visit to one day, for he could not bear to meet the

faces of those he loved best, and employment was better suited to his state of feeling than leisure.

“Then let us make the most of this short time,” said Mary, “we will send for Julia, and Nannie, and Lizzy—”

“Let us spend it by ourselves, dear Mary.”

“Why, how strange you have grown, Allen; for Robert, it would be nothing unusual, but you are so fond of company.”

“My mother and sister are the best company in the world within doors, and it will take me a great while to go over the farm and see what has been done, and hear what is going to be done.”

“But, unless you have serious objections, Allen, I should like to make a small tea party, it would please our friends, you know.”

“Do as you please, Mary, but lest I have no opportunity to see you alone, here is a trifle which I wish you to use in any way you think proper. I will also add something to your little—”

“Allen, brother, this is too much—keep your own hard earnings to yourself—I will not rob the whole family for my benefit.”

“I do not need it, Mary—no one has been robbed for you, it is all a free-will offering.”

“This more than compensates,” thought Allen, as he felt his sister’s heart throbbing against his own, “they must be happy.”

Allen went out to view the farm, and Mary sat down to write to her lover. A few months only had passed, since Robert had received his diploma, but to the impatient young barrister, they were ages. He was a thorough student, and a fine pleader, but he lacked those more shining qualities, the tact and insinuating address, which win at once the favor of the public, and he had not as yet, been favored with business. “Be patient, stay where you are best known, and in time, you will be appreciated,” was Allen’s advice to him. But Robert May could not be patient, he had toiled long enough, and it was time he reaped some reward. This was the burden of his letters to Mary, and hers were full of encouragement and hope. Now her heart was light indeed, for she had good news to communicate, and her little hand quivered like a bird as it glided rapidly over the paper.

“How excited you are, Mary,” said Allen, who had entered unperceived, and stood by while she made two or three unsuccessful attempts to seal the letter.

“If you knew how much trouble he has had, and how this will relieve his mind, you wouldn’t wonder that I am so happy. He will get it to-morrow evening. How I wish Jim was back.”

“He has come—what will you give me—” and Allen held a letter far above his head.

“O, I was sure it would come to-day—it has been so long—give it me! do, dear Allen, quick. May be there is something in it I ought to answer.”

“A true lover’s letter,” said Allen as he saw the sheet unfolded, “no, nothing on the margin; I thought that was the place for sweet things. Good heavens, Mary! look at this paper! Robert May married to Isabel B.! What does it mean? It must be a false report! What says the letter?”

Mary did not move a muscle; her face grew pale as she read, but she stood proudly and firmly until she had finished the last line. The announcement in the paper was only too

true. Isabel B. was the daughter of a certain Judge of high standing and extended influence, but she was an ignorant, narrow-minded woman, whose peculiarities Robert had often ridiculed, and whose weakness he despised. The young barrister was capable of appreciating a character like that of Mary Lucas, he loved her better than any one but himself, and it required a strong effort to pen the words of separation. Yet his ruling principle must be gratified, influential friends he must have to give him consequence, and he chose rather to be the son-in-law of Judge B., than the husband of Mary Lucas. "We both have talents," said his letter, "and that is all—we are both ambitious, but together our ambition can not be gratified; it is better for both that we part and form some other connection, that at least one of our young dreams may be realized. I know your pride is equal to my own, and your aspirations are as high, and so you will be able to appreciate my motives, though Allen and others may blame me for what I have done." Mary crushed the letter beneath her feet, and thanked Heaven that he had made himself known

before it was too late. But the next day the red spot had faded from her cheek, and the fire in her eye was dim. Well was it for Mary that her brother was by to sympathize with and soothe her.

“You must never leave me now, Allen,” she said, and the young architect at once concluded to make his father’s house his home, where if his business, which might extend into the neighboring villages, was not quite so profitable, he could at least have the satisfaction of making himself useful. There are some persons whose especial office it seems to be to soothe the afflicted, and remove the difficulties that beset the pathway of life, and one of these was Allen Lucas. The May’s in particular owed many little kindnesses both of word and deed to his care, for Robert was out in the busy world winning golden opinions from the multitude, and he had but little time to bestow on a worn-out mother, peevish and garrulous from long sickness, and sisters whose minds were uncultivated, and whose gay spirits had been bowed to the very earth with trouble.

“If we had more to give him, he would not neglect us so,” Julia often said, and Allen Lucas had reason to believe it was true. Robert May received empty honors from men who cared not whether he rose or fell, and was unloved even by the wife of his bosom, while Allen Lucas was respected by all his acquaintances, loved by a large circle of friends, and almost idolized by those who knew him intimately.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SCENE AT THE CAPITAL.

IT was on a fine, clear morning, during the winter session of Congress, that a party of travelers, somewhat striking in their appearance, and yet entirely free from ostentation, drew up before the door of one of the principal hotels, in the city of Washington. The gentleman, a fine, intellectual-looking man, in the summer of his days, appeared a comfort-seeker of the better order, for all his arrangements were made with a view to ease and convenience, and there was something so simple and unpretending about the whole party, as to prove them quite above the necessity of pretense. He was accompanied by two ladies, the elder of whom mirrored his own features in her face, softened and subdued by a pensive, thoughtful expression, that stole from the depths of her large, dark eyes, and lingered in a sad, loving smile

around a mouth remarkable for nothing but the exquisite beauty of that strange, sweet smile. This lady had evidently seen more than thirty summers, for the smoothness of her cheek, and roundness of her form, had in a measure disappeared, though she still preserved as much freshness and bloom, as is the lot of American women of that age; her bearing was graceful and dignified, and in all respects she had probably never been so interesting or even so beautiful, as at this period, when the flowers of her spring-time lay withering on her brow. If the soul had been wanting, the mechanism of the face might have served as a foil to many of the gay belles constantly passing and re-passing, but there was an angel in that face, and its charm was unrivaled. The other lady was several years younger, in the very heyday of life and bloom, the glory and pride of beautiful womanhood. Care had never laid its cankering finger on her heart, and if she had ever looked on sorrow, it was in days long ago, when every impression is like letters traced on sand. Her step was stately, and even proud, as she passed along the line of

gazers that seem as necessary to the piazza of a hotel, as the columns that support it; but once within the door of a private parlor, and her manner assumed the playfulness of childhood.

“And so this is the far-famed Washington,” she exclaimed with affected pettishness, as she flung herself on a sofa, “the head-quarters of that great nation of which we were so proud only a little while ago; I declare, it looks like a Swiss village.”

“A fair challenge, Nannie,” said the gentleman, laughing, “but an entire failure, notwithstanding. Not a word will I say, even for Washington, until I have had some dinner.”

“Then patience help me,” exclaimed the lively lady, throwing off her traveling hat, and in the act, unloosing a comb, that sent an immense volume of hair curling in wavy lines, and floating almost to her feet, “for if I should die of ennui among these scattered hamlets, not a word of sympathy should I get from Mary.”

“Your impatience comes too late,” said the elder lady, with a smile. “When we were

in a real hamlet, and completely drenched with rain, you did nothing but laugh."

"O that was so ludicrous; I laugh every time I think how we all crawled under one umbrella, like a parcel of scared chickens, and how that square-shouldered Englishman with the red bandanna, fumed and fretted."

"There was nothing ludicrous, however, about the dark den that we stumbled into the first night we spent in Florence, and yet you did not complain, but kept up your courage and spirits bravely."

"Ah! that was the certainty of being in Florence, Italy. Who would think of complaining in that cradle of the Muses?"

"And who would think of complaining in this cradle of Liberty?" echoed the gentleman.

"Conclusive!" said the lady, "I am of course convinced, but somehow, you have said a word for Washington, even before dinner."

"A more heartfelt word, notwithstanding its playfulness," said the elder lady, "than some of those self-styled patriots, that come here to give us laws, would pronounce, I have no doubt."

“Self-styled, Mary!” was the earnest reply, “if not to them, where shall we look for patriotism? they are elected by free men, and stand up before the nations of the earth, to give wholesome laws to a free people. World-styled patriots, you might with more propriety call them.”

“I believe politicians generally,” remarked her companion, “use patriotism as a varnish merely, to gloss over and give smoothness to their schemes—there is but very little of it in the original composition.”

“One too severe, a very little prejudiced, I should imagine, and the other too enthusiastic,” said the gentleman. “Bad men climb to power, and good men are elevated to it. The frailties and virtues of human nature mingle in the hall of legislation, as they do everywhere else, but while the nation is intelligent and moral, virtue must predominate.”

“I plead guilty to prejudice,” said the elder lady, “though I believe I have no very unreasonable share of it. Did you recognize the apparition that I pointed out to you, as we passed this morning?”

“That old man on the side-walk?”

“He is not a month older than you, Allen.”

“You must have been mistaken, Mary, that man was sixty years old.”

“It was Robert May.”

“Nonsense! why, he was as crooked as Grandfather Parker. Robert May is a member of the lower House, however, and if you have no objections, I should like to see him once more—in public, I mean; of course, we should not seek his acquaintance.”

“I am certain that I was not mistaken, Allen, though I can not tell how I recognized him, every trace of our quondam friend has disappeared. I should be very glad to look at him once more too, for although I think I am completely cured of undue ambition, I should like to see the lesson written out full and plain, as I know it will be on his face.”

Before this time, our little party has probably been recognized, and we have but a word to say in explanation. Allen Lucas had remained a bachelor until he was more than thirty years of age, and by industry and economy, he had amassed a little fortune. It had early been his intention to visit foreign

countries, for the sake of improvement in his art, but now that he had the wherewithal to put his scheme into execution, his consideration for others, stood directly in the way of its accomplishment. Since the day that his sister had thrown herself on his sympathies, she had been his constant companion, and it seemed selfish to divide their sources of enjoyment now. Then there was another, Allen would fain have associated with her, for his betrothed bride was the orphan, Nannie Green, and there was almost a fatherly care mingling with his love for her, some like that he felt when he first led her to Mr. Moreton's door. To include these two in his plans, he must defer the execution of them yet several years, and the more he thought of it, the more difficult it seemed to leave them. The thought of Nannie Green's bringing a fortune with her, had never occurred to him, for in spite of the great change in her circumstances, she had always been to him the helpless orphan, deserving of all care and sympathy. He still toiled on, success attending his efforts, and when he wedded, instead of the little beggar girl; Miss Anna Moreton, the

heiress, the aspect of his affairs was so changed, that his contemplated excursion was merged in a bridal trip to England, and the tour of the continent. Allen's devotion to his art, led him to examine every foreign structure of note attentively, and he had returned richly laden with information that would be invaluable to him in after years.

"That is he," whispered Mary Lucas to her sister, as they looked from the gallery of the House of Representatives, upon the venerable men of whom that body is mostly composed.

"Not that," said Nannie, "you must be mistaken."

Mary shook her head. "Look at those thin, closely-pressed lips, Nannie, and those small, black, hard-looking eyes—even in his best days I was afraid of them—and then, that wavering, undecided motion of the hand—he is the caricature of his former self, but don't you recognize him now, Nannie?"

"It may be—ye—s—yes! now I do! his little eyes glitter, and he gives the chair just such a look as I have seen Liph get from him, many a time."

It was not strange, that Nannie found so much difficulty in recognizing Robert May, for he was indeed, as Mary said, "the caricature of his former self." His hair was grizzled by premature age, his eyes had sunken deeply into the shadow of his projecting eyebrows, his cheeks were hollow and bloodless, and his bended form, and yellow, shriveled hand, could not have been considered the property of youth, or even of middle age. But superadded to this, were forbidding exhibitions of the enclosed spirit, that had made this wreck of its fair casket. Sometimes he assumed a listless air, and a vacant expression took possession of his countenance, but this was usually transient, and gave place to a care-worn, anxious manner, like one harassed with difficulties, and wearied by disappointments. Again, his look was eager, greedy and malignant, his eye rolled from side to side with the rapidity of hurried thought, and his teeth were buried in the flesh of his nether lip; then, in a moment his chin would be resting on his bosom, his eyelids would droop, his eye peep out aslant, his finger creep along the table before him, and

the low cunning and petty malice of the fox, appear written on every feature.

“Oh he must be a terrible man!” said Nannie, with a shiver, as she clasped both hands around Mary’s wrist.

“No,” was the quiet reply, “he is a selfishly ambitious man. He is disgusted with his success, and maddened by every obstacle—he would change our form of government into an absolute monarchy if he could, and seat himself on the throne; but when there, he would be more dissatisfied than he is now. Self, is the centre and circumference of his desires, and they will gnaw deeper and deeper, until they have eaten the very life from out his heart.”

“How different from Allen! he has no time to be selfish, for every minute is employed in thinking of somebody else. Don’t you remember how he spent one whole night, laying plans for the beggars at Rome, and how the old monk laughed at his enthusiasm?”

“Yes, but he afterwards acknowledged, if there were half a dozen men like Allen, in the

city, his plans might be carried into execution."

"Allen never waits to inquire *who* is in distress, but wherever the distress is, whether in foreign lands or his own neighborhood, there go his heart, and head, and hand. The millionaire, who doles out his round dollars ever so generously while he lives, and leaves the aggregate of his wealth to charity at his death, can seldom accomplish as much good, as Allen will in his life time, for his whole soul is in what he does, and his advice is often worth more than his money. We shall never be rich, in gold and lands I mean, but O if I can, by closely imitating him, lay up as much treasure in heaven as he has already accumulated there, I can ask no more."

Mary smiled a reply, and clasped more closely the hand of the young wife, but now the confusion that had enabled them to hold this little dialogue had passed away, and Robert May was the next speaker. He was eloquent and subtle, and he wove a web of sophistry, that it required all the skill of Allen Lucas, as he gazed intently from his stand in the gentleman's gallery, to unravel.

Hammer

“That man’s mother and sisters, were left to receive a burial at the hands of charity,” whispered Allen in his sister’s ear, as they passed from the House, “and but for our dear Nannie’s kindness in encouraging, and good sense in advising, his only remaining sister would have been irretrievably lost. I have always wondered at Nannie’s energetic interference on that occasion, and at her practical wisdom in giving the poor girl a trade.”

“‘Her husband also, and he praiseth her,’” said Mary Lucas, aloud, while a look of pleased affection beamed from her eyes, “the world has no higher happiness for me than this.”

“Nor for me,” said Allen, as he dropped some coin into the extended palm of a blind beggar.

“Nor for me,” echoed Nannie, looking into her husband’s face.

The crowd jostled them, and the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, passed by them in quick succession, all unconscious that there were individuals in their midst, who bore in their hearts a heaven, made by the union of benevolence and contentment.





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