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DOING HIS BEST.

BY

J. T. TROWBRIDGE,

AUTHOR OF "JACK HAZARD AND HIS FORTUNES," "A CHANCE FOR HIMSELF,"
"LAWRENCE'S ADVENTURES," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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DOING HIS BEST.

CHAPTER I.

A SCHOOL-HOUSE THIRTY YEARS AGO.



EACON CHATFORD reached up to the old-fashioned clock-case, opened it, and took out a key.

“Here, boys!” he cried to the youngsters in the kitchen, “which of you is going to unlock the school-house and build a good fire for the master this morning? I guess you are the lad, Phineas!”

“Let the master build his own fires,” muttered Phineas. “Masters always have done it in our deestrick, and they will, for all me.”

“I’ll do it,” said one of his companions, stepping forward.

“I’ll go too, if Jack does!” and Phineas sprang to

get possession of the key. A scuffle ensued, for it was already in Jack's hand, and he was not inclined to give it up.

"There, there, boys!" said the deacon, "it's nothing you need quarrel about. Both go, if you want to. The school-house may need brushing up a little, for though it was left in good order when Annie's school closed, some roguish boys have been in at one of the windows since. I meant to have it seen to, but forgot all about it."

"The day you've looked forward to so long, Jack, has come at last," said Mrs. Chatford, smiling. "I wish Phineas was half as eager for school as you are."

"Maybe I should n't care any more about it than he does, if I had had as much of it," said Jack. "I've a good deal of lost time to make up."

"You've been making it up pretty well since you came to live with us, I should think, by Annie's account. She says you can do as hard sums as Phineas can, — and I know you can read as well."

"Ho!" sneered Phineas, enviously; "guess you don't know! You have n't heard me read as well as I can; and as for ciphering, — I can cipher him into the middle of next week! I can cipher his legs off!"

"I hope you won't try," replied Jack; "I've no legs to spare!"

"Phin's great at bragging," said the elder son, Moses, good-naturedly. "But if he don't take care, before winter's over he won't be in sight of Jack's coat-tails, in ciphering or anything else."

Phin, not knowing what else to say, fell back upon a celebrated blunder of Jack's, asking derisively, "Read the Bible much lately, Jack? Say! do ye remember Joseph's 'coat of many collars'? O Jack!"

Jack paid no attention to this taunt; but, hastily changing his coat and vest, combing his hair, and taking his books and slate under his arm, he started for the school-house, accompanied by Phin.

"There comes old Lion!" cried Phin. "Don't send him back! I tell you! let's make him lie down under our seat, and then, if the master goes to lick us, set him on!"

But Jack did not seem to regard this lively idea as altogether practicable. Calling the dog to his side, he began to reason with him.

"See here, old fellow! you're a mighty knowing dog, but you're not quite up to the spelling-book; do you think you are? Did n't know we were going to school, did you? 'T would make the children laugh and play, to see a dog at school. Don't be silly. Good by!"

"I believe he understands you!" said Phin. Indeed, the dog, after standing for some time and watching the boys as they went down the road, turned about and trotted homewards, like the reasonable dog he was. "I'll be inside the school-house first," then said Phin. "Bet my knife against yours."

"O, pshaw! you know I can run faster than you can. I don't want to get your knife away from you," said Jack.

But Phin insisted. "Come, you don't dare take me up!" He spoke so confidently, that Jack, never suspecting the treachery that might lurk behind the wager, accepted it; and at the word "Now!" from Phin, they started. Jack soon outstripped him; and Phin, laughing, fell into a slow walk.

"I'll have a good fire by the time you get there!" cried Jack from a distance of several rods, and felt in his pocket for the key. Not finding it, he explored his other pockets. "Hullo, Phin! have you seen the key?"

"I saw you put it in your pocket; and now, if you have lost it —"

"You've got it, you rogue!"

Phin laughed. "Now who'll be in the school-house first? O Jack! What do you say now?"

"I say you're a first-class pickpocket. Never mind. I *will* win the bet now!"

"You can't get in without the key!"

"See if I can't!"

"Hold on!" shouted Phin, as Jack began to run again. "I'll go back home! I'll throw the key into the ditch, if you don't wait for me!"

Deaf to these boyish threats, Jack kept on running, and soon reached the old red brick school-house at the corners. It stood a little back from the two roads which there crossed each other; but there was no fence, no yard about it, only a strip of hard-trodden ground before the door, in the angle formed by the two streets. The roadside was the play-ground. Not

a shade tree was near. Behind the school-house was a field, enclosed by a zigzag fence. This came up to opposite corners of the house, the brick walls of which completed the enclosure, and made a saving of rails.

Jack tried the padlock on the door, and, finding that it could not be opened without a key, took a convenient rail from the fence, and put it up to one of the windows. These were placed high, to prevent school-children within from looking out, and rogues without from getting in. He climbed up the rail, and found that the window-fastenings had already been forced, as Mr. Chatford conjectured. He raised the sash, and, entering head foremost, let himself down by his hands upon a broad desk or counter within.

"O, that ain't fair!" cried Phin, coming around the corner just in time to see the pair of legs disappear; "breaking into a winder! I should think you'd tried that once too often a'ready! Got took up for it, any way. I bet I'd be in the *door* first; and here I am! I'll take that knife, if you please," added Master Chatford, confidently putting out his hand as he came in through the entry.

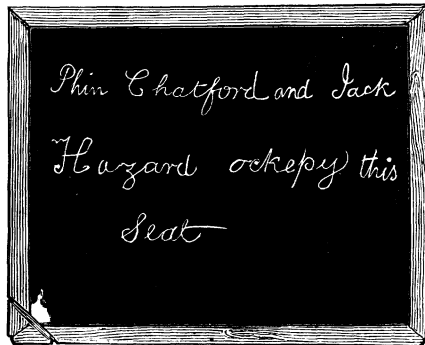
"You thought I was going to call on you for your knife, and said that to get the start of me," laughed Jack. "But I don't want your knife."

"Do you know, that 's Squire Peternot's lot behind the school-house, and it's his rail you took? Better look out for the old man; he 's got a grudge against you!" said Phin.

“I was just going to put the rail back and bring in my books,” said Jack.

“Put ’em on this desk, and hurry, or some other fellers ’ll be here. This is the boys’ side, and these are the best seats in the house, — close to the door ; we can cut out first when school’s dismissed.”

Jack was not anxious to share that privilege with Phin ; indeed, he would have preferred *not* to sit with that young gentleman in school. But Phin, notwithstanding his taunts and sneers, had a vast respect for Jack’s courage and prowess, and determined to make him his champion that winter against the oppression of the big boys. So, while Jack was preparing to kindle a fire in the great oblong stove that stood on a broad brick hearth in the centre of the room, Phin placed the books on a shelf under the counter, and, to establish still more securely their claim to the spot, set up his slate, on which he had written, in a coarse, uneven hand, this notice to all whom it might concern : —



The counter extended about three sides of the room, sloping from a level strip against the wall, and jutting over a bench of heavy plank. The strip was just wide enough to hold inkstands and books, while the counter was designed for a writing-desk. The narrow edge of it also served as the back to the pupils' seats when their faces were turned towards the centre of the room. When one wished to turn the other way, he lifted his legs, made a pivot of his spinal column, whirled about on the bench, to which his trousers assisted in giving a notable polish, dropped his lower extremities under the counter, and was supposed to be absorbed in his studies with his face towards the wall.

Before the bench was a narrow aisle, just wide enough for a file of pupils to pass through ; and still inside of that was a low bench for the smaller ones, extending, like the other, about three sides of the room, except where a passage was cut through it midway, for the use of those occupying the seats behind it. This low bench had a back to it, very convenient for the big boys behind to rest their feet upon, — too much so sometimes for the satisfaction of the little ones, who did not like the feeling of muddy boot-soles and square toes against their sides and shoulders. It was considered a point of discipline in those days not to permit the big boys to annoy the small ones in that way.

All this wood-work was of soft pine, which offered tempting facilities to youthful artists for practice with

their jack-knives. There was hardly a square foot of bench or counter in which some ingenious blade had not hollowed out an imaginary canoe, or carved coarse images of tomahawks, horses, and canal-boats, — not to mention fox-and-geese boards, and many a hack and cut made in the mere effervescence of youthful spirits, without apparent artistic design.

The foundations of the house having yielded a little, the end walls were diversified by two surprising cracks, running in irregular lines from top to bottom. These had been filled with mortar, making the red brick-work look as if severed by streaks of dingy gray lightning; and the house had been kept from tumbling by two iron rods passed crosswise through it and made fast outside the walls. The rods served also to encourage in the pupils the performance of gymnastic feats; and Phin told Jack that often, in the absence of the master, he had seen a dozen or twenty boys hanging and swinging from them like so many monkeys.

The boys could at first discover very few marks of mischief done by the rogues who had forced the window-fastenings. The master's table was placed legs upward on the stove; and on the blackboard was scrawled this imperfectly spelled and recklessly punctuated sentence: "Multiply cation, Is, vexasion devizon Is, as, Bad, the, rule of, 3 It, pusles Me, and, practis, Makes, Me, Mad."

And now, Jack having succeeded in starting a fire in the stove, a more serious piece of mischief was discovered. The smoke poured out into the room,

and, looking up, he saw that an elbow of the pipe was wanting. Search was made for it with tearful eyes in vain, until Phin suggested that it must be "up garret."

Over one corner of the room was a scuttle, the lid of which was imperfectly closed; and Jack, convinced that the missing elbow was there, made a spring for it. From the counter he swung himself upon the iron rod, and from the iron rod he managed to reach the opening above it.

"It's dark as Egypt up here!" he cried, pushing back the lid, and thrusting his head into the hole. Getting his feet upon the rod, he stood up, with the upper half of his body in the black attic, and felt all about as far as his hands could reach. Soon Phin heard something rattle; and then Jack cried, "Here it is! catch it!"

Down came the elbow, and after it the old school-house broom. "Here's something else," said Jack, "I don't know what. Look!"

"It's the old iron basin they keep water in on the stove," said Phin. "The shovel and poker must be up there too; I don't see them anywhere."

Shovel and poker were both found; and at last Jack, with dusty coat and tumbled hair, dropped from the rod.

"I never should have thought of looking up there for anything," he said.

"Nor I," said Phin; "but one noon two winters ago, some fellers threw the master's hat up there

while he was talking with the girls in the entry. He did n't miss it till school was out at night, when all the scholars had gone home ; he looked and looked for it, and finally went to his boarding-place with his red silk handkerchief tied over his head. He came to the school-house next morning, with three big hickory whips on his shoulder ; and there was his hat on the table, just where he had left it ! It was all a mystery to him, and would have been to this day, I suppose, if he had n't licked the truth out of the fellers that looked guilty."

CHAPTER II.

JACK'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL.

WHILE Phin was telling this story, Jack had placed the table under the opening in the stove-pipe, got upon it, and restored the elbow. Just as he was getting down, half a dozen boys with books and slates under their arms came stamping and shouting into the room.

"Hullo!" said one of them, making a rush for the seats Phin had chosen, "I guess not!"

"Not what, Lon Gannett?" demanded Phin.

"I guess Phin Chatford and Jack Hazard *don't* o-c-k-e-p-y this seat! Me and Rant come early a purpose to git it, did n't we, Rant?"

"So did we. Come!" screamed Phin, "let our books be! — Jack! Jack! don't let him!"

"Look here, young man!" said Jack, "what right have you to that seat?"

"I've as much right to it as you have," muttered Lon; "who be you?"

"It seems I'm a foolish sort of fellow," replied Jack. "I was so green as to believe Phin when he said there was honor among the boys here, and that if one laid claim to a seat by putting his books in it, the others would respect that claim. *I don't care anything about the seat.*"

“Nor I,” said Lon. “Come, Rant, le’s go over in the corner here.”

“Don’t touch any of my things again!” said Phin, threateningly, replacing his books; “if you do you’ll ketch it!”

“Yes, you feel perty smart now you’ve got another boy to back ye!” said Lon. “Say! is it true the trustees have hired that Dinks feller, Peternot’s nephew, to teach the school? He’s no great shakes!”

“He’ll makes shakes of you ’fore the winter’s out,” said Phin, inclined to defend his father’s choice of a teacher. “Anyhow, he’s the best that offered himself.”

More boys came in, with more stamping and shouting; then the girls began to arrive; and soon the school-room was pretty well filled with pupils, talking, laughing, drumming on the stove-pipe, throwing caps, opening and shutting the windows, playing tag, and making miscellaneous confusion. All at once there was a hush. A young man with a complacent smile and a good many pimples on his face, a large breast-pin in his shirt, and a heavy ruler in his hand, had entered unobserved. This was Mr. Byron Dinks, the new master.

The boys seemed to feel a sudden need of fresh air, and rushed out to enjoy it. Gathering in a group a few rods from the school-house, the largest among them held a council.

“See that big ruler?” said one. “I should n’t like to get it over my head!”

"Who's afraid?" said another. "I could twist that out of his hand quicker 'n lightning', and lay it over his own head! He'd better not begin savage with us!"

"You'd better be careful how you begin with him," said Moses Chatford, who had just arrived. "Boys can just as well have a pleasant school as a hard one, if they try. Where's Jack?"

"He went over to Sellick's to wash his hands, after mending the stove-pipe," said Phin. "There he comes. Hullo! what ye laughing at, Jack?"

"At one of Sellick's stories," said Jack, coming up. "About the rods that hold the school-house together. He says the iron expands in hot weather, or when there's a hot fire in the stove, and then the cracks open a little; then the cold tightens them up again."

"That's a philosophical fact," said Moses. "Nothing to laugh at."

"But hear the rest of it. He says he used to go to school in just such a school-house. A master taught there once who could n't govern the school; the children behaved so they drove him almost distracted, and he determined to quit, but he meant to have his revenge first. So one cold day he shut all the windows and the outside door, and built up a rousing fire, and by heating the rods opened the cracks; then he made all the children put their fingers in the cracks; — they thought it fun! But all of a sudden he let the cold air in, and all the fingers got pinched, and all the children were caught! Then he took his

hat and overcoat and nobody ever saw him again. The children screamed all together so loud they were heard all over town, and everybody came running, and every parent caught every child by the legs and pulled, but the cracks nipped so close not a finger could be pulled out; and as nobody understood the philosophical fact about expanding the rods by making a big fire, the house had to be taken to pieces to save the children! But I can't tell the story as he did," added Jack.

"One of Sellick's big lies," said Lon Gannett. "Hullo! there's the ruler!"

"Rap—rap—rap-rap-rap!" went the ruler on the side of the door-post; at which signal the boys went straggling in to their seats.

"A little less noise!" cried the new master, rapping sharply on the table. "Take your seats! School has begun!"

The forenoon was mostly taken up in arranging classes. This was no easy task, as the school contained pupils of every age and degree, from the six-year-old learning his letters, up to the big girl and boy of seventeen and eighteen studying the "back part of the 'rithm'tic" and natural philosophy. To add to the teacher's perplexity, pupils who should have been in the same class had in many cases brought different books, which "their folks" expected them to use, in order to save the expense of new ones.

"Who's brought g'ographies?" said Mr. Byron

Dinks. "Hush! we must have less noise!" Rap, rap! on the table. "All them that intend to study g'ography this winter will step out into the middle of the floor."

About a dozen boys and girls of various ages obeyed this summons, and arranged themselves in a line, toeing a crack before the stove. Some were bright and alert, others were dull looking, careless, and slouching. A few had complete books and atlases, some had torn books, and some had no books at all.

"Olney's, — that's right," said the master, beginning with one of the large girls. "How far have you studied?"

"I've been through it once," she replied with a simper.

"You'll go into the first class. — See here, you little shaver!" — turning sharply on a very small boy behind him, — "if you don't keep still I'll put you into the stove! head first! — Olney's, — all got Olney's? What's this? You'll have to get a new one; you can't expect to get along with a piece of a book."

"There's only twenty-one pages of my book gone," said the pupil thus addressed. "Our folks said I need n't begin to study it till the others got up to page twenty-two, then I could pitch in."

"You've no book at all," said the master, passing on to another.

"Ma said she guessed mabby I could look over with some other boy till she could get money to buy one," was the answer, with a hanging head.

“So, you’re coming to school, are ye?” said Mr. Dinks, with a sarcastic smile, arriving at Jack. “I hope you will try to behave yourself.”

Jack made no reply, but turned fiery red at this insinuating remark.

“‘Moses Chatford,’” said Byron, reading the name written on the fly-leaf of Jack’s geography. “You’re going to use his book, are you?”

“He don’t study g’ography this winter,” said Jack.

“Well, how much have you ever studied it?”

“I never studied it at all in school.”

“What did you study last winter?”

“I did n’t go to school last winter.”

“Well, the winter before?”

“I did n’t go to school then, either.”

“When *did* you go to school?” demanded Mr. Dinks in a loud voice.

Jack felt all eyes fixed upon him, while he stammered, “Four winters ago.”

“How much have you ever been to school in your life?”

“About seven weeks.”

“How happens it you never went any more? Where was ye brought up?”

“I never had much chance for schooling,” said Jack, his spirit rising; “and when I might have gone to school a little more, the master imposed upon me because I was ignorant, and that discouraged me.”

Jack looked so straight into Byron’s eyes as he said this, that that gentleman changed color in his turn.

"Hush, I say!" as a titter ran round the room.
"Can you read?"

"A little."

"Let me hear you. Begin there."

Jack was inclined to dash the book back into the master's face, when he saw the lesson that was given him. But checking the ugly impulse, he read: "B, a, ba; b, e, be; b, i, bi; b, o, bo; b, u, bu; b, y, by. C, a, ca; c, e, ce; c, i, ci; c, o, co; c, u, cu; c, y, cy."

"That will do," said the master, smiling, while the whole school laughed. "You read very well. Try this paragraph in your g'ography; see if you can read that."

Jack had been afraid that he would be afraid to read before large boys and girls who had been to school all their lives; but now he feared nothing; he felt angrily defiant of everybody. He took the book, and read the paragraph through very much as he would have sawed a stick of wood to order; acquitting himself so much better, on the whole, than was expected, that the laughing ceased, and the master looked rather chagrined.

"If you have never been to school, where have you learned so much?"

"At Mr. Chatford's, this last summer," said Jack. "Miss Felton gave me private lessons; and Moses has helped me a good deal."

"So have I," spoke up Phineas. "I've showed him about his sums."

"You can put him in almost any class, and he'll

do, he'll come along," said Moses from his seat. "He knows about as much as any boy of his age; and he can learn as fast as anybody I ever saw."

At this moment, the "little shaver" on the front seat, who had made a disturbance before, being at his mischief again, the master suddenly pounced upon him.

"I *told* you I'd put you in the stove!" Clutching him by the arm with one hand, he threw open the stove-door with the other, exposing a bed of burning coals. "Now you go!"

The child screamed and struggled in a paroxysm of fear, while some of the other children laughed, knowing of course that the master would not execute so horrible a threat. He seemed for a moment intent on stuffing the little fellow into the fire; then, relenting, he said, "Will you keep still, if I'll let you go? — What are you laughing at?" turning to another little boy.

"You would n't put him in! you would n't dare to," said the latter, with a knowing smile.

"I would n't, hey? You'll sing another tune when I've burnt all the hair off your head!" And, catching up the second boy, Byron swung him in the air, then brought him down head foremost to the very mouth of the stove. The youngster's wisdom forsook him at sight of the glowing coals, and he too began to struggle and scream with all his might. Having established the discipline of the little ones in this humane and pleasant manner, the master dropped

his second victim, with a warning to take care how he behaved, or his hair would surely get a scorching, and then proceeded with the organization of his classes.

The interruption had diverted attention from Jack, who was glad enough to sink again into obscurity.

CHAPTER III.

"STEP HEN" TREADWELL AND THE BIG BOYS.

THUS the winter school began. There were twenty-five scholars the first day, but this number was increased to about forty in the course of two or three weeks. Lastly some very large boys, who had been kept at home as long as they could work to any advantage on the farm, dropped in one by one, and took the lead in the out-door sports of the school, if not in the walks of learning.

Jack was placed in the lower classes; and there existed a good deal of prejudice against him at first, on account of his early life on the canal. He was no favorite with the master, for obvious reasons. Byron was evidently resolved to see no good in the lad who had had the famous quarrel with his uncle, Squire Peternot, and come off victorious.* But Jack, though as fond of fun as any boy, had a motive in going to school which was shared by few. The feeling that he must make up for lost time stimulated his industry; and, being naturally quick to learn, he made rapid advancement, in spite of the master's contempt and neglect.

* See "A Chance for Himself; or, Jack Hazard and his Treasure."

Out of doors, he was from the first an interesting character. His celebrated escape from Constable Sellick had established his reputation as a lad of spirit, whom it might not be safe to insult. He was regarded with curiosity by the girls, and with admiration tempered by dislike on the part of boys who envied him the fame of that exploit. He made no attempt to court the favor of any one, but minded his own business, and was always good-natured, modest, and independent. The Chatford boys, the Welby boys, and a few others who knew him, accepted him as a companion and playfellow, and the heartiness with which he entered into all their games soon conquered the prejudice of the rest.

A favorite sport, after the arrival of the big boys, was “snapping the whip.” The “whip” was composed of as many boys as could be prevailed upon to clasp hands in a line, with the largest and strongest at one end, and the smallest at the other, for a “snapper.” When all was ready, the leaders set out to run, each dragging the next in size after him; then when the whole line was in rapid motion, it was brought up with a wide sweep and a short turn, which was sure to break it in some weak part, and send the little ones flying away, heels over head, into some burying snowdrift. For the end of the “snapper” Step Hen Treadwell was a popular choice; and it was always great fun to see the vast and ever-increasing strides taken by his very short legs as the whip came round, and then his spreading arms, bulging cheeks, and star-



SNAPPING THE WHIP.

ing eyes, and flying hair, as he spun off into space, and rolled, a helpless heap, in the snow.

Step Hen was a comical little fellow, about twelve years old, whose droll figure (he was very short and "chunky"), clumsy and blundering ways, and woful want of spirit, had made him the butt of the school. His real name was not Step Hen, of course. It was Stephen. But once, having had the ill fortune to meet with it in his reading lesson, with his fatal facility for blundering he pronounced it just as it was spelled, and became from that day "Step Hen" to

his delighted school-fellows. New-comers, thinking the nickname bore some humorous reference to his peculiar style of walking, adopted it at once ; and it bid fair to stick to him through life.

Step Hen was often hurt, both in body and mind, by the rough usage of the big boys ; but he was so spiritless that a little coaxing or urging could nearly always prevail upon him to join again in their games, almost before his aches were over.

One day some boys bent down a stout little hickory-tree which grew in a corner of the fence near the school-house, and then cried, “Step Hen ! Step Hen ! Come and help us ! we can’t hold it !”

Step Hen felt flattered at being called upon to render his powerful assistance. He ran and caught hold of the bent-down top, throwing his whole weight upon it as if he had been a young giant. Then all the other boys, yelling, “Hold on, Step Hen ! hold tight, Step Hen !” suddenly let go. Up went the sapling, and up went Step Hen with it, twelve feet or more into the air, when he was flung off more violently than he was ever snapped from any whip. Whirling over and over, down he came sprawling upon all fours, in the midst of shrieks of laughter, which suddenly ceased when it was found that he lay perfectly still where he had fallen, his head having struck the frozen ground.

“Did n’t hurt ye much, did it ?” said Lon Gannett, hastily running to him and lifting him up. “Say ! guess ye ain’t hurt, be ye ?” For the boys seemed

to think that if they could convince him soon enough that he was uninjured, Step Hen would come up all right.

But Step Hen's head dropped helplessly on one side in a way frightfully suggestive of a broken neck. The boys, terrified, all started to run, just as Jack came rushing to the spot.

"Water! bring some water!" cried Jack, as he raised poor Step Hen to a sitting posture, and supported the drooping head.

"Water! water!" echoed the frightened boys. "That 'll bring him to," said one. "He ain't killed," said another. "Only stunted," said a third.

Rant Hildreth and Tip Tarbox came running with the school-house pail, slopping its contents by the way.

"Just a little! On his face!" said Jack.

But the boys, in their excitement, — thinking perhaps that if a little water would be good, a large quantity would be very good, — lifted the pail and dashed what was left of its contents over both Step Hen and Jack.

Step Hen gasped, opened his eyes, and spluttered, "Y-y-you let the tree up too quick!"

"We could n't hold it," said Lon. "It got the better of us. Hurt?"

"No, I ain't hurt," said Step Hen, faintly. "Only, — I don't know, — my hand aches."

"You should 'a' hild on," said Rant. "We told ye to hold on. Then ye would n't 'a' fell."



HOW STEP HEN "HELPED." Page 30.

“Could n’t hold on,” said Step Hen. “Tree went up with such a jerk!”

“They’re fooling you; they let it go on purpose,” said Jack. “And it’s what I call a mean trick.”

“You do, hey!” sneered Lon.

“Yes!” exclaimed Jack, indignantly. “You big fellows are always imposing on this little chap. Why can’t ye let him alone?”

“We’ll take you, next time,” said Lon, with a laugh; at which his companions, who had looked seriously alarmed and abashed until now, rallied, and exclaimed, “Yes! if he don’t like it, we can take him!”

“No danger!” replied Jack, hotly. “Bullies like you never touch a fellow who has spunk enough to defend himself.”

“Better look out what you say, or you’ll get a rap on the nose,” said Lon, with a surly grin. “Guess I’ve heard a canal-driver talk ’fore to-day; and I’ve sent a stun at the head of more’n one of your sort of blackguards!”

“Come away, Jack,” said Moses, who had arrived in time to hear the angry debate, without learning how it commenced. “You’ll get into a scrape.”

“You would n’t have me leave this boy, would you? They’ve nearly killed him, swinging him from that tree; they thought he was dead. I’m going to stand by him; I give ’em notice that I’m going to stand by this little chap after this, and any one that lays hands on him will have to lay hands on me!”

And Jack, having put Step Hen's cap on and brushed the dirt from his back, helped him into the school-house and set him in a chair by the stove where his clothes would dry. Lon and his friends meanwhile stood in a group by the fence, talking in low tones, whittling the rails, kicking the frozen ground, and casting now and then evil glances towards the door.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW BYRON DINKS KEPT SCHOOL.

WHEN, on that first Monday morning, Byron Dinks set out, ruler in hand, to take control of the district school, his old uncle, Squire Peternot, had said to him, "I would n't have ye fail this winter, Byron, for any consideration. Remember, you're in my own deestric, and 't was through me ye got the app'intment. Your edecation 's good enough; but edecation ain't everything. 'T ain't so much matter how or what ye teach, as how ye govern. Must n't let the scholars run over ye, whatever else ye do. Ye must punish, and let 'em know ye ain't afraid to punish. That 's my fust and last piece of advice to you."

Byron, for once in his life, had taken his uncle's advice to heart. If the necessity of much using the rod is an evidence of weakness in a master, then Dinks was weak enough; though he flattered himself that by his severity he was showing his strength. We have seen how he began the discipline of the little ones; from which beginning he went on to worse and worse extremes. He made use of about all the means of punishment with which he was acquainted, and then invented new, until the aspect of his school-room at almost any hour of the day would

have been curious to behold. If we would witness a style of school-keeping which prevailed in Western New York and elsewhere thirty years ago, but which, we are glad to believe, is fast going out of fashion, let us look in upon Byron in his little domain.

It is a bright December morning, and school has just been called. The boys and girls, who were crowding about the stove when the ruler rapped, now range themselves on opposite sides of the room in double rows.

“Rap!” goes the ruler. “Samuel Narmore! whispering?”

“Did n’t know school had begun,” stammers the culprit.

“What was you saying to Moses Chatford?”

“Not much of anything,” — with a sheepish grin.

“Not much of anything!” — sarcastically. “Very important you should break the rules against whispering, to communicate not much of anything. What did he say to you, Moses?”

“I don’t like to tell,” says Moses.

“You must tell! I command you!”

“He said it was n’t quite nine o’clock yet.”

“What else? You would n’t have had any objection to saying that. Out with the rest.”

“He said,” — Moses hesitates, repressing a smile, — “he said you called school before the time so as to get the crowd away from the stove and have a chance there yourself.”

As Moses concludes his explanation, the smile ex-

pands into a pretty broad one, and an audible giggle runs around the school-room.

“Samuel Narmore,” says the master, trying to maintain his cool and sarcastic manner, but making rather ghastly work of it, “go and hold down that nail in the floor; I see there’s danger of its coming out.”

What Samuel is really required to do is to stoop over, crooking his knees as little as possible, and place the tip of his finger on the head of a nail, which shines from the polish imparted to it by numerous shoe-soles and many an unfortunate previous finger. The posture is a peculiarly awkward one to Samuel, who is tall and ungainly. His legs do not conform to the master’s idea of straightness; who, to help the matter, gives a resounding slap with his ruler upon that part which the pupil’s attitude elevates into undue prominence.

A howl from Samuel, who pitches forward upon one hand, while he puts up the other, either to defend or soothe the injured spot.

“You hain’t got your book,” then says the master. “Moses, hand his book. Here, take this and look over your reading lesson so you won’t miss a word. Must n’t neglect business for pleasure. Reuben and Amos, I’ll hear you read. All study; no looking off from books.”

Reuben and Amos, two little ones learning their letters, come and stand by the master’s side as he sits in his chair by the stove. He points to the page,

while he watches the school. Suddenly the ruler is let fly at a youngster whose eyes are seen to wander from his book. It strikes him on the knee, and falls clattering to the floor.

“Herbert Cone, bring me that ruler!” The ruler is brought by a limping and trembling wretch. “Hold out your hand.” The reluctant hand is extended; a blow and a yell. “Take your seat and mind your book,” says Mr. Byron Dinks.

By this time the young man who is combining business with pleasure by holding the nail in the floor while he studies his lesson, shows violent symptoms of weakening. Now his tortured finger gives way, and for one desperate instant he rests his weight upon the knuckles of his hand. Now his excruciated legs succumb, and for one blissful moment of forgetfulness he sits upon his heels. Again, attempting to straighten, he quite overdoes the thing, and lifts his finger so far that the nail might come out of the floor, for anything he has to do with holding it down. All this time he dares not glance at the master, but keeps his eyes on his book, held in his other hand.

“Tip Tarbox is lookin’ off,” says a squeaking voice from the girls’ side of the house.

“How do you know, Laury?” asks the school-master.

“I seen him,” says Laura.

“How could you see him without looking off yourself?”

"I jest looked one eye off," is the maiden's amusing explanation.

"Jest looked one eye off, and kep' the other on your book, did ye? Well, let me see you keep one eye on your book and look at him with the other."

More than one eye, and more than one pair of eyes, involuntarily turn to see Laura perform this interesting feat. The result is not wholly satisfactory. She looks up with both eyes, and down with both, and winks and twists, and blushes violently, and at last whimpers, "I thought I did."

"Thought you did! Well, you appear so much interested in his affairs, you may go over and set with him till recess. Take down your apron! Start, if you don't want help from me!"

Help from the master under such circumstances not being thought desirable, Laura drops her apron, but puts up her elbow in its place, to hide her shame, and with a bashful, sidelong gait goes over to sit with the boys.

Seeing nearly all eyes off their books by this time, Master Dinks relaxes the rigidity of his rule, the more readily as he would not like to punish some of the large girls.

"Tip's a ticklin' me!" cries Laura.

"O, I ain't!" says Tip, earnestly. "I was jest p'intin' my finger at her to shame her."

"Tend to your lessons, both of ye," says the master, "or I'll do some ticklin' ye won't like." Then to the little ones learning their letters: "Can't tell

what letter that is, after I 've told you fifty times !” And, holding a turkey-quill by the feather-end, he applies the quill part smartly to the heads of the unhappy urchins. “There ! now go and set on the stove-hearth until you can remember that the letter which looks like a snake climbing a pole is R.”

“Laury 's a hittin' me !” cries Tip Tarbox.

“He pinched me !” squeaks Laura.

“Come here, both of ye !” says Byron, with a sinister smile. As the culprits tremblingly approach, not knowing what fate awaits them, he opens his table-drawer, and tells them to put their heads in. “Here, turn your face towards your dear friend Laury ; Laury, turn your lovely countenance towards Edward. Now, don't let me hear from you agin till I come and take your heads out.” So saying, he closes the drawer upon their necks, ties their hands behind them, and leaves them, standing and stooping in that ridiculous posture, viewing each other's charms of feature by the light that comes in through the opening.

“Phin Chatford 's a cuttin' the bench !” says a small voice from the front seat ; among the occupants of which the opinion prevails, that, if punishment is a good thing, it must be a virtue in them to bring each other and their elders to grief.

“Phineas Chatford, bring me your knife !” says the master.

“T ain't my knife, it 's Jack's.”

“Jack should keep his knife in his pocket,” says the master, confiscating the same. As he has long

been watching for a chance to show his spite against Jack, and as Phin is a son of one of the trustees, this seems, to the mind of Byron, a very satisfactory settlement of the matter.

Jack, however, takes a different view of it. "He said he wanted my knife to sharpen a pencil with."

"O, you keep a knife to lend, do ye? Then I'll borrow it!"

"I don't object to lending it to fellows that will give it back to me," says Jack.

"Sassy!" cries Byron, sharply. "Call me a feller, do ye?"

"I was speaking of the *boys*," answers Jack; "and I said *fellows*, not *fellers*." He is sure of that, the correct pronunciation of that word being one of the many things which his dear friend Annie Felton has taught him.

"You may go and set on nothing against the door," is the master's sentence, Jack hardly knows for what.

It is his first punishment, and his hot heart rebels against it. For a moment he hesitates, his eyes blazing with a fiery sense of the injustice done him. But something within him whispers, "Obey!" Book in hand, he marches to the door, which is closed and latched, and takes a sitting posture with his back against it, but with no other support,—a painful and humiliating position. Since he became the champion of Step Hen Treadwell, he has enemies in



MASTER DINKS'S SCHOOL.

school, who are delighted to see him "in a fix"; but, strangely enough, no one enjoys his disgrace more than Phin Chatford.

Master Dinks, walking about the school-room, now takes occasion, as he passes in the rear of young Narmore, to hit him smartly with his ruler, saying at the same time, "Take your seat! what are you here for? You ain't worth a cent to hold down a nail. — Primer class take their places. Toe the mark! Remember

the turkey-quill!" which simple instrument of petty torture he warningly waves in the air.

While the primer class is preparing to recite, Byron turns to the urchins on the stove-hearth, and, pointing out to them a capital R, asks, "Now can you tell me what letter that is?"

"Snake climbin' a pole!" is the prompt reply.

The turkey-quill is raised, but, luckily for the urchins, there is that in their answer which sets Mr. Dinks and the whole school to laughing, and they get off with a light punishment as they are sent to their seats.

The trials of the primer class are interrupted by a terrible crash, which causes the schoolmaster almost to "jump out of his boots," as Phin afterwards declares. He turns, and sees a ludicrous sight, at which the school breaks forth into a roar.

The authors of this diversion are Laura and Tip, who have carried on hostilities even after their heads have been shut in the table-drawer. First Laura made faces at Tip. Tip returned the compliment. Then Laura made a worse face. Tip beat that, and had a good deal of lip to spare. If her hands had been at liberty, Laura would now have given him a taste of her nails, and perhaps have relieved him of a flaxen lock or two. As it was, she had but one effective weapon left: SHE SPIT IN HIS FACE!

Human nature in the shape of a boy nine years old never could stand that. Tip flew at her, with intent to bite her nose; and the result was that Tip,

Laura, table-drawer, table, a pile of books, the master's hat, two apples, and an inkstand all rolled on the floor together.

Jack, from his seat on nothing against the door, springs to right the table and pick up the hat and books, and is afterwards allowed to return to his seat — not on nothing, but on something — unquestioned.

Tip and Laura pick themselves up, and are immediately seized by the master, who knocks their mischievous heads together in lively fashion. They are then sent snivelling to their seats.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW "TIE" BETWEEN JACK AND PHIN.

THE effect of Jack's first punishment in school was not wholesome. "If I am to be punished for nothing," thought he, "what's the use of my trying so hard to behave well?" For it was not so much the fear of penalty which had kept him hitherto in the strait path of discipline, as a certain pride he felt in being a good scholar. That pride was broken down; a public disgrace had been the reward of all his devotion to his studies and his conscientious regard for the rules. He had not a saintly disposition; he was a boy, with all a boy's weaknesses and passions; and I am sorry to say that this injustice left in his heart a burning sense of resentment against Master Dinks.

"Jack Hazard, are you whispering?" said the master, after recess, that very forenoon.

"Yes, sir," said Jack, promptly.

"What was you saying?"

"I said 'I thought so.'"

"Thought what?"

"That is all I said,—'I thought so': just those words."

"Thought what?" the master again demanded, very angrily.

“That what Phin said was so.”

“No nicknames in school!” exclaimed Byron. “His name is Phineas. You know that, and you know the rule.”

“Yes, sir; but you just called me Jack, and my real name is John.”

“Come here, you sass-box!” cried Mr. Dinks, seizing his ruler. Jack marched straight up to him, and looked him in the face. “Tell me now what Phineas said to you, this instant, before I thrash you within an inch of your life!”

“If I must,” replied Jack; “he asked me if I did n’t think you showed partiality to the big girls, and I said, ‘Yes, I thought so.’ That was all.”

Sensation in the school-room. Mr. Dinks turned furiously to Phin. “Step out here!”

Phin did not stir, but looked all about him, as if anxious to discover the person thus addressed. He also appeared much concerned for that person’s present comfort and safety.

“Phineas Chatford!” And the master hurled his ruler.

“O, speak to me?” faltered Phin, starting up with a wild look.

“Fetch me that ruler!” cried Dinks, while all the school looked breathlessly on, expecting to witness a tragedy.

But it took Phin some time to find the oaken missile, which had fallen under the small boys’ bench; and by the time he brought it the master had cooled

enough to remember that young Chatford was a son of one of the trustees. It is impossible to say what a blistering of hands both youngsters might have received, but for this timely recollection. As it was, however, it would not do to let them off without "making an example of them"; for they had not only broken the rule against whispering, but had made him the subject of disparaging remarks.

"You think I am partial, do you?" said he, regarding the two boys with angry eyes, while he held the ruler behind him as if fearful he might be tempted to use it.

"I did n't say so," whimpered Phin. At that Jack gave such a start, and turned and looked at him with such astonishment and indignation, that the prevaricating youngster suddenly remembered the unhappy consequences of another lie of his, and added quickly, "I — I said — I thought Smith *Marston* was partial to the big girls, and he misunderstood me to say the *master*."

A stranger in the school-room would have been able, at that moment, to select the said Smith Marston from among his companions as unerringly as Joan of Arc discerned her king. It could have been no other than the tall, red-haired, and very red-faced youth, upon whom all eyes were just then turned with visible pleasure.

"Silence!" cried Byron, as a rustle and titter circulated among the pupils. "Whatever you said, it was whispering. Give me your thumbs!"

A stout piece of twine hung over a spike in the wall above the blackboard. One end of this cord he tied by a running noose to Jack's right thumb, which he then drew up high above the lad's head. He then prepared a similar noose at the other end, and made Phin reach up and put his left thumb through it. The second noose was then drawn tight; and there the boys stood before the blackboard, facing the school, with their upstretched hands hung by the thumbs.

The pain was not very great at first, but it soon became tiresome business holding the arms in this way; and when they were suffered to droop, the cord cut.

Phin had recovered from his terror on finding that he was to escape the ruler; and he underwent the first part of his punishment with smiling equanimity. Jack looked stern and determined: he was thinking that, if he ever got big enough, he would seek out Mr. Byron Dinks, and give him a sound drubbing. Many a boy has cherished such feelings of revenge against his master; but I never knew of but one case in which the vengeance was actually executed in later years. A gentleman was once promenading the streets of a certain village in company with some ladies, when a second gentleman stepped up and accosted him: "Your name is Swan. My name is Dixon. You taught school at Ladd's Crossing one winter; I went to school to you, and you licked me unmercifully for a little fault. I always said I would

pay you, and I am here to do it." So saying, Dixon beat Swan smartly over the shoulders with a stout cane, twirled him about, pitched him into a mud-puddle, and walked off. Many a lad has done just this thing in imagination; but the school-boy wrath of the most of us, it is to be hoped, cools beneath the falling snows of time, until, like Jack, we remember our wrongs with a smile, and take our revenge in a jest. I have heard our hero many a time relate his trials under Master Dinks; but the brier of that rough experience bears to-day only a laughing rose.

"You got me punished!" muttered Phin, resentfully, when the master's back was turned.

"I could n't help it," answered Jack.

"'T was real mean!" said Phin.

"Almost as mean as trying to get out of the scrape by lying," retorted Jack.

"Come! don't pull so hard! I'll give *your* thumb a jerk!"

But Phin soon found that the jerk was as painful to his own thumb as to Jack's.

"That's right," whispered Jack. "Keep up that motion, and the nail will saw the string in two." A proposal which pleased Phineas.

"Nancy Beman and Sally Buel's whisperin'!" said a half-grown girl on the front seat.

"And you are talking out loud!" cried the master. Nancy Beman and Sally Buel being two of the girls towards whom he was charged with showing partial-

ity, the manner in which he now passed over their fault, and wreaked his wrath upon the spirit of tale-telling, which he commonly encouraged, did not pass unnoticed. "Come here, Mariar! I've seen ye playing and whispering half the forenoon," he added, to justify his severity. "Stand here, and hold out these books."

"Mariar," stationed by the table, extended her arm horizontally at full length, supporting on her hand a pile of three books. "Now, don't ye crook yer arm, or let the books slip off!" But even while Byron spoke, down went one of the books to the floor. He replaced it, giving her arm a smart rap. "Put down your other hand! Take your knuckles out of your eyes! Now mind what you're about!"

But to keep the arm straight, in a horizontal position, with a weight of books in the hand, is not simply a hard thing for a girl of twelve; it is an impossible thing for any person to do for many minutes at a time. The arm will crook, or the hand will rise or sink, to gain some respite for the aching muscles. Byron was probably aware of this, and perhaps his heart relented towards "Mariar," for he soon permitted her to keep her arm in any attitude she chose, provided the books did not fall.

In the mean time Jack and Phin, by keeping up a constant friction on the string when the master's back was turned, had at last sawed it in two. They had been standing for some minutes with their hands at their sides, when he chanced to see them.

"String's come in two," said Phin, innocently, looking as if he would regard it as a great favor if some benevolent person would replace it.

"Second class in 'rithm'tic," said Master Dinks. "You may take your places," — to Jack and Phin, who made haste to slip the loops off their thumbs and run.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW JACK GOT INTO A FIGHT.

IN consequence of these and other punishments received, Jack soon lost not only much of his own self-respect as a scholar, but his influence among the other boys began to decline.

For a long time nobody had dared lay rude hands on Step Hen Treadwell while Jack was near. But now one noontime, coming out of the school-house, he saw a cap flying in the air from hand to hand over a mob of boys, while one bareheaded, chubby fellow pursued it, screaming, "Give it up! give me my cap!" That little fellow was Step Hen.

Jack rushed into the midst of the crowd, and made a lunge for the cap as it fell to the ground. Lon Gannett rushed for it at the same time, and succeeded in seizing it first. He was about to throw it, when Jack grasped his wrist.

"Don't ye throw that cap!"

"You jest le' go my arm, you offscourin' of the tow-path!" said Lon, struggling to get away.

"Don't ye throw that cap!" Jack repeated, warningly, holding fast.

"I'll throw it, for all you!" said Lon, trying to take it in his other hand. "Come! I've been

bullied by you long enough. You begun to put upon me the fust day of school."

"Mind your own business, and don't try to bully smaller boys, and nobody will trouble you, at least I won't," said Jack. "But I gave notice some time ago that I was going to stand by this little shaver; and now if you run over him, you run over me; that's all. Drop that cap!"

Jack was so determined and so cool, and at the same time he gave Lon's wrist such a wrench, that somehow the cap was let fall; and Step Hen snatched it from the ground.

"O Lon! O Lon! give up so!" cried half a dozen voices, — one being that of Phin Chatford.

"I hain't gi'n up!" said Lon. "He took advantage of me. Come!" bristling up to Jack. "Ye want to fight?"

"Not particularly," replied Jack. "Anything to accommodate ye, though."

"Hit me, if ye dare!"

"I don't know what I should hit ye for, if I do dare. You've dropped the cap; that's all I asked."

Lon looked around till he found a small chip, which he placed on his shoulder, and then sidled fiercely up to Jack.

"You don't da's to knock that chip off my shoulder!" he said, tauntingly.

"I've nothing to do with your shoulder: you may put a pile of chips on it, if you like; I sha'n't take the trouble to knock 'em off."

“Come! le’ me see ye touch it! You’re afraid! you’re afraid!” cried Lon. “I dare ye!”

“Look here!” said Jack. “I did n’t come out to fight. I don’t believe in fighting, unless it’s in self-defence or to defend somebody else. Keep out of my way, and let Step Hen alone, and I’ll give ye a wide berth.” And he walked off.

“Why did n’t ye pitch into him?” said one of Lon’s mates. “You’re bigger ’n he is; you can handle him.”

“I did n’t want to begin it. I dared him to knock the chip off my shoulder; if he had done it, I’d have showed ye! Who was it said I give in to him? You’re the feller!” And Lon, feeling the necessity of airing his courage, marched up to Phin Chatford.

“Oh! I ain’t! I did n’t!” screamed Phin.

“You did! You said I was afraid of him. I’ll let ye know who’s afraid!”

“Help! help! Jack! help!” yelled Phineas, running towards the school-house with Lon at his heels.

“What’s the row?” asked Jack.

Just as he was entering the door Phin dodged past him, screaming, “He’s going to lick me! don’t let him!” And, darting into the corner of the entry, behind the door, he pulled the door back against the wall to cover him. Lon grasped the door, and was about to wrench it from Phin’s hold, when Jack planted his foot against it.

“Take away your foot!” said Lon.

“My foot is n’t in your way,” Jack replied.



THE BATTLE.

“There’s plenty of room for you to pass in and out. I’m standing here just now.”

“You *are* in my way!” snarled Lon. “I want to git behind this door!”

“What do you want to get behind the door for?”

“None of your business!”

“That is n’t a very civil reply,” said Jack, “but I suppose it’s all I could expect from you. See here! leave my foot alone till I give you —”

“A bit of advice,” he would have added ; but at that instant Lon, seizing his leg, lifted it, and with all his force pushed Jack against the wall.

The proffered bit of advice was lost in the confusion that followed. The battle had begun. A score of pupils crowded to witness it, boys and girls hurrying and shouting and screaming, some rushing in from without, and some rushing out from within, filling the two doorways, and even thronging the entry in which the combat took place.

And now I wish it were my privilege to describe a gentlemanly set-to (if such a thing, without gloves, can ever be called gentlemanly) between our hero and his antagonist, — a few handsome rounds, with seconds, and according to the rules of the ring. But we cannot have that satisfaction for a very good reason, — nothing of the kind took place. We have read of such contests between school-boys of fourteen and fifteen ; but who of us ever really saw one ?

Lon and Jack fought, as we shall see, not like “gentlemen,” but, after the manner of most school-boys, like a couple of young savages.

CHAPTER VII.

MASTER DINKS TAKES A HAND.

FIRST, Lon tackled Jack. To save himself from falling, Jack clutched Lon by the collar.

Lon, lifting Jack's leg, at the same time butted his head into Jack's stomach. Jack responded by bearing heavily down on Lon, with one arm clasped under his breast and the other tightening across his throat.

Lon bit Jack's arm, the furious teeth finding flesh through coat and shirt-sleeve. Jack thereupon entangled four or five fingers in Lon's hair, took a twist or two, and bereft the parent scalp of a handful.

Howls from Lon. "Let go, then!" from Jack.

The thing was growing serious. Phin came out from behind the door, and with pale and excited features looked wildly upon the combat he had caused. The girls shrieked; the boys prompted and cheered.

"Now's your chance, Jack!" "Throw him over your shoulder, Lon!" "Pelt him in the chops, Jack!" "Flop him, — now's your time to pay off old scores!" "Hands off! fair play!"

"Stop them! stop them! Jack will get hurt!" cried a piercing voice. "O, don't let them fight any more!" It was the voice of Phin's little sister Kate, who ran back into the school-room, shrieking with fear and distress.

The combatants in their struggle had staggered back and forth two or three times across the entry, when both fell together over a pile of wood at the end of it. They rolled off, and Lon came uppermost.

Jack "turned" Lon. Lon "turned" Jack.

Jack, being under, managed to draw up one foot under Lon's breast; the crooked leg suddenly straightened, and away went Lon, over backwards. Both sprang to their feet, and clinched again. The struggle that ensued was too confused to be described with any accuracy of detail. They struck, they kicked, they pulled hair, they tore each other's clothes, they tumbled and rolled and turned each other, and at last tumbled out at the door.

That was the last tumble. Jack was uppermost. He had Lon down, and was choking him to make him say he would give up and behave himself in future; and Lon was gasping and sputtering, "Help, Jim! Ase, pull him off!" when up walked Master Dinks.

"What are you doing here?" And he seized Jack by the shoulder.

"Nothing, only fighting a little," said Jack.

"I'll give you fighting enough!" said Master Dinks. "Get up and go into the house."

Jack jumped quickly to his feet, followed more slowly by Lon, who went limping after him into the school-room.

"Stand out there in the middle of the floor till I'm ready to settle with you," said Byron.

And there they stood after the school had been called to order, a sad and yet ludicrous spectacle. Both were covered with dust from head to foot; their hair wildly tumbled, their clothes torn, their faces scratched and smeared with dust and blood. Poor Jack felt himself disgraced forever; he hung his head, and shed tears of shame and despair.

He had plenty of time for reflection before the threatened settlement came. Dinks kept the culprits standing there at least an hour, in their wretched plight, before he deigned to notice them. Jack meanwhile tried to comfort himself with the thought that he had acted in defence of Step Hen and Phineas; that he had not wanted to fight, but had waited till he was actually attacked. Yet he could not help asking himself, "Was n't I a fool to interfere? Why should I get myself into a scrape by trying to protect *them*? Little thanks will I get for my pains, especially from Phin! He's grinning now in his seat. Why did n't I let Lon thrash him?" Then something would rise up from the depths of his heart, calm and strong and sweet as the voice of conscience itself, whispering, "Perhaps you did n't take the wisest course, but you meant well. It would have been the part of a coward to stand by and see the strong tyrannize over the weak." Then that voice would be silent, and his doubts would return; until poor Jack was hardly able to distinguish right from wrong, or generous self-devotion from reckless folly.

I suppose Master Dinks had all this time been

considering how he should deal with so heinous a crime. At last he took a knife from his pocket (it happened to be Jack's knife), and said, "Who will go up into the woods and cut me four good whips?"

"I will!" "I will!" and at least half a dozen boys sprang to their feet.

"Smith Marston, you may go."

Smith was accordingly despatched with the knife, and the offenders were again left to their reflections.

"Lay them on the table," said Byron, when the whips came. "Boys may go out,—all but the two on the floor."

The sight of the whips had called up a stubborn and desperate spirit in Jack. "Let him lick me! I can stand it," thought he. "'T won't be the first time I've been punished for nothing. I've tried to *do my best*, but it's just the same, whether I do right or wrong."

He had noticed that Smith deposited the knife with the whips; and now, pretending to step aside in order to let the boys pass him on their way out, he quietly moved over to the side of the table. A few moments later, he leaned carelessly on the table, covering the knife with his hand. When he removed his hand the knife was gone.

The boys were called in, and the girls had their recess. Then Master Dinks took the four whips, and seasoned one after the other in the fire, passing them quickly over the glowing coals. This process was perhaps designed quite as much to terrify the

culprits, and to impress the other scholars with the awfulness of what might at any time overtake them, as to toughen the supple birch. The whips were then laid on the table again, and the girls were called in.

“Now for that settlement,” said Master Dinks. “When boys fight, I believe in giving them enough of it. Off with your coats.”

The coats were reluctantly laid aside. Byron inspected the whips, trying their strength and elasticity, and switching the air.

“Which of ye began it?”

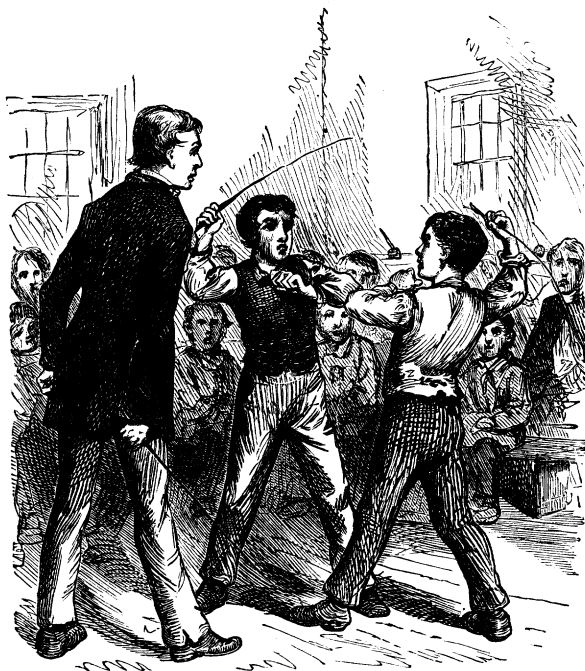
“He did!” cried Jack, with swelling heart. He was going on to explain just how the thing occurred, when the master stopped him.

“Never mind about that. It takes two to make a bargain, and it takes two to get into a fight. Take these whips.” He placed one in the hand of each boy, and made them face each other. “You say ’Lonzo began it. So ’Lonzo may strike first. Then you may strike. I’ll keep tally. If you don’t do the business up thoroughly for each other, I may have to take a hand. ’Lonzo, begin; and don’t be dainty.”

Lon gave Jack a gentle stroke over the shoulder, which Jack repaid as gently. The lookers-on giggled, and even the actors in the little drama had to laugh.

“Harder than that!” said the master. “I’ll show you!” And he gave each a stinging cut across the back.

Lon had not dared strike a hard blow before, being pretty sure of getting as good as he gave. In



RATHER ROUGH.

the rage kindled by the master's birch, however, he ventured a more vigorous stroke. Jack returned it with interest. That warned Lon to hit more lightly. But now the master's whip struck in, playing so lively an accompaniment to their duet, that each, driven to desperation, furiously avenged his smart on the shoulders and head and ears of his antagonist. Thus the spirit of fight, instead of being subdued,

was so inflamed in them that when their whips were used up they would have gone at each other with their fists, if the master had not stopped them.

“I’ll finish up for you, if you have n’t had enough.” And he gave each a final polishing off with a fresh whip. “Now you may put on your coats. I hope you’ve had fighting enough to satisfy you for one while. Those were pretty good whips, Smith. What did you do with the knife?”

“I laid it on the table with the whips,” said the red-haired Smith.

“There’s no knife here. Has anybody taken that knife?”

“I seen Jack Hazard take somethin’ off f’m the table and put it in his trouse’s pocket,” said the tell-tale Laura.

“Have you that knife, Hazard?”

“It’s my knife; I saw it lying there, and I took it.”

“Give it to me.”

Jack hesitated: his eyes blazed like fire through his tears. Dinks seized his ruler. Then Jack, though with rage and rebellion in his soul, handed out the knife.

“You would have got this back again in good time if you had n’t taken it,” observed the master, turning it in his hand, and finally laying it again upon the table. “You are a bad boy; not conquered yet, I see. You will stay with me after school to-night. Now go to your seats.”

To reach their seats it was necessary to pass the

master ; and they knew pretty well what he had stationed himself in their way for. Lon went first ; and just as he passed Dinks gave him a kick in the rear. Jack followed. A multitude of wild thoughts seemed to rush through his soul in an instant of time, — all his wrongs, his disgrace and shame, and the threatened penalty still awaiting him. He had often thought, in calmer moments, that he could never bear a kick from the master, who had a habit of dismissing offenders in that way ; and now his heart was full.

He passed on, however. Up went the Dinks foot, to administer the parting kick ; when, quick as a flash, Jack whirled, caught the uplifted leg in the very act, and overthrew the master with a great downfall and a mighty crash. He then darted to the table, where he took his knife ; then to the entry, where he got his cap ; then out at the door like a deer.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

MASTER BYRON DINKS, falling in a ridiculous attitude, sprawled helplessly on his back for a moment, with his legs on the stove-hearth and his head under the table ; then scrambled upon his feet, and looked confusedly around for his escaped pupil and his ruler.

“He run out !” squeaked the telltale Laura.

That was evident enough ; and Master Dinks, grasping his ruler, but without waiting to put on his hat or part his hair, ran out too.

Now Jack might easily have got away, for he was a lively lad on his legs, and it is not probable that Master Dinks would have ventured upon a long race. But just as Jack in his strange plight and headlong hurry leaped out at the door, a lady and a gentleman in a sleigh drove up to it.

“Jack !” said the lady, putting aside her veil, and showing a sweet face full of surprise and anxiety.

Jack stopped, stared wildly, and, after some hesitation, staggered up to the sleigh. “O Miss Felton !” he began ; when a consciousness of his wretched situation overcame him, and his pent-up feelings broke forth in a sob.

Annie, astonished at his disordered clothes, his smeared and swollen features, and his bursting pas-

sion, began soothingly to question him, while she softly put back his straggling hair under his cap. Before he could get voice to answer, out rushed, with brandished ruler and flying hair, Master Byron Dinks.

One avenging hand had already seized Jack's collar, while the other bore aloft the oaken weapon, when the gentlest voice in the world said, "Mr. Dinks!"

"I — I beg your pardon, Miss Felton! I was n't aware —" stammered the schoolmaster, overwhelmed with embarrassment.

"This is my brother, Mr. Dinks," said Annie. The brother, a big, burly fellow in buffalo-skin coat and cap, looked out with a merry twinkle from the depths of his enveloping fur, and saluted Byron. "We are going to visit Aunt Chatford," Annie added; "and I thought you would be kind enough to let Cousin Kate ride home with us."

"Cer-cer-tainly," gasped poor Mr. Dinks, hardly knowing what to say or how to act. For, if the truth must be told, he was an ardent admirer of Miss Felton, whose good opinion he prized more than that of any one else in the world; and he could not help feeling that he was in a ludicrous position. "W-w-won't ye come in?"

Miss Felton declined the invitation with thanks, but said that she hoped to visit the school before long. "I have taught here, you know," said she, "and I feel a deep interest in my pupils. What is the trouble with Jack? He never went to school

to me, but he has been my private pupil; and I always found him so docile and good a boy, I am amazed that he should ever have any trouble with his teacher."

"I've found him the worst boy in school!" exclaimed Byron. "I punished him this afternoon for fighting; when he flew at me like a tiger, pushed me back against the table, and ran out of school. Go back and take your place, sir, and I'll settle with you to-night."

Byron's hand had slipped from Jack's shoulder, when he found himself confronted by Annie Felton; but he now attempted once more to take the lad into custody. Jack sprang round the sleigh.

"He's told one side of the story, but there's another side! He never asked how I came to fight; and after he had abused me all I could bear, he went to kick me. I ketched his leg, and capsized him." And Jack laughed nervously at the recollection.

"Caught, not *ketched*," said Annie, with a smile.

"I should say you served him right," remarked the big brother, with a look of mingled fun and contempt at Mr. Dinks.

"I — was sure any reasonable man would say so," began Mr. Dinks, uneasily. "For I —"

"I mean, that *he* served *you* right," the big brother pleasantly explained. "A master who kicks his scholars is n't fit to be in a school-room, and I don't blame him for running out. Hop into the sleigh, Jack, and ride home with us."

Out of pity for Mr. Dinks, who turned red and sallow in streaks at this speech, Annie said, "Forrest, you are too bad! Excuse my brother, Mr. Dinks; he does n't mean —"

"Yes, he does," interrupted the big brother. "Is there anything in the school-house you want, Jack?"

"Yes, my books."

"Go in and get 'em. We'll wait for you."

Jack's heart leaped with joy at these friendly words from the brother of his best and dearest friend; and I am afraid he enjoyed a little too keenly the proud triumph of marching back into the school-room, coolly gathering up his books in sight of the wondering pupils, and marching out again, past the glaring eyes and trembling ruler of Master Dinks, who hungered for a good blow at him, but refrained from indulging in that luxury out of respect to the lady and her big brother outside.

"Katie," said Byron in a half-choked voice, "your cousin, Miss Felton, is waiting for you in a sleigh; you can go home."

"May I go too?" cried Phineas, springing to his feet. "Our folks said I might be dismissed."

"Go along!" said the master, crossly. Rap, rap! "The school must come to order!" Just then a wad of chewed paper, commonly called a "spit-ball," struck him on the pimpled forehead, and stuck. He started back, put up his hand, and demanded, "Who throwed that?" — in the confusion of the moment relapsing into the idiom of his boyhood.

“Rant Hildreth did,— I seen him!” was piped from the front seat.

“Randolph Hildreth, come here!”

“I meant to shoot it at the stove-pipe, and it slipped,” was Rant’s anxious explanation, as he obeyed. “All the boys was throwin’, when you was out, an’ some o’ the gals tu!”

Jack did not wait to hear the result of the inquiry into these disorders, but hastened, books and slate in hand, to rejoin his friends in the sleigh. Phin, already there, leaped in, and occupied the place offered to Jack.

“Come! we can make room for you too,” said Annie, noticing Jack’s disappointed look.

“I don’t believe there’ll be any room after Kate gets in,” said Phin.

“In that case you’ll have to get out and hang on behind,” said Forrest Felton, “for I have already asked Jack to ride with us.”

“Don’t mind me; I can walk. Here, Kate!” And Jack helped the child into the sleigh, pulling the buffalo-robe up over her. “Go ahead!”

“Let me take your books, if you walk,” said Annie; and, as she insisted, he gave them to her. “Phineas,” she added, as they rode on, “it was hardly fair in you to crowd Jack out after we had invited him.”

“O, he can walk!” replied Phin, with a careless laugh.

They reached the Chatford house; and, almost before the greetings between the visitors and their

relatives were over, Phin cried, "What do ye think's the news? Jack got a fighting to-day with Lon Gannett, and the master made 'em lick jackets before the whole school, and then he went to kick Jack as he was taking his seat, and Jack got hold of his leg and upset him under the table; and Jack's turned out of school, and here's his books!"

"Is this so?" exclaimed Mrs. Chatford in great astonishment. "It can't be true!"

"Yes, it is, every word of it!" crowed Phineas, as if it had been the best news in the world.

"O Phin! how can you speak so?" remonstrated little Kate. "You know it was by trying to keep Lon Gannett from fighting you that poor Jack got into trouble; and you ought to be more sorry than any one else."

"Huh! I was n't afraid of Lon Gannett! I can lick Lon Gannett with my little finger!" And Phin went on to brag.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE EVENING.

IN the mean while Jack trudged along the slippery sleigh-track with a heavy heart. To be thus left behind was a grievous disappointment to him ; not that he cared so much for the ride, but he needed the friendly presence and support of Annie and her good brother. His passion, and the glow of triumph which Forrest's kind words inspired, had had time to cool ; and he began to consider the results of the day's bad business.

"Of course," said he, "it's the end of my going to school,—and this after all my hopes and plans! when I meant to be doing my best!" He knew well that, even if he wished, he could never return to the scene of Master Dinks's tyranny except at the cost of some terrible punishment and humiliation. Still he could not bring himself altogether to regret what he had done. "That last kick was too much! I never could stand that!"

On reaching home, he quietly washed and brushed himself, then took the milk-pails from the pantry and went out to do the evening's chores. He watered the horses, he fed the swine, he foddered and milked the cows ; and by the time he came in to supper, carrying his two brimming pails of milk, his heart, though

by no means free from trouble, was resolved and strong.

The Chatford family were so busy and so happy in the reception and entertainment of their guests, that Jack's unfortunate adventure seemed to have been forgotten ; no mention was made of it during supper, and it was not until the whole family were gathered in the evening around the sitting-room fire, that Mr. Chatford said, " Well, Jack, what's the news with you to-day ? "

Jack started, his heart gave a sudden jump, and his color changed.

" Not very good news," he replied, forcing a smile.

" So I hear. How happens it you can't get along any better at school ? "

" I don't believe it's all my fault. I did my very best until the master began to punish me for things I was n't to blame for ; then I got discouraged."

Jack paused to catch breath, and gather strength from Annie's gentle eyes fixed upon him, and her brother Forrest's pleasant smile, and Mrs. Chatford's anxious, motherly look ; and then went on : —

" He seemed to have a spite against me from the first ; and I happened to be one of those he thought he could abuse as he pleased, and nobody would interfere. Children of parents well off, especially children of the trustees, hardly ever get punished ; but we poor fellows have to take it ! "

" It's very easy," said Mr. Chatford, gravely, " to accuse a teacher of partiality. But even if what you

say is true, is that any excuse for your conduct? I am one of the trustees of the school; you are a member of my family; and if I pass over this affair, it will look as if I upheld you in your resistance to the master's authority. Are you prepared to go back in the morning and ask his pardon?"

"No, sir!" answered Jack, with a swelling bosom. "I have made up my mind; I never can do that!"

"You prefer to lose your schooling?"

"Yes, sir, if I must. It will be no use for me to go to Master Dinks's school any more."

Jack's voice faltered, and it was a great relief to him to hear Forrest Felton, in his cheery tone, speak up:—

"Do you think, Uncle Chatford, that a master who makes a practice of kicking his scholars is to be tolerated?"

"But does he make a practice of it?" said the cautious deacon.

"Ask Moses!" cried Jack, vehemently.

"Of course he does," said Moses. "Not a day passes but he gives the toe of his boot to one or two."

Then Jack blazed up. "I had borne all I could! I turned on him,—I caught his leg and threw him over! And I would do it again!"

"'T was the neatest thing I ever saw," said Moses, laughing; "and I never was so tickled in my life. Dinks got just what he deserved; that's what every one thought."

"Reminds me of a sarcumstance happened when I

was a youngster and went to school to a man by the name o' Colt," said Mr. Pipkin, the hired man, from his corner. "He used to kick. One day he kicked one o' the Ryder boys,— Dan; sassy feller; spunky as a bull pup. Dan wheeled about an' looked him square in the face. 'Kick when you're a Colt,' says he, 'what'll ye do when you're an old hoss?' The master was so took back he never said a word, by hokey! but jes' let him take his seat. We made a joke on 't, an' said the Colt had got his Ryder that time!"

"I think if I had been the Colt, that Ryder would have got thrown," said the deacon. "A master must maintain his authority."

"Father never will hear anything against a teacher," remarked Moses.

"Well, well! I believe in discipline," replied Mr. Chatford.

"That's just it; and you're so afraid of saying a word that might encourage rebellious notions in us boys, that I believe you'd let a master cut the little shavers' ears off before you would even give us a hint of what you thought of it. I wish you could just look into Dinks's school, some days! Talk about discipline! he has no more discipline than a butting calf."

"Did Rant Hildreth get licked for throwing the spit-ball this afternoon?" asked Phineas. "Took the master square in the forehead, and stuck!" he explained to Mr. Pipkin, with a giggle.

"No; Rant told of others who had been throwing spit-balls, and they told of more, till by and by Dinks had a row of about eight fellows and three girls on the floor. He was going to ferule 'em all, till it came out that Nancy Beman had thrown spit-balls across to the boys half a dozen times to-day. Of course he could n't think of punishing her; so he let 'em all take their seats. He did n't kick 'em; he's cured of kicking for one while, I guess!"

"It seems you gave the master one good lesson, for the many he had given you," Forrest Felton said to Jack. "The school ought to pass you a vote of thanks."

"Don't talk in that way, Forrest," said the deacon. "Dinks ain't the worst teacher that ever was."

"You should have seen Dinks give Step Hen Treadwell a lesson in addition the other day," said Moses. "Step Hen is a stupid fellow at figures; and for some blunder of his the master sent him to the blackboard and told him to add up six ciphers. He took the chalk, frightened half to death, and wrote down a column of six naughts, drew a line under 'em, and went to adding 'em up. 'Quicker'n that!' says Dinks, hitting him a crack with the ruler. 'How many does it make?' 'Six!' bellows Step Hen; and he hurries to write it down. 'No, it don't!' Crack with the ruler! Step Hen howls out, 'Makes one!' rubs out the six and writes down one. 'No, it don't!' Crack, crack, crack! 'Add 'em up again!' Step Hen was so confused by that time that he

could n't have told how many one and one made. He yelled, and rubbed his smarting legs, and concluded that six ciphers added together made five. Then he thought perhaps they made four. Then three. Then two. Then he did n't know how many they did make. Of course he got a licking for every blunder, and an extra licking because he did n't know. It was getting so bad I thought the big boys ought to interfere; and I was trying to make up my mind to speak, when Dinks, to humiliate Step Hen, called up our little Kate, and told her to show him how to do the sum. Tell him about it, Kate."

"I felt so bad for the poor boy!" said Kate, all aglow with the recollection of the scene. "I should have been frightened myself if I had n't had so much pity for him. So I said, 'Six ciphers stand for six nothings, don't they? Now he don't want you to tell how many ciphers there are, but how much they make, added up.' He kept whimpering, 'he did n't know.' So I said, 'You know well enough, only you don't think. Suppose,' I said, 'there are six of us boys and girls; and he asks how much money we have. I have nothing, you have nothing, and so with all of us.' 'O, I know now!' says he. 'Six nothings make — nothing!' And he turned round to the board, and added up his six ciphers, and put a cipher under them, — and O, how glad I was!" cried little Kate, clapping her hands again with joy at her success.

"Why, Kate!" said Annie Felton, delighted, "you are a regular little schoolma'am! But" — her face

saddened immediately — “ I am so sorry for — Step Hen, as you call him ! Stephen Treadwell is one of the best little boys in the world. And not so stupid, either ; though I found it sometimes took a good deal of explanation to make him understand things. Mr. Dinks must be a very poor teacher, as well as a cruel-hearted man.”

“ Don’t say it before the boys, if you do think so,” interposed the deacon.

“ After what has happened to-day,” she replied with spirit, “ I think the truth may be spoken even before them. For my part, I should like to hear Jack’s story. I trust him, and you trust him ; we all know Jack by this time.”

“ Yes, I believe Jack is a truthful boy, and means well, whatever mistakes he may have made,” added the deacon, discreetly. “ Come, boy ! let’s hear what you have to say for yourself.”

CHAPTER X.

JACK'S GOOD FORTUNE.

TEARS of joy and gratitude sprang to Jack's eyes, and he poured forth the whole story of his troubles in school, as it is known to the reader. It was warmly corroborated by Moses and Kate, and less willingly by Phineas.

"Good for you, Jack!" exclaimed Mrs. Pipkin, over her work by the table. "I'm glad you whipped the Gannett boy, and I'll mend your clothes for you. I'm glad you come up with the master; and I hope he'll get turned out of school."

"There are always two sides to a story," said the deacon, warily.

"O uncle!" said Annie Felton, "you must acknowledge that Jack has done as nearly right as ever a spirited boy of his age could be expected to do, under such circumstances."

"I did n't know you approved of fighting," said Phineas, with a grin of malice and envy, — for he never could bear to hear Jack praised.

"I'm ashamed of that brother of mine!" exclaimed Moses, in great disgust. "To fling out about Jack's fighting, as I've heard him do half a dozen times, when 't was by defending him that Jack got into trouble at last!"

"I don't approve of fighting," said Annie; "and it's awful to think of our Jack's pounding heads and pulling hair with that Gannett boy! Of course I wish he had had character enough to get along, and take care of himself and the smaller and more timid boys, without striking a blow."

"O, I was n't timid!" said Phineas; "but our folks have always told me not to fight, and I remembered that."

"It's the lad's principles," said Forrest, in his dry way. "No doubt he'd be a perfect lion among the boys, if his pa and ma had n't taught him that 'little children should not let their angry passions rise.'"

"We've interrupted Annie," said Moses. "I'd like to hear what she was going to say, — for instance, about this very affair of Jack's. I suppose if he had been as wise and cool and strong-minded as maybe we can imagine a boy to be, but as no boy that I know is, then he *might* have done what he undertook without fighting. But for my part, I can't always do it, old as I am; and I'm ashamed to say I've stood by and seen the little fellows imposed upon by the big ones, when I ought to have stopped it, but did n't, because I was afraid of getting myself into a scrape. Now, what should a fellow do?"

"Do what Jack did, I say!" cried Forrest. "Whatever we may preach, we all think better of him to-night for thrashing the Gannett chap and pitching into the schoolmaster. Annie agrees with me, I know she does; and so does Uncle Chatford."

"Fie, fie!" said the deacon, frowning to cover a smile, while he fidgeted uneasily in his chair.

"No," Annie hastened to say, "I don't counsel boys to fight. But I am glad" — and her eyes beamed beautifully on Jack — "that our dear boy here has so much will and spirit. They will prove splendid qualities in his character; but he must learn to control them."

"It's bad! it's bad, every way!" said the deacon. "Say nothing about the discipline of the school —"

"That, it seems, can't be much worse than it was before," Forrest suggested.

"Well, I don't claim that we have the *best* master that ever was. But a poor school is better than none; and now Jack is without any."

"I've thought" — Jack hesitated — "that I might — perhaps you could arrange it so I could go over to the Basin: they've a good school there."

"Just what I thought you would want to do; but," said the deacon, "I set my foot down against that at once! We won't have the unruly boys from the Basin, after they're turned out there, coming over to our school; and I sha'n't favor any from our district going over there."

"Then," said Annie, seeing how crestfallen Jack looked, "I see but one thing for you to do, in order not to lose your schooling."

"What is that?" he asked, eagerly.

Forrest spoke for his sister. "Go home with us to-morrow. We can get you into our school."

"And live with you?" cried Jack, in delighted astonishment.

"Of course," said Annie; "Forrest and I have been talking it over."

"That would never answer," interposed Mrs. Chatford. "You have nothing for Jack to do; he could n't work to pay for his board, as he does here."

"And besides," added the deacon, "there may be a change, — it is just possible Mr. Dinks may resign."

"Or get turned out," struck in Moses. "I should n't wonder!"

"Very well," said Annie; "Jack has been promised a visit to our house for a long time. He shall go home with us, and while we are waiting to see what he had better do, I'll give him private lessons, so that he shall not fall behind in his studies. What do you say to that, Jack?"

"Oh!" was all the overjoyed youngster could articulate, before Phineas put in, —

"Now, I say that ain't fair! If anybody goes home with you to make a visit, I'm going! Jack ain't your relation! why should you think so much of him?"

"If liking went with relationship," laughed Forrest, "dear Phineas, how we should adore you! As it is, we don't object to your making us as long a visit as your folks will allow at any other time. But *this* time Jack is going. That is, if he agrees to it."

"Oh!" Jack said again, his heart almost too full for words. "It is too much! If Mr. Chatford will let me!"

“I don’t know,” said the deacon, trying to conceal his satisfaction at the boy’s good fortune. “I don’t like to have you give up your studies just now ; and Annie is very kind ;— yes, I suppose I shall let you go, though I must say it looks to me very much like a premium for pitching into the master ! Phineas, see who’s at the door.”

The sound of a foot on the scraper was followed by a knock ; and as Phin stood in the entry, holding the door open, a young man stamped the snow from his feet, and walked in. He had a rather short, stocky figure, and his bright, genial face was slightly pock-marked.

“Percy Lanman !” cried the deacon. “Walk along ! Here’s somebody you know, — our niece, Annie. And somebody you don’t know, — her brother Forrest.”

“Yes, I’ve met him too,” said Percy, shaking hands all round. “In one of my excursions I got as far as their house. Ah, Jack, how are you ?”

Jack was very well, and of course delighted to see his friend, — for he felt himself under peculiar obligations to this young man. Yet he thought it strange that Percy should have paid a visit to the Feltons without the Chatfords even hearing of it ; and stranger still, perhaps, that he should happen to drop in this very evening, to call on the family, for the first time since Annie closed her summer school.

The circumstance puzzled Jack a good deal ; and after he got to bed that night he lay thinking of it,

and of the day's adventures, and of to-morrow's journey, until his mind floated off in a dream in which a thousand things mingled confusedly together. Now he was running out of the school-house carrying the master's leg, which he had pulled off in a scuffle. Then Constable Sellick was chasing him, and calling upon him to "stop thief!" Then he was taken before Judge Garty, and Master Dinks appeared on two good legs of his own to swear to the missing member. The Judge entered into an argument to show that if Jack regarded it as "booty," he was guilty, but that if he claimed it as a "leg-acy" he was innocent; which was cut short by Jack running out of court, and riding off in a cutter with Annie Felton. Then he was not riding, but walking along a lonely road, crying bitterly, while Annie rode gayly on before with Percy Lanman. They stopped for him, but he wanted to ask his dog Lion what he was burying; and just as Lion answered, "Squire Peternot's lame leg," he awoke.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ADVENTURE AT THE VILLAGE TAVERN.

IN the afternoon of the next day Forrest and Annie Felton set out to return home, taking Jack with them. The good-byes were said while the sleigh stood at the door.

"We shall miss ye 'bout the chores, Jack," said Mr. Pipkin, handing the reins to Forrest, then pulling up the buffalo-robe over the travellers.

"I would n't be in a hurry to get into a school over there, boy," was the deacon's last word, "for — between ourselves — I think there'll be a change here soon. Say nothing about it," he whispered; "but it's my impression there'll be a change."

Mrs. Chatford kissed him as if he had been her own son; and Jack cried, "Good by, all! Good by, Lion! Get down, you fellow! what are you thinking about?"

"O, do let him go too!" said Annie. "Why not? He saved my life once, you know; and mother will be so glad to see him!"

"To be sure!" cried Forrest. "Jack and Lion are one. We can't think of inviting the boy without the dog."

Lion looked as if he understood every word of this conversation, and his tail wagged with joy.

Nothing else was wanting to complete Jack's happiness ; and he said, with an inquiring look, " If the folks are willing ? " Mrs. Chatford said, " Why, yes, if Annie wishes it, — though Phineas will be more vexed than ever when he finds Lion gone too."

The deacon also consented, although he regarded Lion as " one of the family " ; while Mrs. Pipkin declared, " You 're very welcome, for my part ! You 'll find that dog eats as much as a man ; and when you 've stepped over and around him, lying by the fire, as many times as I have, you 'll be easily consoled for the loss of him."

" Her heart is better than her tongue," said Jack, as they rode away. " She thinks as much of Lion as any of us, and you should hear her stand up for him when he is abused by anybody else !"

" There 's your school-house," said Forrest, as they approached that cracked temple of learning. " Don't you want to stop and bid Master Dinks good by ?"

" I 'm afraid the interview would be too affecting !" said Jack. " I 've shed tears enough, parting with him once."

" Do you think you can bear the separation ?" asked Forrest.

" I don't think I shall break my heart," replied Jack.

As he spoke, they turned the corner ; and just at that moment a chorus of shouts and a wild troop of boys burst out of the school-house. The door was open when the sleigh passed ; and, looking in, Jack

could see Master Dinks, ruler in hand, walking across the room. As the travellers had already said good by to Moses and Phineas, they were not going to stop; but Phin came running after them.

“You sha’ n’t take Lion!” And the exasperated youth, throwing his arms about the dog’s neck, endeavored to hold him.

“There’s Lon Gannett, the fellow I fought, scowling there by the wood-pile. He has got one black eye, any way!” said Jack.

He was quite willing the boys should see him riding away with such companions; and, cracking the whip, which Forrest had intrusted to him, he called, “Come, Lion!” The dog gave a bound, and ran after the sleigh, leaving poor Phineas tumbled in the snow.

The weather was fine, the sleighing excellent, and Jack, sitting by Annie’s side, wrapped up in the same buffalo-robe, while Forrest, in a buffalo-skin suit of his own, sat on the movable seat before them,—following the jingling sleigh-bells, while Lion trotted behind,—was just then the happiest boy in the world. The day was one of the shortest of the year, and the early winter night began to close in upon them some time before the end of their journey was reached. As they were passing through a village, Forrest said, “I am going to leave you at the tavern, while I look up a man I want to see.”

As they stopped at the door of the public house, Jack asked, “What will you do with the horse,—take him with you?”

"No, put him under the shed. He will be all right with the blanket thrown over him. I shall be back in about half an hour." Jack offered to take care of the horse. "Very well. Be sure and hitch him fast," said Forrest, "or he may get home before us."

So, while he went off on business, and Annie seated herself by the parlor fire, Jack took the horse to the shed. Having hitched and blanketed him, he called Lion.

"Here, poor fellow! are you cold too? Come in and warm your nose." And he returned to the tavern, followed by the dog.

As he went in he noticed, on the steps, the figure of a man who had been standing there when he parted from Forrest Felton. He stood with his hands in his pockets, and was humming a careless air, when Lion began to snuff and growl.

"Quit!" said Jack, cuffing the dog, to teach him better manners. "Go in there!"

"Good evening," said the man, in a wonderfully friendly voice. "About how far do ye make it to Harte's Mills?"

"It may be three miles," answered Jack. "We passed there about half an hour ago."

"Thank ye, sir! Cool evenin'." And, still with his hands in his pockets, beginning to hum again, the polite stranger sauntered slowly away.

Jack and Lion entered the parlor where Miss Felton was waiting. No sooner, however, was Lion in the room than he wanted to get out again.

“He knows he has no business here,” suggested Annie. “You had better take him to the bar-room.”

So Jack took Lion to the bar-room, and tried to make him lie down in the chimney-corner. The dog was still uneasy, and his master had to cuff his ears once more to make him mind. “Now, lie there! don’t you stir till I tell you to!”

Jack returned to the parlor, where he had been seated with Annie by the fire not more than five minutes, when the bar-keeper burst in.

“You’d better come out and see to your dog!”

“What’s the matter with my dog?” cried Jack, jumping to his feet.

“You’ll see! I believe he has killed a man!”

Jack, in great alarm, sprang to the bar-room in advance of the messenger; but no dog, and no man, was there. The place, which had held half a dozen loungers five minutes before, was empty. As he stood looking around in no little fright and bewilderment, a sound of excited voices came to his ear through the outer door, which was open; and out he ran to the shed. There he came suddenly upon a group of spectators, half illumined by the rays of a lantern.

“The man’s all right, and the dog’s all right!” somebody was saying in a loud voice. “Let ’em alone!”

“For mercy’s sake, friends, help!” pleaded another voice, which seemed to come from a distant corner. At the same time a dog’s growls were audible.



“TAKE HIM OFF!”

Jack rushed in, and saw by the light of the lantern a man clinging to the empty manger, while Lion was clinging to him.

“Here’s the boy! Is this your dog?” cried two or three voices.

“Yes! but where — where’s the horse and cutter?”

“There’s no hoss and cutter, sure enough,” said

the bar-keeper. "Here 's the blanket on the ground. Have ye seen the hoss, Jim?"

"No," said the man with the lantern. "I was in the barn looking after my hosses, when I heard a row and run around here and found this 'ere dog a tacklin' the man. I believe I did see a hoss 'n' cutter jest goin' up the street. Might 'a' been yourn."

"It was!" cried Jack.

"That's it! I thought the feller was stealin' suthin."

"Take him off!" said the man by the manger. "I'll explain everything!"

Jack made haste to pull Lion away, which was no easy matter; when, behold! the man, stepping forth in the full light of the lantern, turned out to be the same polite stranger he had met on the steps.

"So you didn't keep on to Harte's Mills!" exclaimed Jack.

"No," said the man, brushing his clothes. "I wish I had! This is what I get for tryin' to do a man a service! I heard a noise under the shed here, and saw the hoss you had just hitched backin' out. I sprung to stop him, when this dog stopped me!"

"He stopped you at the right time!" said Jack. "Hold the thief, some of you! I'll chase the horse. Come, Lion!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEST-NATURED MAN IN THE WORLD.

THE boy and the dog had run but a little way in pursuit of the missing horse and cutter, when they met a sleigh coming. Jack stood in the snow on the side of the road, and waited to hail the driver as he passed.

“Have you seen —” he began; when the driver, pulling rein, exclaimed, “That you, Jack! You’re a smart fellow to take care of a horse! I told you he would be in a hurry to get home, if he had the chance. By good luck he was stopped out here, or we should be in a pretty predicament!”

“All right!” cried Jack, breathlessly, tumbling into the sleigh. “It’s all owing to Lion!”

“That the horse got away?” said Forrest.

“No, — that the thief that was stealing him got caught.” And Jack hurriedly told what had happened. “The man had unhitched him, and backed the cutter around, and was just getting into it, I suppose, when Lion grabbed him.” The halter had, in fact, been found tied into one of the rings of the harness, — a circumstance which did not tend to corroborate the man’s story.

“Forgive me for blaming you, Jack,” said Forrest,

frankly. "I confess, when I found the horse had got away, I was vexed."

"I don't wonder!" said Jack. "The fellow must have heard what you said when you left me, for he was standing on the steps. There he is! they're taking him into the bar-room!"

Forrest gave the reins to the hostler, and, jumping from the sleigh, ran into the tavern, followed by Jack and Lion.

"That's the knowin'est dog ever I see!" the bartender was saying to the excited bystanders. "The boy made him lay down in the corner; but he was uneasy,—he knew suthin' was n't right; he got up and scratched and whined at the door, and I let him out. Next minute we heard the hollerin'. Don't appear 't he bit the man, either; only tore his clo'es a little."

The man, in the mean while, was protesting his innocence, and enlarging upon the story he had already told, adding many plausible details. He was a person about forty years of age, rather seedy in his attire, and with a great rent in the lapel of his overcoat, where Lion had seized him. He had a thin, shrewd face, and a persuasive smile which reminded Jack of somebody he had seen.

"If you just took hold of the horse to lead him back where he had been hitched," said Forrest, "how happens it that his halter-strap is found tied in the ring?"

"It was under his feet," replied the man, glibly,

“and I slipped it through the ring before I thought much about it. I may have taken a knot in it, from habit,—I don’t remember; it would have been like me; I am used to hosses. I was leadin’ him back with my hand on the bridle, when the dog flew at me. I’ve often declared I never would go out of my way to do another man a service; for this is just the way of it.” The fellow looked ruefully at his torn garment. “But I suppose I shall do just so again; for I’m too good-natered altogether. I never can learn a lesson. Only a few days ago, as I was goin’ down Broadway, I saw a hat a comin’ towards me, before a high wind, chased by a bareheaded cove, who did n’t seem likely to ketch it. Of course I sprung to stop it for him, for I’m the best-natered man in the world; but in stoopin’ for it I lost my own, and away it went in the wind. That was a fix. Bareheaded cove comin’—slow; my hat goin’ fast. I could n’t put down his hat again, could I? and if I waited to give it to him, what would become of mine? So I hild his hat in my hand while I chased mine. For what else could I do? I put it to you, gentlemen, what else?” repeated the man, with the most candid and innocent air, as if he had been addressing a jury.

Somebody replying that, according to his own account of the affair, it seemed a very natural thing to do, he smiled his thanks for the concession, and proceeded: “To be sure! the most nat’ral thing. But what was the result? Bareheaded cove abused me for runnin’ off with his hat! accused me of meanin’

to steal it! Whereas I was as guiltless of any designs upon his property as I am of wishin' to steal this gentleman's hoss and sleigh. I ought to have let his hat slide; that's the truth about it. I ought n't to have interfered with the hoss's runnin' away; I own everything. I have a fault, gentlemen; incurable, I'm afraid. I'm too good-natered by half."

"What is your name?" demanded Forrest.

"Wilkins; John Wilkins, all the world over; Good-natered John Wilkins, if you please; for that's my name, and that's my nater."

"Well, Mr. Wilkins," said Forrest, "here's half a dollar to get your coat mended with. And let me give you a piece of advice: don't be quite so *good-natured* in future. Your manner of stopping run-away hats and horses is liable to be misunderstood. I would also strongly advise you to leave this part of the country at your earliest convenience; for I will frankly say, men of your disposition are not appreciated here."

"Thanks," said Good-natured John Wilkins, with his blandest smile, glancing at the money as he put it in his pocket.

"Be these your cards?" said the hostler, coming in with his lantern. "I found 'em under the shed."

"I think they are my property. Thanks! I had a pack about me. Nice for a winter evening, — a pleasant amusement for good-natered people, when fortune throws 'em together and night overtakes 'em at a village tavern. Whist, high-low, poker, — almost anything

to accommodate ye, gentlemen, if ye like to take a hand. I'm the best-natered man in the world!"

There seemed to be, however, a prejudice existing against Mr. Wilkins in the minds of the company; and, seeing that his proposal was not likely to prove popular, he asked if there was a tailor near who could be got to mend his coat. He was starting to find one, as directed, when Lion, growling fiercely, sprang after him.

"Call back your dog!" cried he, giving signs of fear. Jack collared Lion. "Strange he should take such a dislike to me!" added Wilkins, with a sickly smile on his pale face, which once more reminded the boy of somebody or something.

"He did n't like you when he first saw you on the steps," said Jack.

"True; and that shows," Wilkins explained, in his most plausible manner, "that it was n't my mistake with the hoss that excited him ag'inst me."

"I believe he has seen you before," answered Jack; "and I'm not sure but that I have!"

"Very likely; try to remember; I should be happy to find in you an old friend! Name?"

"Hazard; Jack Hazard, all the world over," laughed Jack, as he parodied the man's words.

"Hazard; Jack Hazard!" Wilkins touched his forehead. "The name finds no response in my memory. And I don't remember your face, though I may have seen the dog. A friend of mine had such a dog once."

“Was his name Peternot?” inquired Jack, eagerly.

“Peternot was his name, — Paul Peternot; a wild fellow, but good-natered. I love good-natered folks, and so I loved Paul, with all his faults. Did you know Paul?”

“I knew of him! His father is old Squire Peternot. Paul got into bad habits, ran away from home, became a gambler and a drunkard, — set his bed afire one night, and was burned to death, at Wiley’s Basin. His dog was dreadfully scorched, trying to get him out of his room. I found the poor fellow afterwards, took care of him, and have had him ever since.”

“This, then, is the dog!” said Wilkins, nervously. “That accounts for his dislike of me. I — I quarrelled with Paul once; for the best friends will quarrel sometimes, ’specially where one is addicted to bad habits, as Paul was.”

“Were you with him at Wiley’s Basin?” Jack demanded, looking Wilkins full in the face.

“I met him at Wiley’s Basin, after I had been some time separated from him,” replied Wilkins, rather hesitatingly. “He invited me to drink a glass and play a game, and I was — I own the fault — too good-natered to refuse. But when I saw him inclined to go to excess, I remonstrated, — I tried to prevent him; he grew violent, and his dog seized me by the leg. I then left him, and never saw him afterwards; for that very night the unfortunate affair occurred. Ah,” said Good-natured John Wilkins, with a sigh, “if Paul would only have listened to me!”

He then withdrew, expressing a hope that he might meet Jack again after he had paid a visit to the tailor.

And now Forrest Felton, who had been in the parlor with his sister during this conversation, returned to the bar-room.

“Has the rascal gone?” he asked.

“Yes,” said the bar-tender. “Why did you give him money? Did you believe his story?”

“Not a word of it,” replied Forrest. “But I had my reasons. Come, Jack; we must be moving on now.”

Soon the travellers were once more on their way; and you may be sure that in their lively discussion of the evening's adventure Lion's singular part in it was duly admired and praised. It had been Forrest's opinion at first that the dog's uneasiness in the tavern was occasioned by an instinctive knowledge that Wilkins intended to steal the horse; but after Jack related what he had learned about the man, all agreed that Lion must have been actuated by some old grudge against the friend of his former master.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANNIE FELTON'S HOME.

ALL at once Forrest cried, "Here we are!" and drove up to the side door of a small cottage on the outskirts of the next village.

He went on to the barn with the horse, while Jack entered the house with Annie. She showed him into a comfortable sitting-room, where a bright wood-fire was burning and a supper-table was set; and there she introduced him to her mother, — an older sister of Mrs. Chatford's, whom she much resembled, — and her father, a tall, spare, white-headed man in spectacles, who sat reading a newspaper by the fire.

"And this," said she, "is Lion, our Lion," — for the dog had entered with them. "I have brought him in to show him to you and give him some supper; then he is going to be a good dog and sleep in the barn."

The old couple received Jack with great kindness, and patted and flattered the dog. "For we have heard not a little about you both," said Mrs. Felton, smiling under her gray hair and white cap-border; "Annie is never tired of talking about you."

Jack was all aglow with pleasure.

"And now," said Annie, "you must hear of Lion's

last exploit,—something that happened this very evening.”

“Wait a moment,” said Mrs. Felton. And, turning to her husband, she added, “Had n’t you better take a lantern to the barn, and help Forrest about the horse?”

“He is old enough to take care of his own horse,” replied Mr. Felton, good-naturedly. “It is n’t dark.”

“Let me take the lantern out to him!” cried Jack.

“If you will,—I know it will be a help,” replied Mrs. Felton; and Jack perceived, by the tones of her voice and the expression of her face, how fond she was of that big son of hers. “His father says I am inclined to baby him, but I don’t know,—he is an only son, if he is big!” And, having lighted the lantern for Jack, she brought a pair of slippers to the fire and left them warming for her son’s feet.

During Jack’s absence, Annie related all she knew of the adventure at the tavern, including an important fact unknown to the boy himself. On his return with Forrest she went to her own chamber; and the parents, with rather anxious faces, Jack observed, followed Forrest into an adjoining room, where he went to hang his coat away. The door was but partly closed, and presently Jack, left alone with Lion by the fire, heard low voices. “Annie says—that man—are you quite sure?” Mrs. Felton whispered.

“Yes, I knew the rascal almost at first sight,” replied Forrest. And he added, in answer to another question which Jack did not understand, “No, he

did n't appear to ; I have changed more in nine years than he has."

"I had hoped the fellow would never show his face in this part of the country again!" said Mr. Felton. "It will be a terrible trouble to your Uncle Chatford's folks if they —" The rest was lost to Jack.

"Annie and I both thought —" It was Forrest's voice, which also sank so low as to be quite indistinct.

"That's right!" said his mother. "It might lead to — The secret has been well kept till now — Not even Moses —"

Jack now became sensible that he was overhearing parts of a conversation not intended for his ears ; and though his curiosity was intensely excited, he felt that it would not be right for him longer to keep still and listen. So, leaning over the hearth where Lion lay, he began to pet him and talk to him ; in which innocent occupation he was engaged when Annie reappeared.

The family were soon gathered around the supper-table, when the cloud of trouble by which the old couple's faces were at first overcast gradually passed away. And now Jack was charmed by the easy and familiar intercourse which took place between his new friends. They chatted gayly together, and even joked each other in a delicate way, appearing more like pleasant companions than like parents and children. The old man's quiet, dry remarks, uttered with a humorous twinkle of the eye ; Mrs. Felton's genial talk, which seemed to flow from her

very heart ; Forrest's hearty, deep-chested laugh ; and, above all, the silvery sweetness of Annie's voice, and the grace and gentleness of all her words and ways, — filled Jack with a sort of wondering delight.

“ Oh ! ” thought he, “ am I that miserable little swearing canal-boat driver of less than a year ago ? What company I kept and had pleasure in then ! And now ! — O, I don't believe there is anywhere in the world so beautiful a family as this ! ”

And what had he done to merit his good fortune ? Nothing, he thought ; it was all owing to the kindness of his friends, — to her more than all ! And his eyes grew misty with grateful tears as he fixed them on the dear, sweet face of Annie Felton.

He had the “ spare room ” in the house that night, — a great honor. He had never been treated so well in all his life. At Mr. Chatford's he was a boy with the boys ; here he was entertained as a guest.

After he got to bed, as he lay thinking of Mrs. Pipkin's sharp tongue and Phin's unlovely disposition, he could nor help wishing that his home was here with Annie and her friends.

“ But that is mean in me ! ” he said to himself, checking these thoughts. “ After all the Chatfords have done for me — they are so good — and dear little Kate — no, no ! I won't be dissatisfied ; that would be more than foolish in me, — it would be wicked ! I'll put up with the few disagreeable things I have to endure there, and be thankful for these privileges ! ” And his heart seemed cradled in a sea of

bliss as, with Annie's beautiful image in his mind, he went to sleep.

Thus began the boy's brief visit to this charming family. His stay with them was too eventless to be dwelt upon, and I fear many lads would have found it tame; but to him it was of itself a great event, — one that was sure to have an influence upon all his after life.

Mr. Felton was a farmer who, finding old age coming upon him, had wisely given up hard work and the care of his land, and retired to the quiet life of the village. There he kept his horse, his cow, and his garden; and, without being rich, was able to live in ease and comfort. He was full of experience, which, though a rather silent man, he took pleasure in imparting to good listeners, — and Jack was one.

His son Forrest practised surveying in summer and taught village singing-schools in winter; and by him Jack was inspired with the ambition to learn both singing and surveying. He began those studies at once, with books which Forrest loaned him; and at the same time got from Annie some knowledge of the meaning of English grammar, concerning which all Master Dinks's instruction had failed to give him any distinct idea.

But, after all, the best result of the visit was the interior culture Jack received from being in the presence and breathing the atmosphere of those superior persons. His pure and enthusiastic devotion to Annie made him keenly susceptible to their influence;

and all the strings of his heart became attuned to the harmony of their lives.

He made a few acquaintances in the village, coasted, snow-balled, skated on the frozen creek, and had a few sleigh-rides with Annie and her brother. And so the days flew by on joyous wings, until his stay was cut short by the arrival of another visitor. This was Moses Chatford.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOSES BRINGS GOOD NEWS.

MOSES had come to take Jack home ; and he had brought some interesting news. This he crowded into a single jubilant sentence, as he jumped from the sleigh, and afterwards related circumstantially as he sat with the family about the evening fire.

“I tell ye, we had great doings at school after you left, Jack ! Things grew worse and worse till last Wednesday, when the big row came.”

“What began it ?”

“Why, you remember, when there happened to be no wood in the school-house, Dinks would tell some of the boys, at recess, to bring in some.”

“Yes ; and sometimes they would bring in a little, and sometimes a good deal ; then sometimes they would forget all about it, and Dinks would have no dry wood for his fire the next morning.”

“Well, Tuesday forenoon, he said to the boys, as we were going out, ‘Some of you bring in some wood when you come in.’ Now somebody’s business is nobody’s business ; and not a boy carried in a stick except Step Hen Treadwell, — he took in two little sticks, and got well laughed at when he laid them down. Dinks was wrathful ; and in the afternoon he said, ‘Now every one of you bring in an armful of wood,

after recess! I'll see,' says he, 'if we can't have wood enough in the school-room to last one day!'

"So we thought we would give him enough. I started the thing, without knowing how it was coming out; I went to the wood-pile, and filled my arms as well as I could, then got the other boys to load me up to the chin. I went staggering in, and threw down my contribution by the stove. Dinks was tickled. 'There!' says he; 'that's the way! We should have wood enough, if we had a few boys like Moses Chatford!' Then in came Smith Marston, his red head almost hidden behind a small mountain of wood. 'Ha! there's another smart boy!' says Dinks. 'You need n't load up quite so heavy next time, boys; but I'm glad to see you ain't afraid of using your muscles.' Then in came two more tremendous loads; and still they kept coming; crash, crash, down on the floor by the stove. Dinks's praises of smart boys grew fainter and fainter, and finally stopped; he looked red as fire, and finally cried out, 'There! there! I did n't tell you to bring in the whole wood-pile! That will do! Tell the other boys that will do!'

"But somehow the word did n't get to the other boys, and the wood kept coming, till you never saw such a sight! the stove was almost covered up. Dinks was mad as fury. He picked out five boys, who had stayed to heap up the other boys' arms, and came in last, all loaded to the chin. He called over their names.

“ ‘Samuel Narmore, ’Lonzo Gannett, Randolph Hildreth, Jeremiah Mason, ’Liphalet Buel,’ says he, rapping on the table, while they brushed the dirt and snow from their coats, ‘after school, you can each of you have the privilege of carrying out a handful of wood ; and as much as you brought in. Remember !’

“Jerry Mason and Liphe Buel,” Moses explained to his relatives, “are the biggest boys in school ; they had never been punished by Dinks, and they did n’t believe he would dare lay hands on them. They just smiled, and whispered among themselves, ‘He has no control over us after school hours ; he can’t set us to carrying out wood.’ So, when school was out, they walked past the wood-pile, and walked off, independent as could be. Of course the other three boys followed their example.

“Dinks called after ’em. ‘Boys !’ says he, ‘come back and carry out that wood, or I ’ll give you a kind of wood you won’t like so well, to-morrow morning !’ But they paid no attention to him.

“Well, the next morning Dinks came to school, bringing with him six splendid hickory whips, — one apiece for the five boys, and an extra one. The culprits came in together, looking remarkably cheerful. It turned out that they had agreed among themselves not to take off their coats for Master Dinks, and not to hold out their hands to be feruled ; and to arm themselves against the hickory whips, they had each put on several shirts and an extra pair or two of trousers.

“Dinks began the business of the day by taking down his whips and calling the five fellows to ‘stand out in the middle of the floor.’ Out they marched, grinning hard to keep their spirits up. Dinks began to season his whips in the fire. ‘Off with your coats, boys!’ says he. Not a boy stirred. ‘Your coats, I say!’

“‘Excuse me,’ says Jerry Mason, with his head on one side, and his hand on his hip, ‘but I’ve been taught at home that ’tain’t perlite to take off my coat in company. I’d rather be excused.’

“‘Same with me,’ says Liphe Buel.

“‘I got on a ragged shirt,’ says Rant Hildreth, ‘an’ marm told me not to let anybody see it.’ As he had bragged to us that he meant to make this excuse, we all laughed.

“Dinks stamped with his foot. ‘Silence!’ says he. I suppose by that time he had found out that to get those five coats off was a rather big job, and that he had better shirk it. So he says, ‘Very well, you can be punished with your coats on, if you prefer, but you’ll be whipped all the harder.’ They only smiled. Then he began and used up several whips on them, principally about the legs; and they smiled all the while. They laughed as they took their seats, and Rant Hildreth muttered something out loud.

“‘What did he say?’ Dinks asked. Phin up and told: ‘He said it did n’t hurt him a bit, for he has got on three pair o’ trousers! so have they all,—they’ve all got on two or three pair!’

“ ‘Come back here, every one of you!’ says Dinks; and they all marched back, looking a little more sober than before. He grabbed his ruler. ‘Hold out your hand!’ says he to Rant.

“ ‘I’ve been licked once for what you’d no right to lick me for at all,’ says Rant, ‘and I won’t hold out my hand!’ At that the master began to beat him over the elbows and ears. Rant dodged and parried the blows for a while, till they came too thick and heavy for him; his extra shirts and three pair of trousers did n’t protect his skull; then, remembering, I suppose, Jack’s illustrious example, he started to run out of school. Dinks started after him, and caught him by the coat-tail. We heard an awful rip! Rant got away, but his coat-tail did n’t! Dinks brought in the trophy, brandishing it like a black flag, and laid it on the table. He then began on Lon Gannett, and was knocking him over the head in the same way, when Rant came to the door, howling like an Indian: ‘Give me my coat-tail! give me back my coat-tail, or I’ll send this club at your head!’

“In came the club; it hit the basin on the stove, and knocked the hot water all over Dinks and Lon Gannett and Sam Narmore. Then Jerry Mason spoke up: ‘See here, Master! I guess it’s about time to stop this thing. It’s dangerous knocking a boy over the head that way; and I would n’t tear off any more coat-tails, if I was you. — Liphe, what do you think?’

“‘I’m o’ the same opinion,’ says Liphe. ‘Then le’s’s stop it,’ says Jerry. ‘Agreed,’ says Liphe.

“Dinks had already stopped. But he was too late. The fellows took him, dragged him to the blackboard, tied up his thumbs with one of his own cords as high as he could reach, and left him roaring for help.

“‘School’s dismissed for the rest of this winter!’ says Jerry Mason; and he and the rest went to getting their books together. Rant Hildreth took his coat-tail and put it in his pocket. There was a terrible uproar. I went and cut down the master, and he tried to restore order. But it was no use. He talked a little while with two or three of the big girls, who took his part, then grabbed his ruler and dictionary and other private property, and went up to Squire Peternot’s. I waited till all the rest were gone, then locked up the school-house and carried home the key.

“Well, there was a heavy after-clap; old Peternot wanted his nephew to go on with the school, and came over with him to see father about it. There was a meeting of the trustees at our house that night, and there was a lively time. I was called as a witness. You should have been there, Jack, to hear the old man rave and thump the floor with his cane! But father can be as set as anybody, when his mind is once made up; and, to tell you the truth, his mind was made up about Dinks’s style of school-keeping before you came away, only he was careful not to say so before us boys.

“Well, Dinks was dismissed, and the next day

father rode over to the Basin and hired the new master. It seemed he had already had some talk with him on the subject, and knew what he was about. So school will begin again next Monday, Jack ; and your friend, Percy Lanman, is to be the master."

CHAPTER XV.

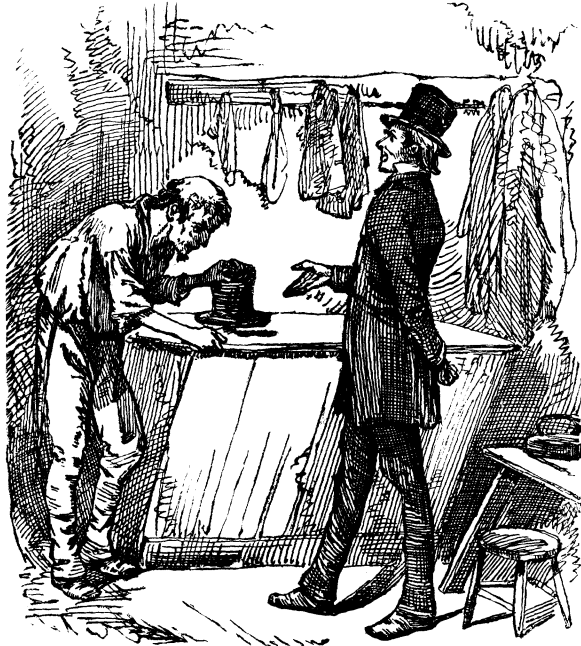
GOOD-NATURED JOHN WILKINS ONCE MORE.

THIS good news reconciled Jack to the necessity of cutting short his visit and returning home with Moses; though when the time came for bidding his friends farewell, the next morning, it required some stoutness of heart to keep back his tears. He had spent the happiest week of his life in the house he was leaving; and when would ever such bliss be his again?

It was Saturday. They had the day before them; and the boys, to gratify a natural curiosity, stopped in the village where Jack had made the acquaintance of Mr. John Wilkins, to see if they could learn anything more of that good-natured man. The bartender said he had heard the fellow played a queer game on the tailor who mended his coat; and so the boys paid the tailor a visit.

“Yes, he did indeed!” said that worthy man, on being questioned as to the fact. “The way on’t was this. I charged him half a dollar for the job, and give him his supper besides. I thought I ought to have another shillin’, but he said if I would take fifty cents, he would show me a curi’s thing to do with a hat. As he seemed such a drea’ful good-natered man, — he called himself so, and he was so, — I could n’t

stand out about the odd shillin'; besides, I don't believe he had another cent. So, when he paid me, he took my hat, — to be perfectly fair, he said; I might think 't wa' n't quite fair if he used hisn, — then laid the half-dollar down on the counter, told me to watch sharp, and put the hat over it. 'Now,' says he, 'you're sure you know where the money is.' 'I rather guess I do,' says I, 'since I've seen it with my own eyes go under the hat.' 'You're sure it's



“JEST A GOOD-NATERED TRICK, YE KNOW.”

under the hat?' says he. 'Sure as I be of anything in this world,' says I. 'Of course,' says he; 'you'd be willin', I s'pose, to bet a considerable sum on 't?' 'I'll bet a thousan' dollars,' says I. 'Don't bet any foolish sum,' says he, 'but jest bet what money you can lay down. Jest a good-natered trick, ye know,' says he. So I took what change I had out of the till, — about a dollar and seventy-five cents; he lifted up his hat, — there was the half-dollar, for I watched sharp; he put all in a neat little pile together, one piece top o' t' other, an' then put the hat over 'em again. 'Now,' says he, 'you bet what money there is, that it's under the hat?' 'Sartin, I do,' says I. 'Now, watch sharp,' says he, 'for the curi's thing's to come. Now,' says he, 'lift the hat.' I lifted it, and was never so amazed in all my life. There wa'n't no money under it! 'Sartin not,' says he, 'for it's in my pocket. I believe, my friend,' says he, 'you've lost the bet. I wish ye a very good evenin'!' An', 'fore I could scratch my stupid pate twice, the rogue was gone."

The boys could not help laughing at the tailor's simple story; and as they rode on, they had a good deal of talk about the good-natured Mr. Wilkins. Jack was tempted to relate what he had overheard of Forrest's conversation with his parents, that first night at Mr. Felton's house; but he thought that he had no right to speak of it.

The boys reached home about noon; and Moses, entering the house before Jack, came upon a curious

scene. Phin, sitting upright in a chair, was grinning with delight while a travelling phrenologist fingered his skull and described his brilliant and amiable traits of character. The science the stranger professed was new in those days; and the idea of a person's talents and disposition being indicated by the "bumps" on his head appeared to many people a simple absurdity. The deacon, however, had kindly permitted the experiment, and had soon laid aside his newspaper to listen more attentively than he had ever expected to do to "such nonsense." Mrs. Chatford had dropped her sewing; little Kate stood by her side. Mr. Pipkin, tipped back in his chair against the chimney, sat with open-mouthed wonder, making an extraordinary display of frontal ivory; while Mrs. Pipkin, half-way between the kitchen and the dinner-table, paused with a dish of steaming vegetables in her hands.

"Dr. Doyley, Moses," said the deacon, introducing his son. "Be quiet," he added with a smile, "and you'll hear something."

"Phrenology?" suggested Moses.

"That's the name on 't, I believe," said Mr. Pipkin; "though I don't see why they should call it *free-knowledgey*, long 's we're expected to pay twenty-five cents apiece for havin' our bumps felt on."

Dr. Doyley smiled indulgently. He was a rather slight man, dressed in a once genteel but now rather threadbare coat, buttoned tight across his chest, concealing every vestige of linen (if there was any to conceal), except a pompous shirt-collar. His hair

was stuck straight up on his forehead ; which, in addition to a pair of large-bowed spectacles, made him look — as Mr. Pipkin observed — “ wise as any old owl.”

“ Approbativeness — very large,” he was saying. “ This boy is fond of praise, and he never can be comfortable in his mind a minute while he sees another boy a gittin’ more ’n he does.”

“ By hokey ! that’s a fact,” cried Mr. Pipkin.

“ But that’s a good trait, properly directed,” said the man of science. “ Gives one the desire to rise in the world ; to be as big and as smart as anybody. And he’ll rise, too, this boy will ; I find it in his bumps. He won’t git his livin’ by hard work, neither ; he’s got talents, he’s got great talents, for makin’ his way.”

“ Where do you find ’em ? ” Phin inquired, immensely flattered.

“ Here, — all about here,” replied Dr. Doyley, his nimble fingers playing a lively tattoo all over the boy’s cranium. “ Perceptive faculties — large ; knowledge of human nater — very large ; suavity, — he can be polite as a basket o’ chips, if he takes a notion.”

“ That’s when he sees it for his interest to be,” said Moses. “ How about conscience ? ”

“ Conscientiousness — not remarkably developed, but fair ; ’t will do ; enough for all practical purposes. There’s such a thing as a man’s havin’ too much conscience ; it prevents him from risin’ in the world. Acquisitiveness, — the boy has large acquisitiveness,

but that is a good trait, too, properly directed. Without that, he would never accumulate the large fortune he is sure to do afore he has lived many years."

"Come, come!" said the deacon, with a frown; "I'd rather you would n't put such notions into the boy's head."

"I'm only sayin' what I find in his head. If the notions ain't there already, they'll be there soon enough; he has only to follow his genius;—he'll rise, he'll make his way; it's his nater."

"Talkin' about nater," said Mr. Pipkin, "who does he take arter?"

The phrenologist looked first at Mr. Chatford, then at Mrs. Chatford and Kate, and finally at Moses. Then he stepped lightly and airily, and fingered the heads of each.

"That young man," said he, pointing at Moses, "has both his parents' traits in about equal proportion; p'raps a little more his father's than his mother's. The little girl has got most mother in her. But here"—returning to Phineas—"is somethin' extraordinary. I can't find that this boy takes after either parent. I'd venter to bet a trifle that his friends often hear it remarked that he's an odd one, not like any of the rest of the family."

Mr. Chatford's newspaper dropped from his lap to the floor. The incredulity which at first lurked in his smile had now quite vanished, and his countenance appeared full of astonishment and something like apprehension. Mrs. Chatford turned pale, while

she kept her eyes on the man of science with a most searching look. Mrs. Pipkin nodded, with a sarcastic tightening of the lips; while her husband exclaimed, "By hokey! you've hit the mark this time, if you never did afore!"

"I sometimes hit the mark," said the learned doctor; "and if you'll allow me presently to examine your head, — only twenty-five cents; fifty cents for a written chart, — I may surprise you more yit. I can describe your traits of character; tell you what sort of a career you are fitted for, and what sort of a person you ought to marry."

"My husband is a married man," said Mrs. Pipkin, sharply, pausing again between the kitchen and the table, "and don't need any advice on that subject."

Dr. Doyley bowed politely. "Yit it might be a satisfaction to be told that he's made a wise choice; that science itself could n't 'a' guided him better in the selection of a companion, — for I can see so much without goin' near your heads." (Smiles from Mrs. Pipkin, and a very broad one from Mr. Pipkin.) "A good-natered man, — p'r'aps too good-natered; that's like me," said the phrenologist, glancing about the room, — "I'm too good-natered for my own interest, and —"

Just then a new face entered the door, and the quick eye of the man of science fell upon Jack. He hesitated a moment, but rallied immediately, and was going on, when Lion bounced into the room. With a terrific snarl he sprang at the doctor, who in sudden



A RECOGNITION.

alarm ran backwards towards the chimney, and sat down very unceremoniously in Mr. Pipkin's lap.

"Take him off! take him off!" he shrieked, hugging Mr. Pipkin in a frenzy of fear, while the chair slid from under them, and both rolled on the hearth together.

Jack with cuffs and threats sent the dog back, and the stranger leaped nimbly to his feet. He was imitated, though rather more clumsily, by Mr. Pipkin,

grumbling and brushing the ashes from his coat-tails.

“Ah, my young friend!” said the phrenologist, recovering his lost self-possession, together with his spectacles, which had dropped upon the hearth, “I believe we have met before!”

“I should think so!” cried Jack. “Now your spectacles are off, you look like *good-natered John Wilkins!*”

“And I know you!” exclaimed Mr. Chatford, advancing with his right hand angrily clinched. “John Wilkins! Dr. Doyley!” he repeated; “I know another name for you! How dare you enter my house in this way, you miserable scoundrel?”

And the usually mild deacon seized the “best-natured man in the world” by the coat-collar.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STRANGE VISITOR.

THE violence of this action so excited Lion again, that, in spite of all Jack's efforts to hold him, he would have sprung at the man's throat, had not the deacon himself, after an instant's reflection, withdrawn his hand and driven back the dog.

"Why," said Dr. Doyley, — or John Wilkins, or whatever his name may have been, — quickly regaining his equanimity, "in answer to your remarkable question, this is the way I commonly enter houses, since I've taken up the profession of a phrenologist."

"How long have you followed that?" demanded the deacon.

"Not very long, I confess. It's a new science, and I am new in it. But I've made some good hits in the case of your son here." And the doctor managed to convey a peculiar meaning in his tone and look as he waved his hand towards Phineas. "That you know better than anybody. No harm done, sure. Bright boy, and I take an interest in him. You can't help that. And if *you* have the boy's interest at heart, — well, to say the least, you'll invite me to dinner," he added, with a grimace meant for a smile.

"I'll invite you to walk out of that door, and

never darken it with your shadow again! You impostor!”

Wilkins stepped back and quietly laid his hand on Phin's shoulder. “If that's your game,” said he, “very well! I'm the best-natered man in the world, but —”

“O husband! deacon!” exclaimed Mrs. Chatford, clasping the good man's arm, to restrain him. “Consider!”

“After his promise to me!” said the deacon.

“I hain't forgot that promise,” said Wilkins, glancing from the deacon to the dog, with no little anxiety in his smile, — for Jack stood ready to launch that growling thunderbolt at any moment. “And I shall keep it, unless you force me to break it in self-defence.”

“But here you are in my house! Is that keeping your promise?”

“A nat'ral curiosity; ye can't blame me for that.”

“It was natural; you'll allow so much,” said Mrs. Chatford, still restraining her husband. “Hear to reason! Let him stay to dinner, if he will; you never denied any man a dinner yet.”

“How can I trust him a minute?” said the deacon, with huge dissatisfaction in his face. “Even the dog scents his villany! Where have you ever met this man, Jack?”

Jack, who had been eagerly watching for an opportunity to put in a word, related briefly the adventure at the village tavern. “It seemed to me then I had

seen him before, though I can't tell where; Lion had, anyway. He was with Paul Peternot, at Wiley's Basin; and the dog seems to connect him somehow with the cause of his master's death."

"It is my fate to be misunderstood," said the doctor, with a deprecating wave of the hand and a sad smile. "'Thus ever from my childhood's hour,' as Shakespeare says. I try to save my friend, and git the ill-will of his dog. I stop a runaway hoss, and am accused of stealin'. I enter this house on an ur-rant of love" (I suppose he meant errand), "and I'm suspected of treachery. Things that seem dark in the past" — bowing to the deacon — "might be as easily explained. I have a bad fault, a bad fault! I say to myself a dozen times a day, 'Don't be so obligin'! Do hold up a little! You're too eternally good-natured!' I say, and that's the fact."

He stepped and took his hat from the bureau, his overcoat from a chair, and a small and very lean looking valise from the floor.

"Sir," bowing to the deacon, "your very humble servant. Madam, the same to you. I cut the Gordian knot of the present diffikilty by withdrawin', — amicably withdrawin'. I might be vindictive, but I prefer to be generous. For the sake of some one who shall be nameless" — a very profound and significant bow — "I smother my resentment, and take everything in good part. I waive the question of dinner, and — adieu!"

And, having patted Phineas fondly on the shoul-

der, he bowed very low to the rest, smiled ironically, put on his hat with an ornate flourish (he had already put on his overcoat), and departed, — very much stared at by all, and growled at not a little by Lion.

Phin was the first to speak. "Father! where did you ever see that man before?"

"No matter," replied the deacon, frowning darkly, and appearing much agitated. "I had some dealings with him years ago. I can't explain now; maybe I will some time, when you get old enough to understand."

"Is his name Doyley?" Phin persisted.

"No more than it is Wilkins. Now, don't ask any more questions. He's a slippery, oily-tongued, unconscionable knave! though I think he must have been hard up when he took the risk of stealing Forrest's horse and cutter."

"Did he ever see *me* before?"

"No, no! Or if he ever did, it was before we moved into this town. He was never here before."

"We've lived here ever since I was a baby," Phin urged. "Then how could he know so much about me? There must be *something* in phrenology."

"Maybe there is. Now, let me never hear this subject mentioned again!" said the deacon, sternly. "Is dinner ready? Come, let's sit down. Jack, you have n't told us about your visit yet. How do you like the idea of Percy Lanman for a schoolmaster?"

So the conversation was turned to other subjects ; and, though the family's strange visitor was a good deal talked of in whispers, and Phin teased his mother about him till he got his ears boxed, nobody ventured again to speak of him in the presence of the deacon.

CHAPTER XVII.

PERCY LANMAN'S SCHOOL.

ON the following Monday Jack returned to school with higher hopes and brighter prospects than ever. By his battle with Lon Gannett, and his little affair with Master Dinks, he had won a reputation which made him the most popular boy in school. Those who had formerly been his enemies now sought his friendship; while the better class of pupils, who as a rule despised fighting and condemned resistance to lawful authority, could not but admire the lad who had shown so much spirit in his own defence, and so much generosity and courage in the defence of others.

Poor little Step Hen Treadwell lived in peace after that, and there was very little tyranny exercised over the small boys during the rest of the winter. This better state of things, however, was owing in part to the influence of the new teacher.

Percy Lanman reopened the school, which had been closed in the irregular manner described by Moses, on very different principles from those which had actuated the unsuccessful Dinks. Quiet, energetic, pleasant, prompt, his presence in the school-room brought with it a new atmosphere. The very

sight of him was a delight to Jack's eyes ; the sound of his voice kindled love and ambition in his heart.

“Young ladies and gentlemen, and boys and girls,” said Percy, in calling the school to order the first morning, “I hope we all understand what we are here for. It is not for play ; it is not to have some fun. Though play and fun are good things in their way, and I hope to enjoy them with you in the right time and place, our chief business in this room, during school-hours, is STUDY. I am here to help you ; and I shall help you in every way I can. In return, you must help me. You will help me, and so help each other, by being cheerful, quiet, orderly, industrious. Now, let all who are willing to help in this way hold up their hands.”

Every hand in school was raised.

“It is a vote !” said the new master, with a smile that seemed to light up the whole school like sunshine. “All agreed ! Now we have no time to waste in words ; only a part of the winter is left us, and we must make the most of it.”

So the school began. It was not until an hour later that a needful word was said about discipline. The new teacher could not break up old habits in his pupils and bring order out of chaos in a minute. Suddenly he rapped with his ruler.

“Some of you, I see, are forgetting our agreement. This won't do. I am here to teach you ; but to do that, I must have order. It is a shameful thing, to both teacher and pupils, if he is obliged to threaten

and whip them, as if they were dumb beasts that could not listen to reason ; and if anything of that kind is necessary this winter, it will not be my fault. But, as I said, we are going to have order in this school-room, whatever else happens. I know you all agree with me, that that is right. If any think differently, let them hold up their hands. Not a hand ! Very well ! now we understand what *must* be."

This was spoken in so resolute a manner, that even those who were not governed altogether by reason felt their rude natures touched by the determined spirit of the new master. He had little trouble after that. There were two or three unruly boys whose offences required prompt and summary treatment, and that they got ; but in every case of the kind the public opinion of the school was on the teacher's side.

Sometimes at noon Percy would go out and join in the big boys' sports. He went so far one day as to offer to wrestle with Jerry Mason, who had thrown every one he had taken hold of, — " Provided," said Percy, in his pleasant way, " you 'll agree not to give me a hard fall." So the master and the champion wrestler took hold of each other ; while a ring of interested spectators looked on, expecting to see " Jerry fling the master": for Jerry was the larger of the two.

But Jerry put forth his strength in vain. Percy, lithe, athletic, alert, stuck to the ground as if his feet had been magnets on a floor of steel. Jerry lifted, and tripped, and tried all his favorite locks and turns ; until at last Percy said, laughingly, " Now I 'll

show *you* a trick; look out for yourself!" And the next moment Jerry was laid flat on his back, without knowing precisely how he came there.

Jack was almost beside himself with joy at this result; and, indeed, all who witnessed it were greatly excited and pleased, with the single exception, perhaps, of Phineas Chatford.

"Huh!" sneered that envious youngster, "I don't see why you should all make so much of the master for that little thing! He never'd have dared to wrestle with one of his big boys if he had n't known he could fling him."

Notwithstanding his familiarity with the scholars, Percy never lost their respect. Heartily as he entered into their games, the moment school was called his whole manner showed them that the hour of sport was over, and serious business begun.

His manner of teaching was no less admirable than his style of discipline. Jack was a favorite pupil, and the progress he made was so rapid, that before the winter was over he was in advance of Phineas in all their studies; which circumstance served greatly to embitter Phin against his rival.

"It's your own fault," said Moses one day, when Phin was charging it all to the master's partiality. "Jack goes into things in earnest; he is doing his best; while you shirk hard work, and just do what you think will make a good show. Talk about ciphering Jack's legs off! I told you, the first day of school, just how it would be."

"I don't care!" muttered Phin. "I *could* have kept ahead of him if I had tried. But I ain't going to get my living by hard work,— so that phrenologist said, and, abuse him as much as you've a mind to, *he* knew what he was talking about. I've got talents; I shall rise in the world without going crazy over cube root and syntax."

"The best thing you can do is to forget what that humbug told you," said Moses. "It's making a fool of you."

"Humbug!" retorted Phin; "I asked the master if there was anything in phrenology, and he said there was."

"I heard just what he said," replied Moses. "'There's something in it, no doubt,' says he, 'but as a science it is still in its infancy, and it is n't safe to rely too much upon it.' Anyhow," added Moses, "even if it was the most perfect science in the world, that would n't make your great Dr. Doyley anything but a quack and a knave."

"I don't see what he has done so much out of the way," retorted Phineas. "He explained everything, or said he could explain; and I liked him!"

The two brothers had frequent arguments regarding the merits of the said Doyley, which usually ended in this way, much to the disgust of Moses.

Jack worked hard about the farm-yard and woodshed, before and after school; and towards the last of the term a new affair began to occupy his time on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BOYS GO INTO BUSINESS.

ONE day Mr. Treadwell, the father of Step Hen, driving by the school-house at the time of the boys' recess, stopped and beckoned to Jack. He was an eccentric old man; all his ways were what the country folks termed "odd." He had his nickname as well as his son. At a public school-meeting he was once nominated for the office of trustee; but, thinking it would be better filled by some person living nearer the centre of the district, he arose, and declined the honor in these words: "I must beg to be excused, *I live so scattering!*" He was "Old Scattering" ever afterwards.

This was the man who stood up in his sleigh and beckoned violently, screaming, "You, sir! you Hazard boy! come here!" Jack ran up to him, thinking something dreadful was the matter; but his mind was soon put to rest by the old man saying, "I want to shake hands with you!" (he put out a thick leather mitten,) "and thank you for your dutiful behavior to my son! You've been a friend to my Stephen, and I thank you!"

The old man's voice choked, and tears of emotion filled his eyes. Jack at the same time observed that his eyes were very red, his nose unnaturally large and

spongy, and his cheeks full of inflamed little veins. The truth is, Old Scattering was accustomed to drink rather too much hard cider.

“Stephen is a good little fellow,” replied Jack, “and he seems to be getting along very well lately.”

“All owing to you ; your noble conduct !” the old man declared. “I wish I could recompensate you. I tell ye what I’ll do, — you shall come over and eat supper with us some time, and spend the night with Stephen, and I’ll make the old woman fry some of her prime doughnuts !”

Jack laughingly replied that he did n’t want any reward ; though he had no doubt he should enjoy the visit and the doughnuts. “But there’s one thing I’ve been wishing to speak to you about,” he said.

“Name it, and I am your debtor !”

“It is only this. Aunt Patsy has some sugar-maples which she says I may tap this spring, if I like, and will give her a share of the sugar. I’ve talked with Moses Chatford about it, and he would like to go in with me, and his folks are willing, and there’s only one thing in the way, — we’ve no sap-buckets. Stephen says you have some in your shed, which you have n’t used for a year or two ; and I thought —”

“You thought right !” interrupted the old man, emphatically. “Most happy ! The buckets are yours. And, moreover, my woods jine Aunt Patsy’s, on t’ other side ; I’ve some prime maples ; and there’s an old hut, and an arch for b’ilin’ ; all at your sarvice !”

“That will be grand!” cried Jack.

“Most happy!” repeated the old man, once more offering Jack the thick mitten to shake. “Only my old woman’ll expect a share of the sugar,— whatever Mr. Chatford says will be right; for we all know the deacon. At your sarvice; and most happy!”

Jack carried the good news to Moses, and the two consulted Mr. Chatford about the matter that evening.

“Well, I don’t know,” said the cautious deacon; “a couple of boys,— I don’t suppose you can do much. But try it if you like; there’ll be a chance for you to learn something, anyway.”

“Now, see here!” Phineas protested; “if Jack and Moses are going into sugar-making, I am too!”

“I don’t suppose they will object, provided you do your share of the work,” said his father.

“But you know he won’t,” said Moses. “He’ll just pretend to, and then shirk. I know him too well!”

Phin appeared to feel greatly outraged at this view taken of his character, and said so much, that finally, at Jack’s request, he was taken into the “company.”

And now the boys were full of business. Every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon found them in Mr. Treadwell’s loft repairing the old sap-buckets and “spiles” (wooden spouts for taking the sap from the trees), whittling new spiles, and making other preparations for the sugar season. As Moses had expected, he and Jack were left to do about all the work,

while the third partner sat by, pottering a little at one thing and then another, as he soon tired of each, and filling up the time with talk.

The buckets ready, the boys went to the woods, where the snow, dotted here and there with squirrels' and rabbits' tracks, still covered the ground ; and had plenty to do putting the stone arch and old hut in repair, and cleaning out a huge sap-trough, to be used as a reservoir for the precious fluid when it was brought to the camp. Then the mild days came, when the sap began to mount vigorously in the great trunks, and it was time for these to be tapped.

Jack was sorry to be obligéd to leave school a few days before the term closed ; but he resolved to make up for the loss by studying all the harder at "odd spells" during the spring and summer. And now he plunged with all the ardor of his young heart into the business he had undertaken.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUGAR-BUSH.

DEACON CHATFORD and Mr. Pipkin went over and helped the boys tap the trees. It was a beautiful day; the stillness of the woods was broken only by the chattering of a squirrel or two, and the tinkling snap of the ice on the high limbs as, touched by the morning sun, it came rattling to the ground. Then followed the sounds of cheery voices and ringing axes; and the day's work was begun.

It was a new business to Jack; and the wild beauty of the leafless woods, the delight of youthful spirits in a novel enterprise, and the hope of honest gain, made him very happy. He was quick to learn; and in an hour or two he knew all that even the wise Mr. Pipkin knew about tapping trees.

Just a slanting gash was made in the trunk with an axe; below the lower corner of this a spile was driven into a curved cut made for it by a gouge, and under the spile, which formed a sloping channel for the sap, a bucket was set. Some of the largest of the maples were tapped in three or four places. After the sun had got well up, the sap almost spirted from the trees at the first cut, and made a merry drumming as it dropped upon the bottoms of the empty buckets. These had been soaking in rain-water for a few days,

and scarcely any of them leaked. All the pails and pans and bowls which could be spared from the house were also put to use; and to these were afterwards added a number of sap-troughs that Mr. Pipkin hollowed with an axe out of short, thick slabs, into which the trunks of two or three small basswoods were cut up.

The great kettles for the arch were brought down from Mr. Treadwell's house on a stone-boat, or drag, drawn by one horse; and in the afternoon the horse and drag were used in collecting the sap. Jack and Phineas went the rounds of the sugar-bush with a couple of upright, open casks; into these the sap from the buckets was emptied, until they were as full as they could safely ride without slopping over, as they were drawn to the camp. Phin drove the horse, and stopped at the trees, while Jack emptied the buckets, some of which were found brimming full,— a glorious sight to Jack's eyes. Moses, in the mean time, with a boy's impatience, got a good fire under the kettles, within the stone-work of the arch, and before night the pleasant odor of the steam from the boiling sap was wafted through the woods.

Phin soon complained of a sprained ankle, and thought he could not drive the horse any more. So he went and sat down before the fire, while Step Hen Treadwell, who ran to the woods as soon as he was out of school, gladly helped Jack in his place.

The fire had now to be kept going and the kettles boiling by day and often by night, as long as there



GATHERING THE SAP.

was sap. The boys had accordingly brought their supper with them, intending to watch the arch until late in the evening, and then sleep in the hut. Jack and Moses were tired enough when night came,—tired and hungry; and, O, how good the bread and butter and boiled eggs tasted! and how sweet the rest from their labors, as they sat in the door of the hut, before the glowing mouth of the arch, and talked over the day's doings and the prospects of the morrow!

The sap stopped running at night, to begin again the next morning, first a few slow, trickling drops, and then a lively pattering, which it did Jack's heart good to hear. The forenoon was spent in tapping Aunt Patsy's trees, finishing the new sap-troughs, chopping wood for the fire, and gathering, without the aid of the horse and drag, the sap in the buckets nearest the camp. Phin rendered very little assistance. If left to tend the kettles, he either let them boil over, or neglected to keep them supplied with sap, or suffered the fire to go down; while he could usually be seen sitting on a log, holding a dipper of steaming sirup, which he was complacently cooling and sipping.

The sap, stored in the great trough, was dipped from that into the first, or heating kettle, from that into the second, or boiling kettle, and lastly into the third, or sweet kettle, where many gallons of sap were concentrated into a single gallon of sirup. This was finally taken, a few gallons at a time, to Mr. Chatford's house, to be strained, and then boiled down still further and carefully "sugared off" by Mrs. Chatford over the kitchen fire.

It chanced to be a capital sugar season; and there was so much work to be done, and Phin did so little, that the two active partners had to "borrow" Mr. Pipkin much of the time, in order to keep the sap boiling and the buckets from overflowing.

"Jest as I knowed 't would be," said that gentleman, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "You're a couple o' perty smart boys,—got good grit, I allow; but ye could n't git along without me!"

“O, you ’re mighty grand!” sneered Phineas; “just about the smartest man in the world,— Mr. P. Pipkin, Esquire!”

Mr. Pipkin, who stood on a log which he was chopping, paused, stooping, and looked contemptuously over his big front teeth at Master Chatford.

“As for that ’ere Phin,” said he, “if he’s worked enough in this sugar-bush to ’arn the sirup he’s dranked, I miss my guess! Talk about his bein’ a pardner in the business, by hokey! It’s like a farmer takin’ a fox into pardnerships, a raisin’ chickens! There’s reason in all things!” And, striking the axe into the log again, he made the lively chips fly at Phin’s head.

The boys had a good many visitors at the camp,— men who were interested to see “how they were getting along with their job,” and young fellows who came for a taste of the sirup, or to sit and tell stories in the evening before the fire. Three or four of the “Huswick tribe” came prowling about, making friendly advances to Jack, and helping themselves rather too freely to the contents of the sweet kettle. Phin was afraid of them; and Moses said he did not like to get their ill-will by driving them away. But Jack, who had particular reasons for not being charmed by their society,* vowed at last that he would have no more of it.

So one day, when the lank and long-armed Hank approached, and, with a wink and a grin, taking down

* See “A CHANCE FOR HIMSELF.”

the dipper from its nail, reached it over into the sweet kettle, while behind him stood Cub, short and fat, awaiting his turn, and still behind him Tug and Hod, Jack spoke out:—

“ See here ! that dipper is travelling back and forth altogether too often between that kettle and your mouths ! ”

“ It’s lickin’ good ! ” said Hank, smacking his lips. “ Don’t be mean about a little sirup.”

“ Mean ? ” retorted Jack. “ We don’t tap trees and chop wood and boil sap, to treat all the loafers in town.” He sprang and snatched the dipper. “ Now go about your business, will you ? You’re not wanted here.”

Hank stared, and Cub looked fierce ; but Jack quietly laid the dipper on the end of the great sap-trough, and said to Lion, “ Watch ! take care of it ! ” Which command Lion, who cherished a cordial grudge against the Huswick tribe, was ready enough to obey.

“ Lucky for you ye’ve got a dog to back ye up ! ” said Cub, as he followed his retreating brother through the woods.

“ Yes, watch-dogs are useful, when such fellows as you are about ! ” Jack hallooed after him.

It was Lion’s business after that to guard the sweet kettle ; and, as he was a constant companion of the boys at the camp, they had no more trouble from unwelcome visitors.

“ I van,” said Mr. Pipkin one day, after Lion, in the absence of Jack, had baffled all the attempts of

Lon Gannett and Rant Hildreth to steal a dipperful of sirup, "the dog ought to be the third pardner in this consarn,— he's wuth a plaguy sight more'n that 'ere lazy Phin!"

At the close of the season the boys gave a famous sugar-party in the woods, to which their friends were invited. It was a mild March evening; and the woods were beautiful, lit up by a blazing bonfire. The "sugaring off" was a success; and, fortunately, there was still snow enough to be found to drop the golden wax on, hot from the ladle. The merry guests, gathered in a noisy group about the kettle placed on the ground, scraped it clean with knives and sticks and spoons; and afterwards played "I spy" among the shadowy trunks in the firelit woods, which resounded with their joyous voices.

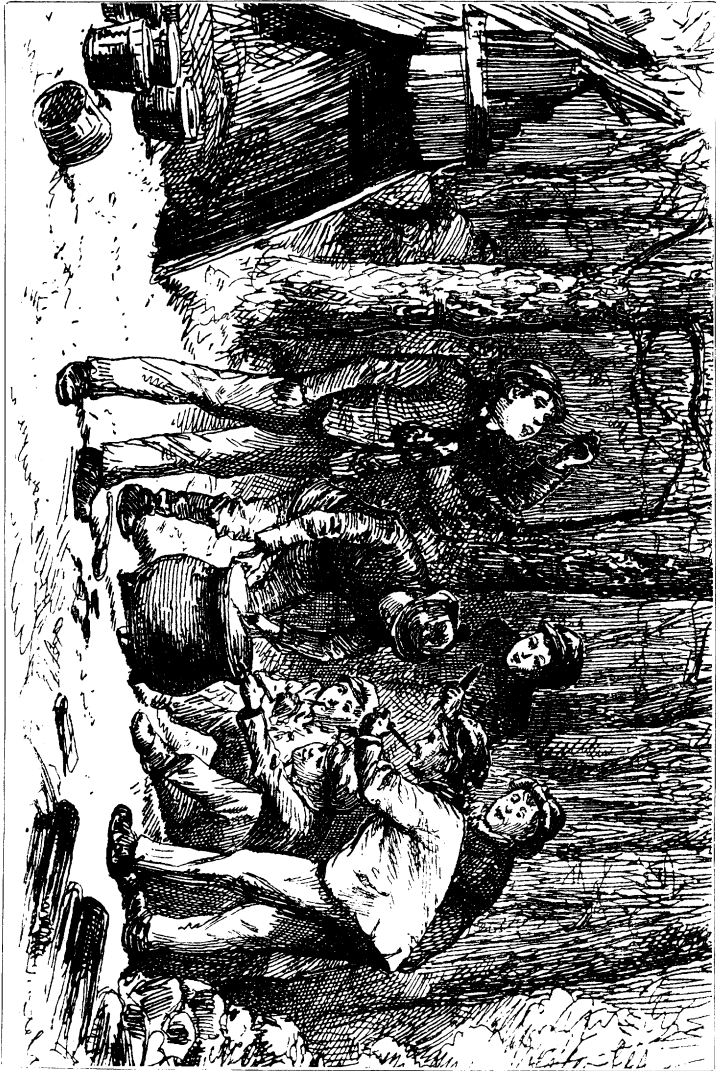
After paying for Mr. Pipkin's services by giving Mrs. Chatford a portion of the sugar, and allotting to Mrs. Treadwell and Aunt Patsy their shares, previously agreed upon, the boys sold what was left, and found that they had cleared twenty-seven dollars by the operation.

"Well, well! I do declare!" said the deacon; "I'd no idea of your making so handsome a thing! For two boys, it's really very well."

"Three boys!" snarled Phineas, vexed at being left out of the account.

"And a dog," laughed Jack; "don't forget Lion."

"And a man o' judgment and backbone to look arter 'em and lend a helpin' hand," said Mr. Pipkin.



“Now about dividing this money,” said Moses. “Though I ’m older than Jack, he has worked just as hard as I have, and is entitled to as much as I am. But you saw how Phin worked, father ; and now I ’m going to let you divide it.”

“I was a partner, and I claim an equal share with the other two !” cried Phin, with great vehemence.

“They ’d be better off this minute if Phin had kep’ out o’ the sugar-bush altogether,” said Mr. Pipkin. “A lazy back and a sweet tooth hender more ’n they help, about the kittles.”

Mr. Chatford took Moses and Jack aside. “I know he did n’t do very well,” he said, coaxingly ; “but I want to encourage the boy ; it will be a great disappointment to him, if he don’t have a share. So, if you ’ve no objections, I ’ll divide the money in this way : you two shall have eleven dollars apiece, and Phineas shall have the other five. ’T ain’t hardly fair, I know ; but you sha’ n’t lose by it in the end.”

Moses said it was “outrageous” ; but Jack declared himself satisfied. “Although,” said he, “I don’t believe Phin will be.”

Indeed, Phin was at first furious over the small share given to him ; but, finding that it was all he could have, he finally put it in his pocket, vowing at the same time that he would come up with Jack and Moses in some way.

“And now, father,” said Moses, “Jack has another idea, — a bigger scheme than this, — which I believe we can make something out of, if you will let us, and

if we can keep clear of third partners ; we have had enough of them !”

“ Say nothing more about that !” replied the deacon, indulgently, with a wink and nod. “ What’s your scheme ? Something to make your fortunes, I suppose !”

“ Of course,” said Moses, laughing ; and he proceeded to explain.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GREAT SCHEME.

“WE have no more land under cultivation now, than we have had for the past four years. But here’s Jack, an extra hand, who thinks he ought to be earning something besides his board and clothes; and I,” said Moses, — “I believe I can do twice the work this year I did last.”

“I hope so. But come to the point, come to the point,” said the deacon.

“Well, there is Old Scattering’s farm, which has been running down ever since he began to drink too much hard cider.”

“Who is Old Scattering?” demanded the deacon, sternly, — though he knew very well. “If you mean Mr. Treadwell, say so. Learn to speak respectfully of neighbors.”

“He will do anything for Jack,” said Moses; “and I believe we can take some land of him, to work this summer, just as we did the sugar-bush.”

“Come, come!” said the deacon, thoughtfully, “you mustn’t let your ambition run away with you. Bear in mind, you’re only a couple of boys; and don’t think, because you’ve done tolerably well with the sugar-bush, you can make money at farming. Besides, we have n’t the team to spare.”

"I've talked with Mr. Treadwell," said Jack; "and he has promised to furnish team and tools, and one half the seed, and give us one half the crop."

"Well, that's liberal, too liberal," said the deacon; "though I suppose it will be better for him than to have his land lie still. But it ought to have been broken up in the fall. Besides, it's too far off."

"It is n't a long way, through the woods," replied Moses. "If he furnishes and keeps the team, we sha' n't have to go around the road very often. I believe we can raise a good crop of spring wheat on his old corn-lot, by just turning it over, giving it a good harrowing, and sowing some of Sellick's new kind of seed on it. The old fallow we can get ready during the summer for sowing with winter wheat in the fall. All that need n't interfere very much with our work here at home, if we only manage right."

"Who ever heard of such a thing? Two boys!" said the deacon, when he had got to the end of his objections.

"Jack and I can plough and harrow as well as anybody," insisted Moses. "I guess we can get you to sow the wheat for us; and we shall expect to ask your advice about some things."

Mr. Chatford began to waver. "What will the neighbors say to our taking land? as if we had n't enough of our own!"

"But it is n't you, it's Jack and I! And if the neighbors say anything, I think they'll say you've got a couple of pretty enterprising boys in the family."

"Well, well! don't brag; that sounds too much like Phineas. I suppose he'll want to go in with you?"

"But he can't, if he does. We gave him one trial. We don't want any drones in our hive. He don't know anything about it yet."

The deacon took time to consider the matter and talk it over with his wife. She was prepared to favor it. "You saw," said she, "how happy and industrious the boys were, at work on their own account in the sugar-bush. It is the very best education you can give them,—to throw them on their own resources a little, and let them think and act for themselves."

So at last the deacon gave his consent. Phin, when he found it out, was highly exasperated; and he declared that, if he stayed at home, while Jack and Moses took land to work, he would have a share of their profits, "anyway!"

The two young farmers were impatient to begin their spring work; and as soon as the frost was well out of the ground, they might have been seen one morning harnessing Mr. Treadwell's horses, and getting out the plough from the wagon-shed. The old man was present, and helped them start.

"Most happy!" said he, when Jack thanked him for his assistance. "At your sarvice! I am not what I was; I could plough once! Now I abrogate" (Jack wondered whether he meant *abdicate*) "in favor of my juniors. Old men for counsel, young men for war." And he proceeded to moralize, making odd

gestures, and speaking in so funny a singsong tone that Jack and Moses had to put down their heads behind the horses to hide their laughter. "Time cuts down all, both great and small. Stephen will let down the bars. We are a flower, and we wither; we are cut down, and we pass away. The plough will ride very well on the shoe. Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging; and, boys, I bid you good speed. At your sarvice, and most happy!"

As the boys set off, Jack driving, and Moses holding the plough in the wooden "shoe," the old man suddenly screamed after them, —

"Ho, ho! hold on! wait! I — I — I forgot!"

"What can the old fellow want?" said Jack, pulling the reins. "He yells as if the world was afire!"

"I notify you!" cried Old Scattering, shaking his fist at them as they looked back. "Beware! Don't go home to dinner! The old woman's been fryin' some of her prime doughnuts this mornin', — at your sarvice! That's all!" And, waving his hand at them rather tragically, he walked off in the direction of his house.

"I guess the old chap has been taking a little more hard cider than usual, this morning," remarked Moses. "Hurry up, Step Hen! take away those bars."

Once in the old corn-lot, the plough was launched from the shoe, and a broad "land" was marked out.

"That furrow is n't so straight as it might be," laughed Jack, looking behind him. "And it is n't turned so clean as your old plough turns a furrow."

"This plough will do better after it has had a little polishing in the earth; the rust will soon wear off. We must make a neat job; father will be over here to criticise and laugh at us, if we give him a chance."

"Now," said Jack, after he had gone two or three times round the field with Moses, "let me try it alone, and see how I get along."

He slipped the reins over his shoulders, and laid hold of the plough-handles, following in the furrow as the team moved slowly along. At the corners of the "land," he brought the horses about with a touch of the reins, and then hauled the plough around. The ground was tolerably free from roots and stones, and everything went well.

So Jack said to Moses, "Now leave me here to plough alone, while you go home and help your father. I want him to see that he is n't going to lose us, because we have land of our own to work. Or you may plough, and I'll go."

"You can plough as well as I can, but maybe I can do more than you at something else," replied Moses, who accordingly returned home.

Jack was delighted. Ploughing was his favorite work. It required little effort of the mind; and that was left free to think. Many a bright day-dream he had, walking in the furrows with his hands upon the plough-handles, — alone, but never lonely; many a lesson in his books he reviewed in memory, and many a problem solved.

He had brought his dinner and a book with him;

and at noon-time, while the team was feeding, he hid in the barn on the hay, to avoid Old Scattering and his wife's "prime doughnuts"; and there he studied, "to make up for lost time," as he used to say. The necessity he felt for making up that loss was a good thing for him, since it stimulated him to efforts which soon placed him in advance of boys who had enjoyed far greater opportunities.

But we must not stay too long with Jack at his studies and his work, or we shall give the impression that he never played. This would be far from the truth. He managed to have no idle time; yet, though he worked hard and studied hard, when any genuine sport was going forward Jack was just the fellow to join it.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CARAVAN.

THE spring work was done, the crops were doing finely, and the summer was well advanced, when the neighborhood was one day thrown into a state of joyful excitement by the arrival of a menagerie.

It passed by Mr. Chatford's house on its way to the Basin; and Kate and Mrs. Pipkin, followed by Mr. Pipkin, ran out to see the long line of wagons, some drawn by four or even six horses, the band riding in their magnificent chariot, and O, most wonderful sight of all, the two elephants!

"They've got the animals' cages in them big, close wagons," said Mr. Pipkin, — "bears, and painters, and hyenies, and rhinocroces, and monkeys."

"Monkeys! O, monkeys!" cried little Kate, beside herself with excitement. "Where's Jack? Where's Moses? O, where are they?"

"But you can't see the monkeys, child!" said Mrs. Pipkin.

"No, but I can think of them! And, dear, dear! I wish mother was at home, to say I can go to the show to-morrow! I believe I shall die if I don't go and see the darling monkeys!"

The boys now came running; and, although Mrs. Pipkin warned them that dinner was ready, curiosity

proved stronger than appetite, and away they sped, following the menagerie up the road.

“They’ve stopped!” cried Jack. “Hurry, and we shall see the elephants yet!”

They ran on, and found that the whole caravan had come to a halt at Welby’s Brook. A few of the lighter wagons had crossed, but, the bridge proving rather shaky, its strength was to be tested before the heavier wagons should attempt to go over. The boys were wondering what sort of test would be applied, when Jack exclaimed, “The elephant! they are going to try the big elephant on it!”

There were two elephants; one a huge, formidable, surly-looking old fellow, with monstrous tusks, and a tremendous trunk, which he kept constantly in motion, now swinging to and fro over the ground, now pulling a tuft of grass and stuffing it into his mouth, or using it to brush away the flies from his shoulders and legs, and now casting little volleys of sand over his back. The other elephant was about two thirds grown, and was without tusks.

“You’d better keep away!” cried one of the keepers to the boys, as they were inclined to press near. “Accidents may happen.”

So they jumped over the roadside fence, and viewed from behind that convenient barrier all that passed.

The big elephant was now led forward by his keeper to the edge of the bridge, where he paused, and carefully placed one foot on the timbers. That was enough. Having felt the structure shake beneath his

weight, he drew back, and was then taken around through the bed of the stream below the bridge.

Preparations were then made to send the heavy wagons across in the same way. As the farther bank was steep, the teams had to be doubled; and so one after another the wagons passed.

“I wonder what the animals in the cages think, going down and then up, and shaking about, in that way!” said Moses.

At last came the heaviest wagon of all. Eight of the finest horses were attached to it, and it went reeling and plunging down the bank. It crossed the stream safely, and was ascending the farther bank, the eight horses springing with all their might, when it stuck in the mud, and all their efforts to start it forward once more were in vain. Phin screamed with delight.

“They’re stuck! the rhinoceros wagon is stuck in the bank, and they never can get him away!”

“It looks so, by George!” said Moses. “There’s no chance for any more horses, as I see; they’ll break something, if any more are put on.”

“O, I’m glad I came!” cried Phin, climbing up on the fence. “Say! Ab, Jase!” he called out to the Welby boys, who had just arrived, “we’ve got a rhinoceros in the mud here, did ye know it?”

“How do *you* know it’s a rhinoceros?” said Jack. “It may be the lions. You would n’t laugh quite so loud, if the wagon should tip over and they should break out.”

Phin changed countenance, and turned to see if the way was clear behind him. "I'm going to climb that tree!" said he, starting for a little birch near the fence. "Lions can't climb, can they?"

"Look!" said Jack. "See what they are going to do with the little elephant!"

The "little" elephant would have been thought big enough if the enormous size of his companion had not made him appear small by comparison. Viewed beside the largest horses belonging to the caravan, his bulk was immense; and now an opportunity had arrived to compare his strength with theirs.

His keeper led him down into the bed of the stream, and placed him in the rear of the mired wagon, with his nose against it. Then he gave him a signal. The elephant began to push. He did not seem to put forth his strength, and yet the wagon which the eight horses could not move was lifted slowly and steadily forward up the bank. The horses did not start until after the wagon did, and then they had little to do but to keep out of its way, until the elephant was withdrawn.

The boys were thrilled with wonder and admiration at this display of docility and power in the young animal. Jack declared he wouldn't have missed the sight "for anything"; and that he would have "given anything" if the folks had all been there to see it.

"We're all going over to the show to-morrow; are you?" cried Jase Welby.

"I am!" said Phin, slipping down from the tree. "I tell ye, it's going to be the biggest show that ever was!" And he went on to brag as if he had been the proprietor of the menagerie.

"The old folks are away from home; won't be home till to-morrow night," said Moses. "But I suppose they would let us go."

"Where 've they gone?" said Abner Welby.

"A visitin', — over to the place where we used to live before we moved here," replied Moses.

"They've been talking about going there ever since that phrenologist came to our house," said Phin, "and I bet it's to find out something about him, — they used to know him there."

"We *must* go to the show, Jack!" said Moses.

"Yes; and Kate, — it will break her heart, if she can't go and see the monkeys," said Jack. "*We* could walk, but — and there's your cousin Annie!" for Miss Felton was once more teaching the summer school. "To-morrow is Saturday, — no school in the afternoon, — she must go!"

"We might all go in a load together, in the double wagon, and have lots of fun," said Moses, "if they were only at home! They've got old Maje and the buggy; we should have to drive the old mare and the colt, and the colt ain't used to the road."

"He's broke," said Phin, "only he won't back; nobody could ever make him back yet."

"Jack says he knows how to make him; and father has said he might try it some time. We might

this afternoon ; we sha'n't feel much like work, thinking about the caravan."

The Welby boys said they would like to help and see the fun.

"Well," said Jack, "come over and bring your yoke of steers, and I'll show you. It's rather rough ; but I've seen more than one horse taught to back in that way."

To this Abner and Jase gladly agreed. Jack and Moses and Phin then hurried home to tell what they had seen, and to get sharply scolded by Mrs. Pipkin for being late to dinner.

"Don't say any more about it," said Jack ; "and maybe — maybe" (laughing) — "we'll arrange it so that you and all of us can go to the show to-morrow afternoon."

Mrs. Pipkin was pacified, and Kate clapped her hands with delight.

CHAPTER XXII.

BREAKING THE COLT.

THE dinner was eaten in haste ; and by the time the colt was harnessed, the Welby boys arrived with the yoke of steers.

The colt was a three-year-old ; “going on four,” as Mr. Pipkin said, and nearly as large and strong as his mother. He had been broken to ride, the previous autumn, when a good deal of sport had been had with him, particularly on one occasion, the precise circumstances of which Mr. Pipkin now related.

“Nobody ’d ever been on his back but once, then Mose tried it, — but he was off agin quicker’n ye could ’a’ said ‘Jack Robi’son !’ Colt was a nippin’ grass in a corner o’ the fence, an’ Mose was a layin’ on his back, jest where he’d been flung. Deacon told him not to try it agin, an’ got Don Curtis over here one day last fall ; Don said he could ride any hoss ’t ever stepped on four feet. Wal, Don mounted ; an’ for about half a jiffy the colt stood stock still, as if he was so much astonished he did n’t know jest what to do. ’T was in the pastur’, where there was plenty o’ room. Colt looked around him, then all of a sudden he started ; he walked right up to that big stun-heap ye see over yender, — stopped, — head went down and heels went up, — and there was Don on the stun-heap !

He was ridin' that ! he, he ! " said Mr. Pipkin, chuckling at his own wit. " Don hung on to the bridle, an' got off 'm the stuns lookin' dreffle silly, — ruther sick, tu, for he 'd got a good deal of a bruise, and a good deal more of a scare. Then Jack says, ' I believe I can ride him ! ' Deacon tried to put him off ; and Don says, says he, ' Let him try, if he wants a broken neck. ' ' I 'll resk my neck, ' says Jack ; and he was on, afore the deacon knowed it. Colt r'ared, till he 'most went over back'ards ; but Jack stuck. Then the colt tried the head-an'-heel business, — r'ared and kicked up five or six times like fury, — an' still Jack stuck. Monkey to the show to-morrer won't do no better 'n Jack done then. Bimeby colt got mad and begun to run. Hokey, how he did clip it ! Round the pastur', round and round the pastur', like a streak. All thought he was runnin' away with Jack. But 't seems Jack was a lettin' on him go ! For arter a while, when the colt was about used up, all of a lather, pantin' as if for his last breath, Jack jest reined him right up to where we all stood a waitin' an' wonderin', jumped off, stroked and patted colt's head and neck, then jumped on and walked him round the lot, slick as could be. We never had no trouble with him arter that, — only we never could make him back in harness."

" Huh ! " said Phin, " anybody could have done just what Jack did, that had always been with horses, as he has ! He was brought up in a stable."

Jack made no reply to this taunt ; but, the colt

being by this time harnessed between the stout shafts of a cart, he hooked one end of a log-chain into the ring of the ox-yoke, and made the other end fast to the cart-tail ; the steers being headed in one direction and the colt in the other.

“Now,” said Jack, taking the reins, “I’ll try to back him ; if he won’t back, just start up the steers, and draw him back. Gently. — Back now ! back !” And he pulled hard on the reins.



BREAKING THE COLT.

The colt, as he had always done at such times, braced himself obstinately, refusing to budge. Just then Abner touched up the steers. Greatly to the colt's astonishment, no doubt, the cart began to go backwards, and he with it, in spite of himself. Not liking to be beaten in that way, he fell on his haunches, and finally went down altogether.

"That will do!" cried Jack. "Unhook!"

The chain was cast free from the yoke, and Jack and Moses, one on each side, made the colt get up. He was then started forward, stopped, and ordered once more to back. He leered and braced himself as before.

"Hitch on again!" cried Jack.

The same operation was gone through with three or four times, and at last, when the colt flung himself, he was drawn backwards a little way along the ground. He did not fall again; but when the oxen began to draw, he yielded, and walked backwards without making any resistance. Then, when told to back, he anticipated their pulling; and finally backed very well without their help. All this time Jack coaxed and talked kindly to him, and never struck him a blow.

"Wal! ye've done it!" said Mr. Pipkin. "Colt's had a lesson he won't forgit in a hurry. He's as well broke as anybody's colt now, an' for my part I'm willin' to give Jack all the credit on't. Guess the deacon'll be surprised!"

The colt was then harnessed with the mare to the

double wagon, driven about the lot several times, and made to back occasionally. He was afterwards unharnessed, coaxed, and curried, and fed with "nubbins" of corn from the boys' hands.

"In this way," said Jack, "he will find out that we are his friends, and mean well by him."

CHAPTER XXIII.

GOING TO THE MENAGERIE.

AFTER supper that night Jack hastened to find Miss Felton at her boarding-place, and invite her to the show the next day.

"Everybody is going; we are all going, and you must go too."

"Who will take care of the house?" Annie asked.

"We can lock it up, and leave Lion to watch it. Oh! if you could have seen what that little elephant did!" And Jack went on to talk of the subject that filled his mind, until Annie caught his enthusiasm and agreed to go.

The boys dreamed of elephants that night, and were up early the next morning, impatient to have the time come to harness the horses and start.

The mare and colt were in the pasture, when Jack, a little before noon, went out and caught them. Moses, who met him leading them in, saw at once by his anxious face that something was the matter.

"Moses!" cried Jack, "look! the colt is lame!"

"Lead him off; let me see how he steps," said Moses. "He must have strained a leg somehow yesterday."

"By hokey!" exclaimed Mr. Pipkin, coming up, "the critter 's ruined! So much for your fashion o'

breakin' hosses ! break their legs ! I knowed suthin 'd happen,— I told ye 't wa'n't no way !” Although at the time he had thought it a very good way.

“Ho ! Jack !” sneered Phineas, “ye did n't know so much as ye thought ye did ! Anybody could break a colt in that way ! Father 'll be home to-night ; you 'll ketch it !”

“Shut your head !” exclaimed Moses, impatiently. “The colt is n't hurt so but that he 'll get over it in a day or two.”

Jack tried to think so, and yet he could not conceal his trouble. “It won't do to drive him to-day, any way,” he said.

“What shall we do ?” said Mr. Pipkin. “Women folks can't walk ; and when my wife's made up her mind to do a thing, I don't want to be the one to tell her she can't !”

Jack thought of Kate, and Annie whom he had specially invited, and looked blue enough for a minute.

“The neighbors' horses will all be in use, such a day as this ; can't borrow one, for love or money,” suggested Phineas, well pleased, since he could walk, whatever the rest might do.

“I've thought !” suddenly exclaimed Jack. “I'll get one of Old Scattering's horses ! I know he 'll let me. So while you, Moses, get a rag, and some salt and vinegar, and give that ankle a good rubbing, I 'll put.” And Jack “put” accordingly.

Unfortunately the old man was not at home.

“When will he be at home ?” Jack asked in some dismay.

“I sha’ n’t expect him before night,” said poor Mrs. Treadwell, with a look which told of much sad experience with a husband who carried a red nose. “He’s to the Basin, with Stephen; of course they’ll stay to the show.”

She knew nothing about the horses; and Jack, who had been accustomed to take them without asking whenever he wanted to use them on the farm, at last resolved to take one for his own private business that afternoon. Of course he did not feel just right about it, but necessity seemed to justify the step.

So he bridled Snowfoot (the old man gave fanciful names to his beasts), leaped upon his back at the gate, and returned home at a smart canter around the road. Annie had already arrived; and all were waiting to see what success he had met with.

The brisk ride, and the consciousness of having by a prompt action overcome a serious difficulty, put him in excellent spirits, and caused him for a time quite to forget his misgivings.

After dinner Snowfoot was harnessed with the mare before the double wagon, and all “piled in,” at Mr. Pipkin’s suggestion, — Annie and Kate and Phin and Moses and Jack and Mr. and Mrs. Pipkin; a jolly load, like many another that went to the show that afternoon. Jack was the driver, and he took pride in passing every “slow coach” on the road.

The great tent was pitched just outside the village, in a large field divided from the street by a zigzag rail-fence, to which already a number of country

teams were hitched. Jack drove up to a convenient corner, jumped down and tied the halters to a rail, while Moses and Mr. Pipkin helped the ladies to alight.

Close by, and quite near the opening which had been made for the crowd to pass in, was a sort of pedler's wagon, on the green sides of which were painted in fancy letters the words, *Dr. Lamont, Prince of the healing Art*. The rear end of the wagon, which was turned towards the passing throng, had been opened so as to form a sort of platform, on which stood an astonishing figure,—that of a man, in a wonderful green coat, or robe, that came down below his knees, with a shining brass helmet on his head, a brass trumpet in one hand, and a small bottle in the other. As he was making a speech that attracted a good deal of attention, Jack and his party stopped to hear him.

After putting the trumpet to his lips and blowing a few not very melodious notes, the man proceeded in a voice rendered sonorous by the hollow brass:—

“The 'Lectrical 'Lixir, ladies and gentlemen!” (brandishing the small bottle.) “Here it is! here's the great remedy of the nineteenth century! Only fifty cents a bottle,—three bottles for one dollar, ladies *and* gentlemen! Cures ear-ache, sore eyes, hydrophoby, catarrh, consumption, dyspepsy, coughs, colds, burns, scalds, bruises, lameness in man or beast!”



THE 'LECTRICAL 'LIXIR MAN.

“Better buy some for the colt,” observed Mr. Pipkin.

“Walk up, walk up, gentlemen and ladies, *and ladies and gentlemen!*” said the mouth under the helmet. “The 'Lectrical 'Lixir” (Electrical Elixir, probably) “is compounded from the extract of the skin of the wonderful 'lectric eel,—the most curi’s and wonderful creatur’ in the known world. You’ll

see some curi's creatur's under the tent to-day,— monkeys, moon-calves, rhinoceris hosses, chickens with two heads, and I don't know but whales; but you won't see nothin' so wonderful as the 'lectric eel. He inhabits tropical countries, and lurks in the beds of streams, and when travellers go to cross, he discharges his battery at the hosses' legs, and hosses and riders fall down, and is drowned, and he feeds upon them at his leisure. No man can touch this eel without receivin' a shock; and a stroke from his tail, either in or out of water, has been known to produce in a few minutes instant death."

"Then how do they ever ketch him, I'd like to know? There's in all things!" chuckled Mr. Pipkin.

The man hesitated, the eyes behind the helmet turning now for the first time upon Jack and his party. He seemed for a moment to be looking for somebody or something else in the crowd,— perhaps a child or a dog, for his glance took a low range along by Mr. Pipkin's legs; then proceeded briskly:—

"The 'Lectrical 'Lixir, manufactured by a scientific and chiminal process from the skin of this curi's beast, possesses properties unknown to the age a few years ago. If any gentleman present — gentleman *or* lady — is troubled with deafness, lameness, toothache, rheumatiz, let 'em step up, and if I don't cure 'em with a single application of the 'Lixir, before the eyes of all of ye, then I'll ask no man to buy my bottles."

“Better cure us of our common-sense fust, then we’ll buy!” said Mr. Pipkin.

“I take jokes in good part,” replied the quack, looking straight at the speaker through the eye-holes in his helmet; “but the ‘Lectrical ‘Lixir is no joke, as you shall find if you’ll step up and let me cure ye of that rheumatiz. No charge for the application; and you won’t be obliged to buy a bottle, neither,—though it’s only fifty cents; three bottles for one dollar, *ladies* and gentlemen!”

“By hokey!” said Mr. Pipkin, “I have got the rheumatiz in my left shoulder! How did he know it? I’ve a good notion to let him try his ‘Lixir!”

“O, come along!” said Jack, seeing that Annie Felton, grown impatient, was walking on with Moses and Kate.

“Go ahead, if ye want tu,” said Mr. Pipkin, stripping off his coat. “But *I*’m a goin’ to let him try, an’ see if he *can* cure me, as he says.”

Mrs. Pipkin gave her consent, influenced by curiosity and the gratuitous nature of the experiment, and held her husband’s coat, while he stripped up his sleeve and presented his shoulder to the charlatan.

“This is what I like!” said the latter, pouring on some of the “‘Lixir” and rubbing it into the flesh. “To be doin’ good; to be healin’ the ‘flicted; curin’ diseases; anything to oblige my feller-creatur’s; that’s my weakness. If I git pay, very well; if I don’t, it’s jest exac’ly as well; for I’m the best-nattered man in the world!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE TENT.

IN the mean while, without waiting to hear the concluding speech of the man in the brass helmet and green robe, or once suspecting that he might be an old acquaintance, Jack hastened to overtake Moses and Miss Felton, leaving Phin to follow with Mr. and Mrs. Pipkin.

At the entrance to the tent, Annie wished to pay for herself, but O, no ! Jack was too proud and happy to be able to pay for her with money he had earned by honest work.

“ Well, if it will please you,” she said, with a smile. “ Shall we go in now, or wait for the others ? ”

“ Better go in, I think,” said a well-known voice, “ and see the animals before the tent is crowded.”

“ Percy ! ” said Annie, with a start and a blush. “ Mr. Lanman ! ” cried the boys. He gave the young lady his right hand, and with his left shook hands with Moses and Jack and Kate.

They all entered the tent together. Percy escorted Miss Felton, and Moses had Kate in charge, while Jack followed with a lonely and disconsolate feeling at his heart. What troubled him all at once ? Was it the recollection of the colt's lameness, or of the manner in which he had taken Snowfoot, without leave ?

Percy had many anecdotes to relate of the animals they saw, and of the countries they inhabited; and Jack ought to have considered it a piece of good fortune that they had fallen in with him. Jack was indeed a grateful and admiring friend of the young man, whom he liked better than *almost* anybody else in the world. But now his lowering looks, as he watched him and Annie, seemed to say, "I know she expected to meet him, and that's what made her hurry along so! And now she can't think of anybody but him! 'Twas I that invited her, and what right has he to take her away from me? How happy they both are — without me!" And, unable to endure the sight, the wretchedly jealous and unhappy boy wandered away alone and lost himself in the crowd.

He tried to divert his mind by looking at the wild animals, — the sleepy old lions, crouched upon their paws; the sleek leopards, bounding over the bar which their keeper thrust into the cage; the restless hyena, pacing to and fro within his narrow bounds; the languid polar bear, panting over his pan of cold spring water; the chained black bear, begging cakes and buns of the children; the boa-constrictor, which the man wound about his neck like a tippet, — and all these would have interested him greatly at another time. But now he was too miserable to care for them. As he remembered the joyful anticipations with which he had looked forward to this time, his heart seemed almost bursting with grief.

Then all at once he stopped and said to himself, "I am a fool! Worse than a fool! I am just as mean and selfish as I can be. I ought to be glad that she is happy; why am I not? I will be glad!"

Then came a struggle with himself; and, after a great gulp or two at his choking grief, which refused to be swallowed so easily, he at last got the mastery of it. When he met his friends again, he appeared with his hands full of oranges and his face full of smiles.

"Why, Jack!" cried Annie, "we thought we had lost you! Where have you been? Oranges! You naughty boy!" For they were rather a costly luxury in those days, and she thought him extravagant. But Jack knew how fond she was of them, and the hope of adding to her happiness had so lightened his heart that he would have held them cheap had they cost their weight in gold.

While they were all refreshing themselves with the delicious fruit, and looking at the monkeys, Mr. and Mrs. Pipkin came up.

"Hello, Phi!" said Moses, "what luck?"

"It's the most wonderful thing ever ye heerd on!" answered that gentleman, screwing his mouth into a pleased pucker about his conspicuous front teeth. "That feller jest cured me in a jiffy! took the pain right away. I tell ye that 'Lectrical 'Lixir can't be beat for rheumatiz!"

"What's that stuffed in your pockets?" asked Jack.

“Bottles ; three for a dollar, by hokey ! My wife was opposed to my buyin’ on ’em at fust ; but, ye know Deacon Dresser ? Deaf as an adder in one ear, — has been for ten year an’ more. Wal ! that chap jest rubs on some of his ’Lixir round and under it, and finally gives it a good squeeze behind with his thumb, an’ out comes a great wad of ear-wax, and, I vum ! the deacon declares he can hear as well now out of one ear as t’ other. Arter that my wife was willin’, for she ’s a little hard o’ hearin’, on the off side.”

“Mr. Pipkin !” cried that lady sharply, “I’ll thank you not to make a public topic of my ears ! And you’ll oblige me by *not* speaking of me as you do of your horses.”

“I said the off side, an’ the off side’s the off side, whether it ’s a hoss or any other critter,” Mr. Pipkin explained.

“Mr. Pipkin ! I’m amazed at you !” said Mrs. Pipkin.

“I leave it to the schoolmaster,” grinned Mr. Pipkin.

“Then the schoolmaster will give judgment against you,” said Percy. “We call the left side of some animals the *near* side, because we stand on that side of a horse when we go to mount him, and walk on that side of a horse or ox team we are driving, and that makes the other side the *off* side. Now, unless a man drives his wife as he does his oxen — ”

“I give it up !” said Mr. Pipkin. “I drive her ? by hokey, she drives me !”

Jack asked if Snowfoot and the mare were quiet when Mr. Pipkin came away, and where was Phin?

"I did n't notice about the team," replied Mr. Pipkin. "As for Phin, that 'Lixir man said he had a curi's thing to show him if he would wait till the crowd thinned out a little more. Phin was tickled enough 'cause he took notice on him, an' so he waited."

"I don't like that!" said Moses. "He'll get humbugged!"

Jack said he would go and find him, but just then two acquaintances came along.

It was Step Hen Treadwell and his father,—the old man so tipsy that he had to steady himself by holding fast to his son's shoulder. Jack hastened to meet them, thinking he would tell about Snowfoot; but the old man struck a solemn attitude and pointed to the cages.

"Good thing!" said he, leering, and balancing himself, with a hiccup.

"Yes," said Jack, "a very good thing."

"Good thing!" repeated the old man, waving one hand loftily, while he still held fast to Step Hen with the other. He then beckoned to Mr. Pipkin, and when that gentleman approached, he once more indicated the show with a sweeping gesture, and reiterated, with an emphatic nod, "Good thing!"

His inflamed eyes, his veiny cheeks, that fiery sponge, his nose, the solemn grimace and emphasis with which he spoke those two words, as if they had

been the last utterance of human wisdom, and the contrast of poor, little, timid, short-legged, round-eyed, round-faced, sober, staring Step Hen, attracted about as much attention as any animals belonging to the menagerie. The last Jack saw of them, the old man was standing by the great pole which supported the centre of the tent, — and which he probably mistook for a spectator, — calling its attention to the satisfactory display of wild beasts, and repeating, “Good thing! hey?” with a hiccup; “good thing!”

Phin soon came in, and his friends noticed that he had a strange look in his face.

“What did the ’Lixir man say to ye?” asked Mr. Pipkin.

“Nothing much,” replied Phin, with a shy and rather guilty air. “Made me a present.” He pulled a small book from his pocket. “Keeps ’em to sell, but he gave me one, because he took a notion to me.”

“A Dream Book! ‘Dream Book and Fortune Teller’! O Phin!” cried Moses.

“Need n’t laugh,” said Phin resentfully, taking it back. “You’ll be glad enough to have some fun out of it some day, — but you sha’ n’t! Where did ye get your oranges?”

“O, a fellow came along and gave ’em to us!” said Moses.

“Who was it? Come, tell me, can’t ye?” snarled Phin.

“I guess the fust letters of his name is Jack Hazard,” remarked Mr. Pipkin.

“ You might have kept one for me !” said Phin. “ I think you ’re real mean, anyway.”

“ Here, Phin,” said little Kate, taking one from her pocket. “ Jack was so generous, he gave me two. You may have this.”

Phin seized and sucked it greedily.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PIPKINS RIDE THE YOUNG ELEPHANT.

IN a little while Kate complained that she was getting tired of the beasts. "They make such horrid noises when they yawn, and they smell so! I want to go home."

"We will go into this other tent, where there is to be a performance pretty soon," said Percy. "There we can find some good seats, and rest."

All followed him except Phineas, who said he was going to see more of the animals first. When, a quarter of an hour later, he came and occupied the seat they had kept for him, he was full of brag.

"Huh! I've seen something you have n't, any of ye! I saw the man go into the lions' cage! He whipped 'em, and played with 'em, and was going to put his head into the old lion's mouth; but he was cross, and so he did n't dare."

Kate wished she could have seen what Phin described; but she was quickly consoled by what took place in the tent where they were.

Among other things there was a diverting pony performance, which filled the tent with shouts of laughter. Within a circular space, surrounded by spectators on the benches, a man, dressed like some country greenhorn, had a series of comical adventures

with a little black pony, hardly larger than himself, — chasing him, catching him, riding him, and getting flung from his back.

Then “General Jackson” was introduced. The General was a monkey, with chattering teeth and little snapping black eyes. He was dressed in “soldier clo’es,” as Mr. Pipkin remarked; he walked on his hind legs with the help of a chain held in his master’s hand, and wore a military hat, which he politely took off when he bowed to the spectators. Being relieved of the hat and chain, he mounted the pony, whip in hand, and rode swiftly round the ring first one way and then the other, clinging fast in spite of all the efforts made to throw him off. Now he leaped from the pony’s back to his master’s shoulder, and again to the pony’s back; or hopped to the ground to pick up the whip, which he had dropped, and jumped up on the pony again when he came round, — all while the pony was in rapid motion.

Then, General Jackson retiring, any gentleman present, not too heavy, was invited to ride the pony. A long-limbed, lank, grinning young fellow stepped forward, saying “he guessed he could.” “It’s Hank Huswick!” said Jack. “Hank Huswick!” repeated a dozen other young fellows who knew him; and there was loud cheering. The applause was still more uproarious when, after trying in vain to cling on by locking his long legs under the pony’s belly, Hank retired ignominiously from the contest, with a dusty jacket and a bloody nose.

The pony then being withdrawn, the large elephant was brought in and introduced as the "Emperor Nero." As he had been advertised to walk over his keeper lying on the ground, lift and carry him on his tusks, and perform many other surprising feats, the result was disappointing. There was evidently something about the enormous brute's appearance which his keeper did not like; for, after a few turns about the ring, the Emperor Nero was led out.

"That elephant," whispered Percy, "is the Prince Royal, that lately got away and made such a panic in some town in Canada; his owners have changed his name, but he is the same fellow. He has periodical fits of ill-temper, and they have to be very careful of him."

"Here comes our little elephant!" cried Jack. And the boys had to tell once more how the great wagon, which eight horses could not draw, had been pushed up the bank by that powerful head.

After Napoleon — for that was the young elephant's name — had performed a few simple feats, a huge saddle, with a "sort o' pew on top on 't" (to quote Mr. Pipkin's phrase), was brought and firmly bound by strong girths to his back. He was then made to kneel down, and a short flight of steps was placed against his side, leading up to the open door of the "pew." This was elegantly cushioned, and capable of seating several persons.

"Now," said the keeper, "any ladies who would like to ride on the elephant can have an opportunity, such

as will not probably occur to them again in the course of their lives."

Not a lady stirred.

"The animal," he went on, "is, as you see, perfectly docile and harmless. Hundreds of ladies — some of the first rank — have ridden on his back, both in this country and in Europe ; and no accident has ever happened during these performances."

Thereupon a lady stepped forward ; and, encouraged by her example, another, and then another, followed.

"I am going! would you?" said Mrs. Pipkin, excitedly. "I believe I will!"

"Mis' Pipkin! Mis' Pipkin!" remonstrated her husband ; "it's a terrible resk! Don't you ventur'! You 'll git a broken neck!"

"Mr. Pipkin!" said Mrs. Pipkin, severely, "I'm ashamed of you!"

Other ladies were pressing forward, and she made haste to take her place with them, while her husband excited a good deal of merriment by calling anxiously after her, "Mis' Pipkin! Mis' Pipkin! you're crazy! Heavens an' airth! You're crazy, Mis' Pipkin!"

As many as twenty ladies presented themselves, eight of whom — Mrs. Pipkin being of the number — mounted the steps and took seats in the cushioned box on the elephant's back.

"She 'll git killed! they 'll all be spilt out when the elephant goes to git up!" said Mr. Pipkin, nervously. "I declare, if she don't beat all the women!"

The door of the box being closed, Napoleon, at a sign from his master, rose carefully to his feet, carrying saddle and ladies up with him without spilling one. Then the spectators cheered, and the ladies on the elephant waved their handkerchiefs in triumph.

After a few turns about the area, the elephant was made to kneel again, and the ladies dismounted. Eight others then took their places, rode round the ring a few times, and afterwards retired in like manner.

“Now,” said the keeper, “would any gentlemen like to ride?”

A dozen sprang to their feet; and, strange to say, Mr. Pipkin was one of them.

“Mr. Pipkin! Mr. Pipkin!” said Mrs. Pipkin, sarcastically, “you’ll get a broken neck!”

“I’m goin’ to have my ride on the elephant as well as you, by hokey!” And Mr. Pipkin crowded forward into the ring.

No sooner, however, had the twelve gentlemen presented themselves, than the saddle was quietly removed, and they were invited to mount the ladder and take seats on Napoleon’s bare back. Three declined the honor, and retired amid the jeers of the multitude. Some of the remaining nine would also, doubtless, have gladly withdrawn, but for the dread of ridicule. One of these was Mr. Pipkin, who declared afterwards that he “did n’t exac’y fancy the idee of straddlin’ the critter bare-backed”; but, having committed himself to the enterprise, he “wa’ n’t the sort o’ man to back out.”

Mrs. Pipkin, however, seeing the saddle removed, was seized with genuine alarm; and, rising in her seat, she beckoned, and cried in a shrill voice, "Mr. Pipkin! Mr. Pipkin! don't you ventur'! you *will* get a broken limb! Mr. Pipkin, you *are* insane!" to the infinite amusement of the spectators.

The elephant rose, not quite so carefully as when he bore a fairer burden, but the nine men clung fast, each to the man before him, while the foremost kept his seat firmly on the animal's neck. So they were all carried safely up, and afterwards borne in ludicrous state around the ring. Mr. Pipkin, as he passed the bench where his friends were seated, waved his hand, and puckered his lips about his big front teeth with a droll smile. But his career of triumph was short. Napoleon suddenly stopped. His keeper stood facing him, with crossed arms.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this is a very docile and intelligent animal, as you observe, but he sometimes has the ague. I think he is about to be taken by a fit."

He opened his arms, probably as a signal, and immediately Napoleon began to shake. He shook till Mr. Pipkin screamed, "The ladder! quick! take me off! le' me git down!" He continued to shake, harder and harder, like a small mountain swayed to and fro by a violent earthquake, and off went two gentlemen over his tail. He shook again, and off went two more on one side and one on the other. The next man was Mr. Pipkin. He clung fast to the body of the man before him, who did the same to the next, who hugged



THE YOUNG ELEPHANT'S AGUE-FIT.

as for dear life his fellow on the elephant's neck. But the ague was too much for them, and all went tumbling to the ground together.

Roars of laughter greeted this final catastrophe, which was considered the greatest sport of the day. Nobody was seriously hurt, and the manner in which the men picked themselves up as they fell, and ran away from the elephant's legs, seemed to amuse everybody except poor Mrs. Pipkin.

“He has broke — certainly he has broke something! Have n’t you, have n’t you, Mr. Pipkin?” she cried, as Mr. Pipkin came limping back to his place, looking ruefully at his bosom, which appeared to be saturated, if not with his blood, then with some liquid which he held equally precious. “Is it your breast-bone?” said Mrs. Pipkin.

“No, but my bottles! my three bottles of ‘Lectrical ‘Lixir! Dumbbed if they ain’t all broke, by hokey!” And the worthy Pipkin proceeded, with an aspect of the utmost dismay, to examine his unlucky pockets.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW PHIN SAW THE "ZEBRAY."

"If you had only thought to rub some of your wonderful Elixir on the elephant's back, you might have cured his ague," said Jack, slyly.

"So I might," replied Mr. Pipkin, "if it had been a real ager; but did n't ye see? 't was all a trick! The man gin him a sign for to shake us off."

"O, this is dreadful!" said Mrs. Pipkin, looking at her husband's clothes. "What did I tell you? If you had only heard to me! You do beat all the men!"

"Keep the 'Lixir in your pockets, Phi," said Moses, "and let it soak into your hide, and you never will have the rheumatism or any other disease again."

"I don't know, mabby 't ain't so great a loss arter all," remarked Mr. Pipkin, philosophically. "Fact is, I was beginnin' to feel my rheumatiz comin' on agin, settin' here, with this draft of air on my shoulder. Should n't wonder if the feller's a humbug!" And, taking the broken glass from his pockets, he flung it spitefully under the bench.

Phin now said that he was going back to the large tent, to find the "zebray," which he pretended not to have seen. He had been gone about ten minutes,

when it occurred to Jack that he ought to go and look at his team. He accordingly departed, telling his friends that, if he should not return, he would meet them as they came out.

As he passed through the large tent he looked in vain for Phineas; and afterwards, to his surprise, found that young gentleman in close consultation with the man in the helmet and green robe. The man had, however, laid aside his helmet, which could not have been a very comfortable thing to wear in the hot sun, and in the shrewd, thin features thus exposed, Jack recognized, with amazement, his old acquaintance, "good-natered John Wilkins."

The fellow, using the platform of his wagon for a table, was showing Phin some interesting tricks with a pack of cards. "Now, this," he was saying, "is a mighty curi's trick, perty as it can be! I'll show you. The jack-o'-hearts, you say, went into that pile?"

"Yes, for I saw it," replied Phin, hugely tickled at the thought of gaining so much useful information.

"And of course you are willing to bet it is there? Of course. But don't bet, for I don't want to win *your* money. I'm only showin' ye, and that's 'cause I see you are such an uncommon bright boy, and 'cause I take such an uncommon fancy to ye. For now jest look! The jack ain't in that pile at all, but here in my hand! Ain't it curi's? Now, with practice, you may make a good thing on't if ever you

find yourself in want of money. Jest a good-natered little game, you know !”

But Phin, looking guiltily around to see if he was observed, had by this time discovered Jack standing by the fence.

“So this is the way you see the ‘zebray,’ is it ?” said Jack.

“I’m just having a little fun, and it’s nobody’s business but my own,” replied Phin, tartly.

“I hope you know what sort of a man you’re dealing with, that’s all !” said Jack with a significant look at the charlatan.

“I guess I know a good deal better than you do,” retorted Phin.

“Oh ! do you ? Then maybe you can tell me just what he is, — a travelling phrenologist, or a quack doctor, or a book-pedler, or a gambler, or whether he’s chiefly in the horse-and-sleigh business ?”

“My young friend,” said the man, “you do me injustice, and it’s nat’ral ; so I forgive ye. I’m a sort of jack-at-all-trades, and good at several ; and when one don’t pay, or I git tired on’t, I turn my hand to another ; variety is the spice of life, you know, and I’m the best-natered man in the world.”

“What’s your name to-day ?” queried Jack.

“Don’t ye see it on my wagon ? ‘Dr. Lamont, Prince of the Healing Art’ ! And let me assure you, my young friend, that, whatever you may think of me, — and it’s my fate to be misunderstood, — the ‘Lectrical’ Lixir, manefactered from the concentrated

extract of the ile of the 'lectrical eel, is no humbug, but the greatest remedy of the nineteenth century, curin', by both out'ard and in'ard application, all diseases of the lungs, liver, stummick, skin, *and* blood, of which I am the sole proprietor."

"Proprietor of the diseases?" laughed Jack.

"My young friend, a joke is never out of place with me, for I am too good-natered to take offence. But now," said the Prince of the Healing Art, "I must don my helmet again, and take up my trumpet, for the crowd will soon be comin' out, and I expect to sell one hundred bottles of the celebrated 'Lectrical 'Lixir 'fore the sun goes down."

CHAPTER XXVII.

EXTRA PERFORMANCE BY THE OLD ELEPHANT.

So saying, the Prince blew a blast which was answered by a strange and terrible noise in the tent, — the bellowing snort of some huge animal, succeeded by the yell of tigers, the roar of lions, and a tumult of human screams. Jack looked in the direction from which came the frightful sounds, and saw five or six men rush wildly out of the tent. Then some large object was pushed against the side of it, making it bulge and sway to its very top. Then out came a pair of enormous white tusks, tearing the canvas, followed by the head and shoulders and whole body of the great elephant, the Emperor Nero, breaking ropes and chains, trampling fragments of the tent under his feet, brandishing his trunk, and bellowing and trumpeting with tremendous fury.

It was the snort of his rage which had set the wild beasts in their cages to roaring, and now the sight and sound of the frenzied monster filled the horses at the fence with astonishment and terror. Two or three broke their halters and ran away with the vehicles to which they were attached. Some snorted, responsive, and tugged in vain at their fastenings. Others stood paralyzed and trembling with fright, while he rushed down upon them.

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He started toward the street ; but instead of passing where the way was clear, he struck the corner of the fence near the opening, and with a toss of his tusks, sent the rails flying fifteen or twenty feet into the air, as a child might twirl a handful of jackstraws.

The wagon of Dr. Lamont, from which the horse had fortunately been removed, was next attacked. Nero went at it head downwards, and in an instant the air about him was thick with flying fragments, — wheels, shafts, splinters, Dream Books, and bottles of Electrical Elixir. While Phin fled for his life, and the Prince took to his heels, Jack sprang to unhitch Snowfoot and the mare, and get them out of the way. But he might as well have attempted to dodge a bomb-shell. He had barely time to escape with his own body and limbs, which luckily appeared too slight for Nero's notice, when the infuriated beast plunged at the quaking and cringing team.

The harness snapped like shoe-strings, as the mare, caught upon the great tusks, was hurled over the elephant's head. Snowfoot now broke loose, parting halter and trace, and started to run. But his speed, compared with that of the hugest and most powerful of all beasts, was as an infant's to a man's. The elephant swiftly came up to him, tossed him, and caught him with his tusks as he came down.

Jack, glancing back over his shoulder, and seeing the destruction of the horses, uttered a cry of dismay, and stopped, little caring now what might happen to himself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CATASTROPHE.

CATCHING and tossing Snowfoot the second time, the elephant left him on the roadside, where he fell, and kept on up the street, his tusks low, his trunk in the air, and uttering, from time to time, his wild snort.

The panic-stricken spectators of the show came pouring out of both tents, without confining themselves to the means of egress provided for them, or even to the vast rent made by the Emperor Nero. More than one jack-knife made liberal slits in the canvas, to let out the crowd.

One of the foremost of the out-rushing throng was a little man in a short striped jacket, with a red Turkish cap on his head and a spear in his hand. He might have been heard to shout, as he ran swiftly toward the scene of Nero's doings, had not his voice been drowned in the tumult of noises. Finding he could not come up with the elephant, he turned back, and was met by an attendant leading a horse, saddled and bridled. The spearman seized stirrup and rein, flung himself into the saddle, and spurred through the crowd, which parted before him with cries of, "The keeper! make way for the elephant's keeper!"

Jack now ran toward the tent, eager to learn if

any accident had happened to his friends. He soon saw Moses in the crowd.

“Where are they — Annie, and the rest?”

“They are all safe,” replied Moses. “Percy Lanman is with them.”

“Nobody hurt?” said Jack.

“Nobody that I can hear of. Almost everybody was in the second tent when the elephant broke loose, and he did n’t come into that. . Any damage outside?” asked Moses.

“Our team — he has done for the mare and Snow-foot!”

“Killed them?”

“Yes, or worse!” replied Jack, with a bursting heart. “Come and see!”

The Prince of the Healing Art was standing in his green robe, helmet in hand, surveying the wreck of his wagon and his scattered wares, and amusing the crowd with his philosophical remarks. On the roadside close by was the mare, entangled in the wreck of the fence, where she had fallen; while on the opposite side of the street, a few rods off, lay Snowfoot, bleeding from the wounds of the tusks.

“There’s your borrowed horse, Jack!” said Phin, with a satisfaction which he did not attempt to conceal. “Guess it’ll take all you make by farming this year, and more, too, to pay the damages.”

“That horse will die, or have to be killed,” said Moses. “I don’t believe the mare is hurt quite so bad; let’s see.”

Some of the bystanders took hold with the boys, and helped get the mare out from among the rails, and upon her feet. She was bleeding from a tusk-wound in one leg; and she trembled so that she seemed hardly able to stand.

“She has got what she never ’ll get over!” said Phin. “Then there’s the colt at home, lamed for life.”

“Take it coolly, my young friends,” cried the Prince of the Healing Art, showing his trumpet, which the elephant had stepped on. “I shall never be able to blow any but flat notes, after this! No matter; these are trifles. Let’s be jolly! Learn a lesson from the good-natered philosopher!”

While he picked up his books and unbroken bottles, and piled the pieces of his wagon on the side of the road, the boys took the dangling strips of harness from the mare, and, leaving her standing in a corner of the fence, went over once more to Snowfoot. The harness had been completely stripped from him; and there seemed to be nothing they could do, but to leave him where he lay. By this time Mr. Pipkin had arrived.

“Wal!” said that gentleman, in utter dismay and horror, “if this ain’t ridickelous!” — which was about as strong an expression as he seemed able to make use of. After a moment’s reflection, he added, “If it don’t beat all creation!” Another pause; then, “Boys! boys! what ’ll the deacon say? Jack, what ’ll Old Scatterin’ say to his Snowfoot? Deliver me from elephants, arter this! dumbbed if I ha’ n’t had enough o’ the brutes!”

Jack now saw Percy Lanman coming with the ladies. "Don't let her — don't let them see this sight!" he said, and ran to prevent their approach. "The elephant has almost killed our horses!" he cried. "You may as well know it, but don't go and see! The poor horses!"

Though greatly shocked, herself, Annie, at sight of the boy's distress, put on as cheerful a look as she could, telling him to bear it bravely, as it was something for which he was not to blame.

"Things seem determined to go wrong with me, whether I am to blame or not," sobbed Jack. "I try to do my best, — but see what comes of it all!"

"Keep on trying!" said Annie. "Don't give up. This is dreadful, but you could not help it; and it will all come out right, I am sure!"

"Of course I could not know what would happen, but — Mr. Treadwell's horse!" said Jack.

She said what she could to console him, then left him, Percy having proposed to take her and Kate and Mrs. Pipkin to his father's house, which was not far off.

Jack, who had been looking, from time to time, for Step Hen and his father, now saw them coming. The old man appeared a little more sober than when he made so ridiculous a show of himself in the tent, and Jack hoped to find him reasonable.

"Somebody's horse killed?" interrupted the old man, as Jack began to tell the story. "Whose?"

"Yours, Mr. Treadwell! Snowfoot!"

"My Snowfoot? He's to hum in the pastur', ain't

he, Stephen? Did n't drive over, did we, Stephen? Though I most forgit. Hey, Stephen?"

"O Mr. Treadwell!" cried Jack, "I went to ask you if I could take Snowfoot, and you were not at home. I had invited the folks, and I felt sure you would be willing, — you had told me always to take the team without asking, when I wanted to use it on the farm, — and I — I will pay for him, of course, when I get money enough, though I think the owners of the elephant —"

Here the old man again interrupted him. Still partially drunk, he forgot all his kindly feelings towards Jack, and, reflecting only that Snowfoot had been taken without leave, and had been killed, he flew into a passion. He refused even to see the owners of the elephant, declaring that he would have no dealings with them; they would never pay a cent without a lawsuit; that Jack alone was responsible to him for the loss.

"How much will it be?" asked Jack in a faint voice.

"Seventy-five dollars!" replied the old man sternly.

"You offered to sell Snowfoot once, to Don Curtis, for sixty-five," suggested Step Hen, in his friend's interest.

"That was when I thought of giving up the farm. Now, I've fine crops growing," said his father.

Jack thought it hard that what he had been doing for the old man should have added ten dollars to the value of the horse he was to pay for, but he only

said, "I'll do what I can; perhaps my share of the crops will come to near that."

"I shall hold the crops," replied Mr. Treadwell. "As for the hoss, do what you please with him. I wash my hands of him!" And he stalked away.

Percy Lanman now returned, anxious to see what could be done to help the boys.

"We must find Duffer, the first thing," he said, "and put the horses in his charge."

"Duffer!" cried Jack. "He is my best enemy!"

"No matter; he is a good horse-doctor; I'll manage him."

"He is down there by Snowfoot, now," said Jack.

So they went and found Duffer, who, at Percy's request, consented to take charge of the wounded beasts.

"The next thing," said Percy, "is to find the proprietors of the show, and see what they will do; since Mr. Treadwell refuses to have any dealings with them, and Mr. Chatford is away, I'd better act for you."

"O, will you? will you?" cried Jack with joyful eagerness.

"I'll see Judge Garty," said Percy. "I'll get out a writ and attach their whole menagerie, if they refuse to pay the damages. But I think they will hear to reason; if they don't, they certainly can't expect to exhibit their show again in this part of the country."

Jack's heart kindled with hope and gratitude as he listened to these resolute and cheering words, and he ran to tell Moses.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN ELEPHANT HUNT, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

IN the mean while the Emperor Nero's keeper, spear in hand, spurred swiftly after him up the road, followed close by two or three other mounted men, armed with rifles, and, at a more respectful distance, by a throng of spectators, curious to see an elephant hunt, and solicitous at the same time for their personal safety.

The enraged monster amused himself, at first, by demolishing one of the runaway vehicles, which he speedily overtook, and killing the horse, which he tossed two or three times and then trampled beneath his feet. He then opened a passage into a cornfield, by scattering two or three lengths of fence, and went through it like a tempest, throwing up the hills with his tusks and tearing and trampling the half-grown crop, and leaving a track of ruin behind him which his pursuers found it easy to follow.

Beyond the cornfield he entered a meadow and attacked a haystack, which he was busily tearing to pieces when the horsemen appeared. At sight of them he started off again at a swinging trot which soon left the swiftest behind.

He now entered a field where a man and a boy were making hay. Too busy to be able to go that afternoon

and see the elephant, what must have been their astonishment to see the elephant coming to them! The boy had just time to dodge behind a stone-heap, and the man to spring up into a tree, when the animal passed, and went crashing through a thicket of young poplars farther on.

He was now getting into difficulty. On the other side of the thicket was a corduroy-road, laid across the edge of a morass which stretched beyond. Nero was too knowing to trust his tremendous bulk upon that soft and treacherous footing, so he took to the road. He did not seem to like that very well either, for the logs were broken in places, and there were mud-holes in which he was careful not to set foot. The way was also dangerous for the horses, and he might still have escaped, but for a circumstance which the wisest elephant could not have foreseen. The road led to the canal, and he suddenly found himself on the edge of a bridge which he dared not venture over.

As the road was here bordered by a swamp on both sides, he found himself in a sort of trap.

He turned about and was going down from the bridge, when he was met by the foremost horseman.

It was the little man in the striped jacket and red cap. He threw himself from his horse, and it was a wonderful sight to see him, a mere pygmy in comparison with the brute's stupendous bulk, march boldly up to him, while that huge and powerful creature, fresh from killing horses and destroying wagons and haystacks, began to cringe and tremble, and actually



THE ELEPHANT HUNT.

roar for mercy! Perhaps there was never a more striking example of the supremacy of man over the brute. With one stroke of tusk or trunk, he could have slain his keeper on the spot, and no doubt the faintest sign of fear on the part of the latter would have proved fatal to him; but perfect courage and a merciless spear gave him the victory. Nero had suffered many severe punishments for his misdeeds, but probably never anything like what he received that

day at the hands of the determined little man in the red cap.

Great was the surprise and wonder of the spectators, half an hour afterwards, to see the great elephant returning tame and contrite, with the mounted spearman riding at his side, and the horsemen, armed with rifles, close behind. The crowds fell back and gave him a wide berth as he passed.

"Now, gentlemen," said one of the horsemen, dismounting near the scene of the first catastrophe, and giving his beast and his gun to an attendant, "we will see about these damages."

"Thank you, Mr. Mundy," said the Prince of the Healing Art. "That sounds good-natered! I'm a good-natered man, myself, but —"

"I don't care anything about you!" interrupted the showman, putting the Prince promptly aside. "You have followed our show long enough, and if you want me to pay for your wagon, you must first prove it is your property. Who are the owners of these horses?"

"I represent the owners," said Percy Lanman. "The mare belongs to this young man's father; the horse is a borrowed one, and this other boy will have him to settle for."

"The mare will get well," said the showman.

"But she never will be good for much; ask the farrier here," said Percy, bringing up Duffer.

"I have eyes of my own," replied the showman. "Harness ruined. Wagon-tongue broken. Anything else?"

“One whippetree,” said Jack.

“Well, what’s the damage?”

The boys looked at Percy, who, after hesitating a moment, said, “There are a dozen good judges of horses present who know this team, and —”

“No matter about that,” said the showman. “I can see for myself. What’s to pay?”

“One hundred and sixty-five dollars,” replied Percy.

“That’s fair. Walk over to the tavern with me in a minute, and I’ll hand you the money. Who is the owner of that dead horse and broken buggy up the road?”

“I am,” said a young farmer, who had been waiting to see how the first affair was settled.

“What’s to pay?”

“Three hundred dollars.”

“You’ll have to go to law for your money,” said the showman, promptly.

“Why so?” asked the young man, turning pale.

“Either you are a fool, or you think I am. Where’s the owner of the cornfield?”

“See here!” said the young man. “I did n’t mean to ask more than I honestly thought the horse and buggy and harness are worth.”

“Yes, you did.”

“Well, then, what do you think — what are you willing to pay?”

“One hundred and twenty-five dollars. If that don’t satisfy you, sue.”

“ I suppose I shall *have* to be satisfied.”

“ Then come over to the tavern. And, gentlemen,” added the showman, addressing the crowd, “ I want it understood that the proprietors of this menagerie do business on straightforward principles. All danger is now over, and the Emperor Nero will be strictly guarded in future.”

“ Here is the owner of the cornfield !” cried some one, and an old farmer came forward. He said he had just been to look at the field, but that it was a hard thing to get at the actual damage. “ I ’d rather,” said he, “ let my neighbors look at it, and say what you ought to pay.”

“ That ’s honest talk,” said the showman. “ But let ’s see ! You could n’t have raised a hundred dollars’ worth of corn where the Emperor passed, could you ?”

“ O, no !”

“ Fifty ?”

“ No.”

“ Twenty-five ?”

“ Considering the fences, the haystack, and everything, the damage may amount to that.”

“ Twenty-five dollars ; that ’s settled, then. Come along with us.”

And the showman led the way to the tavern, while the Prince of the Healing Art took advantage of the lull in the excitement to get up a tolerably brisk sale of his Electrical Elixir, at twenty-five cents a bottle. “ A ruinous sacrifice,” he remarked, “ owing to circumstances over which he had no control.”

On the way to the tavern, Jack whispered to Percy, who, stepping to the showman's side, asked if he knew anything about "Dr. Lamont."

"The real Dr. Lamont, the Electrical Elixir man, used to follow our show through the country, with that very wagon, till about a month ago, when he fell in with this fellow. They got to gambling, and the doctor lost everything, — horse, wagon, stock in trade, green coat, brass helmet, trumpet, I don't know what all! He then staked his name, and this fellow won that too. He has been Dr. Lamont ever since."

Jack wished to learn more of the Prince, but they had now arrived at the tavern, and he forgot everything else in the joy of seeing one hundred and sixty-five dollars in good bank-notes, counted out by the showman, and paid over to Percy.

"There's Old Scattering painting his nose at the bar," remarked Moses; by which figure of speech he meant that the old man was taking a glass of grog.

"I'll settle with him on the spot, before witnesses," said Jack; and, walking up to the bar with Percy and Moses, he offered the old man the price of Snow-foot.

The drinker paused, glass in hand, and leered with his red and watery eyes at Jack and his handful of bank-notes.

"Jack," said he, with emotion, "you're a superlative chick — chick — chicken! A friend to my boy here, when he needed a friend! Forgive hard words,

and shake hands. Now take a glass, and then go home with me and eat some of my wife's prime doughnuts."

Jack declined the glass, but in order to draw the old man away from the bar, pretended to accept the other invitation, until he had got him and poor little patient Step Hen launched on their homeward way. Then he left them, saying that he must see about getting his "women folks" home.

CHAPTER XXX.

PHIN'S PROGRESS.

MR. PIPKIN had already started for home on foot, accompanied by Phin, who was eager to meet his parents on their arrival, and tell them the exciting news.

The hopeful youth had that satisfaction. He met his parents at the gate, and, before they had time to alight, told them of all the disasters that had happened in their absence,— the laming of the colt, the taking of Snowfoot without leave, and the destruction of horses, wagon, and harness by the elephant; for you may be sure that he set the matter forth in as strong colors as his vivid fancy could paint.

The deacon, excited and alarmed, did not get down from the buggy at all, but, having taken Phin up in Mrs. Chatford's place, started for the Basin as fast as old Maje could travel.

They had not gone far when they met Percy Lanman coming in a carryall with Annie Felton, Mrs. Pipkin, and Kate.

"Where are the boys?" demanded the deacon, with a stern and anxious face.

"They're coming 'cross-lots afoot," said Mrs. Pipkin. "Don't be concerned; don't blame them!"

"Concerned! blame them!" echoed Mr. Chatford.

“Strange that I can’t go from home to be gone a couple of days, but everything must go wrong in my absence! You, Mrs. Pipkin, and your husband, ought to look after things better than this, instead of countenancing the boys in their folly. I suppose now I shall be responsible for Mr. Treadwell’s horse, and have him to pay for, besides suffering my own losses.”

“The horses are both paid for, Mr. Chatford,” replied Percy Lanman. “Mr. Treadwell has the money for Snowfoot, and Moses is bringing home ninety dollars for the damage done to the mare, harnesses, and wagon.”

“The caravan people settled the hash, then, did they?” said the deacon.

“Yes, and very liberally.”

“And, uncle,” added Annie, “if you will wait and hear the boys’ story, I don’t think you will blame them very much.”

“And the horses — both dead?”

“Neither, as yet,” said Percy. “The mare will get well; possibly Snowfoot will, too. Jack couldn’t bear to have him killed. The horses are both in Duffer’s charge; the wagon is at the wagon-maker’s, and the harness at the harness-maker’s, and I think everything has been done that could be, under the circumstances.”

The deacon’s mind was relieved by this good news, though Phin did not appear so well pleased; and, turning about, he drove on after the carryall, con-

cluding to postpone his visit to the Basin until the next morning.

Moses and Jack reached home about the same time with the others, and met Mr. Chatford in the yard. There the colt was examined and found to be much better; and then the day's adventures were discussed. The deacon was amused at Jack's account of Mr. Pipkin's ride on the elephant, but his brow darkened again when he learned who was the vender of the bottles of Electrical Elixir.

"That villain in town again?" said he.

"Yes, and he's likely to stay some time, if he waits to have his wagon mended," replied Moses. "He made a good deal of Phin, and gave him a Dream Book."

For a moment the deacon stood speechless with astonishment and indignation. He then called for the book, and demanded of Phineas what the man had said to him.

"Nothing much," replied Phin, faintly, "only that he took a notion to me."

"Took a *notion* to you!" echoed the deacon, angrily. "Did he give you anything else?"

"No," murmured Phin.

"I charge you, one and all," then said Mr. Chatford, "if that scoundrel stays at the Basin, have no sort of intercourse with him. Phineas, do you hear?"

"Yes; though I can't see what hurt there is in it."

"What hurt! I'll show you what hurt there is, if you disobey me!" And, walking into the house, the

deacon helped forward the supper by stuffing the Dream Book under the simmering teakettle.

Mr. Chatford rode to the Basin the next morning, and found both the mare and Snowfoot in an improving condition.

"Whatever else you may say of Duffer," he remarked, "he is certainly a good farrier."

"Reminds me," remarked Mr. Pipkin, "of what old Parson Plumley used to say of weeds, — that there wa' n't one but what was good for suthin', if we could only find it out."

"He offered fifteen dollars for the mare," continued the deacon; "but I said she had done us good service, and if she lived I would pension her off; turn her out to grass, and let her raise a colt or two. He said he would give five dollars for Snowfoot; what do you think of that, Jack?"

Jack did not say anything for a moment, he was so astonished.

"I am glad we did n't have him killed! But he is not for sale. I never owned a horse before," he added with a smile, and a flush of pleasure, "and I'll hold on to Snowfoot, if only for the name of it!"

"You own a horse!" sneered Phineas, his face turning almost green with spite and envy. "That's a great thing to brag of, ain't it? But I suppose you got so used to driving old crow-baits on the canal, you'll feel quite at home with a limping cripple!"

Jack gave Phin an angry look, but turned away without speaking a word.

The colt speedily recovered from his lameness, and was put to the plough beside old Maje. The business of the farm now went on as before, except that Phin appeared more discontented than ever. Neither threats nor coaxing could induce him to do an earnest stroke of work, and it soon became evident that he had some mysterious business of his own on hand. Often after supper he would leave the others to do the milking, and, scudding off across the fields, be gone until late in the evening, when he would return, prepared with some wonderfully smooth excuse for his absence, in answer to his father's questions. The next day he would appear languid, lagging behind in the field, and complaining of all sorts of physical pains and weaknesses, until his father would say, "If you are not able to work, I don't wish to compel you to"; then he would go and lie down behind a stone-heap, or in a corner of a fence.

But the deacon was not altogether deceived, and one day, stepping up softly to a wall, behind which Phin had lately dropped, overcome by an excruciating colic, he discovered that ingenuous youth, no longer clutching his waistband with piteous groans, but practising tricks with a pack of cards!

"This is your terrible stomach-ache!" thundered his father; and, pouncing upon the frightened Phineas, he shook him till the cards flew in every direction, and his head seemed near flying away after them. "Where did you get these cards?"

"I found — bought — they are some Jase Welby gave me!"



CAUGHT.

“Tell me the truth! I shall ask Jason, and if I find you are lying, I’ll horsewhip you!”

Then Phin whimpered, “They are some that man —”

“That scoundrel!” exclaimed the deacon, turning pale, “after I told you to have no more dealings with him!”

“I have n’t,” said Phin. “They’re some he gave me that first day, at the show.”

“Then you lied to me!” And his father grasped him once more by the collar.

“I — I was afraid you would burn them up, as you did the Dream Book!” cried Phin.

“How many times have you seen that man since?”

“Only once, when I could n’t help it. He’s at the Basin waiting for his wagon to be mended. I was over there, and I just saw him, but I — I remembered what you said, and did n’t speak to him.”

“Who told you that you might go to the Basin?”

“Nobody, but I wanted to get some string for my kite —”

“Look at me!” said the deacon. He felt that the boy was lying to him, but somehow he had not the heart to punish him as he deserved, so he said, “Give me those cards, and don’t go to the Basin again, or out of sight and hearing of the house, unless you are told to. Will you obey me?”

Phin promised. But the next Sunday, having excused himself from going to meeting, he skulked away behind walls and fences, over the hills, then ran through the woods to the canal, and along the “heel-path,” until he met a smiling and very good-natured man coming to meet him.

CHAPTER XXXI

BUSINESS PROSPECTS.

ANXIOUSLY, in the mean while, Jack and Moses watched the maturing of their wheat crop. They had seen with wonderful interest and delight the first tender spears pricking out of the ground; then the whole field turning green; then the tall stalks waving in the wind, and putting forth heads, which were soon filled with plump, milky berries; and now they saw, with more pleasure than they had ever felt in any romance or story, the gradual yellowing and ripening of the grain.

The season proved favorable. "But a wheat crop's never safe," said Mr. Pipkin, "till ye harvest it, and thrash it, and git it to market, and git your money for 't." The great danger was the *rust*. A few days of warm wet weather might, almost at the very last, prove fatal to the finest crop, causing the stalks to mildew and the ripening berries suddenly to "shrink," losing their beauty and also much of their value. Then, even if that danger passed, a wet harvest might ruin all.

At last, one Saturday, the deacon said, "If it's a fine day, boys, we'll go into your wheat lot next Monday." And it *was* a fine day. And Mr. Pipkin and another man, hired for the special occasion, advanced

into the field, swinging their white-fingered cradles, and laying the grain behind them in even swaths. Jack followed, raking it up into gavels, for Moses and the deacon to bind; and afterwards carried the bundles together, and helped set them up in stacks, ready for drawing to the barn and stack-yard.

In due time the grain was housed and stacked; and soon a thrashing-machine, which went from farm to farm, thrashing all the wheat in the neighborhood, was set up one evening on Mr. Treadwell's premises. When it left, two days later, there lay a huge heap of chaff behind the barn, two great stacks of straw stood in the yard, and the grain, the plump, golden grain, a great, spreading pile, covered all one side of the barn-floor. Ah, how proud and rich the boys felt!

The same machine afterwards thrashed the deacon's wheat, about which they helped, of course; then they took advantage of a few days of dull weather to run their grain through a fanning-mill, and get it in a fine condition for market.

While they were thus at work, a merchant from the Basin came and looked at it, and finally bargained for it at a good price. Mr. Treadwell sold his share at the same time, and all, carefully put up in bags, was afterwards delivered to the dealer at his warehouse on the canal. The boys' profits amounted to thirty dollars apiece. This may seem a small matter to us, but it was a very great matter to them; and I have heard Jack say that no subsequent gains, in the more prosperous years of his life, ever afforded him

such happiness. And when we consider that he and Moses had given but a portion of the time that summer to raising their first crop, and that they had also prepared ground for a still larger crop of winter wheat, besides working at home enough to pay for their board and clothes and the help the deacon furnished them, we must allow that thirty dollars apiece was not bad.

Ah, but they had both gained more than that! In cultivating a crop of wheat, they had cultivated their own manhood, and reaped an experience of more value than any harvest.

Phin put in his claim for a share in the profits, as he had vowed he would do, and got well laughed at for his pains. And now Jack met with another piece of good fortune, which served greatly to aggravate Phin's discontent.

On visiting the Basin, three or four weeks after the menagerie was there, Jack had ventured to call on Duffer, and ask about the horses. To his surprise that cordial enemy of his had received him with more respect and politeness than he had probably ever shown to any boy before.

"That 'ere mare," said he, leading the way to the pasture, "she ain't doin' so well as I 'xpected. But that 'ere hoss, he's doin' better'n I 'xpected. That 'ere mare, she never'll be fit for nothin' but to raise colts; but that 'ere hoss, he's a hoss yit. I'll give ye twenty dollars for him."

Jack put his hands in his pockets, and his head

on one side, and looked and felt very much like an experienced dealer in horse-flesh.

“What will you do with him?” he asked.

“If I buys him,” said Duffer, “I jest keeps him till he gits sound and strong, and then I sells him to go on the canal.”

“The canal is a hard place for horses,” said Jack, who knew.

“Yis; and I ca’e’late he’ll git used up in jest about one season.”

“Poor old Snowfoot!” said Jack, stroking the animal’s flanks, “he’s suffered enough on my account, and I don’t think I shall ever be willing to let him go on the canal.”

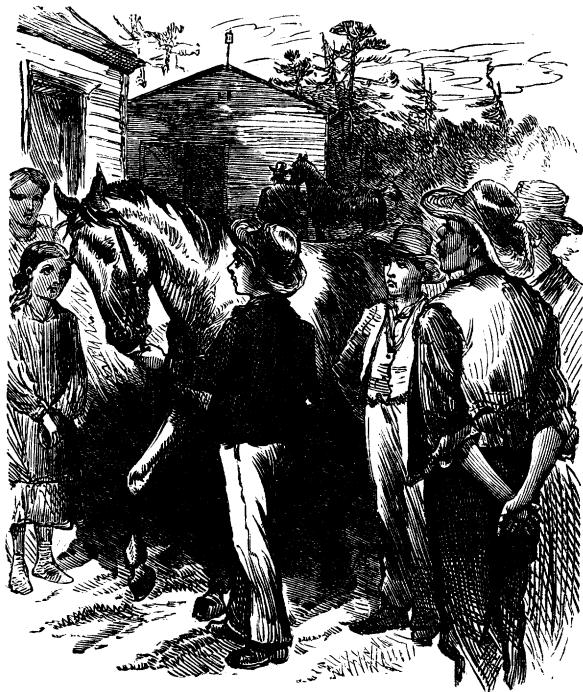
“I’ll give ye twenty-five dollars,” said Duffer, who thought Jack was only waiting for a higher bid, “and that’s about twice what you’ll ever realize on him arter my bill for nussin’ on him is paid.”

“Very likely,” said Jack, “but Snowfoot shall never be killed on the canal, if I can help it!”

As he was going away, Duffer offered him twenty-eight dollars; and the next time he came, two dollars more.

Not long after, the deacon paid the farrier’s bill — fifteen dollars — for attendance on both horses, and he and Jack led them home. The mare was a cripple; but Snowfoot was fast getting over his lameness, and but for two ugly scars in his hip and side, would have looked almost as well as ever.

As they entered the door-yard, Jack took great



JACK AND SNOWFOOT.

pleasure in making Snowfoot "stand around," and in showing him up to his friends.

"If it don't beat everything under the sun!" said the admiring Mr. Pipkin. "Five minutes arter the ol' elephant had the handlin' on him, I would n't 'a' gi'n a rusty copper for that hoss, with a shovel to bury him with throwed in; and now—by hokey!"

"Is he *your* horse now, Jack? O, I'm so glad!" cried little Kate, delighted.

"I don't see but what the horse belongs to me, just as much as he does to Jack," said the envious Phin. "We all had him that day."

"Yes!" retorted Jack, "you were glad enough to ride with us after I had got him, and to taunt me with my bad luck after the accident; so you have no claim. But it is different with Moses; and I've been thinking that I would give him an equal share in the horse with me. I think that is fair; and, Moses, I'll do it."

"You won't do any such thing," replied Moses, much affected by this generous offer, "for I won't let you. You took all the responsibility for the loss, when you thought it would come out of your own pocket, and I didn't offer to share it; and now do you think I'm so mean as to share your good luck? No! The horse belongs to you, and to nobody else."

"I'll give you forty dollars for him," said Don Curtis, just then sauntering into the yard.

"Thank you," said Jack, "but my horse is not for sale." And he led Snowfoot proudly away.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE RACCOON HUNT.

"'COONS are makin' terrible work with the corn this year," Mr. Pipkin complained one evening. "Won't be much left to git ripe, at this rate."

"I'm going to train Lion to track 'em," said Jack, who thought that what dog had done dog could do, especially if the last-named dog was Lion.

"He's a dreffle knowin' animal, I allow," said Mr. Pipkin. "But you never can l'arn one o' that kind to be a good 'coon. Now young Lanman has got a fust-rate 'coon-dog; why don't ye ax him to bring him over next time he comes, and go a 'coonin' with ye?"

"So we will!" cried the boys; and so they did. And accordingly, on the first fine moonlight evening, Percy came over with his long-eared, tawny Lara, on purpose to "go a 'coonin'."

"All ready?" he called, holding his dog at the door.

"Yes, and waiting," replied Moses, for it was late.

"There was no use in starting any earlier," said Percy. "The 'coons don't go into the corn much before this time. But now we must hurry, or the moon will set before we can catch a 'coon. Bring an axe, somebody; we may need it. And a gun."

"I've got the old musket ready on purpose," said Moses. "Where's Phin, I wonder? He was here fifteen minutes ago."

"That 'ere boy's conduct is queer!" observed Mr. Pipkin. "He done perty well for a while, arter that 'Lectrical 'Lixir man left the Basin; but now he's got some more mysterious business on his hands."

"The Elixir man is back again," said Percy. "He has come for his wagon, which has been mended, but he has n't the money to pay for it."

"Phin has n't gone to the Basin at this time of night, I know!" said Moses. "He'll be back here soon."

They waited for him a few minutes, then, as he did not come, started off without him.

"Must be suthin' curi's, to make him miss a 'coon hunt," was Mr. Pipkin's comment, as he shouldered the axe and marched out into the moonlight.

The party proceeded in silence to the cornfield, on the side towards the woods, out of which the raccoons were known to come. Then Percy whispered, pointed, and released Lara. Throwing down his nose, the dog darted away between the two outer rows of corn, and disappeared. Jack at the same time released Lion, saying, "Seek!" and away went Lion also, though in another direction.

"You'll hear from Lara presently, if there are any 'coons in the corn," said Percy.

The boys listened with anxiously beating hearts, but for a while heard nothing but their own footsteps, and the rustling of the long corn-leaves in the wind.

Then suddenly Lara opened,—a long, loud bay, which was music to the ears of the eager hunters.

“Hark!” cried Percy, as the boys would have rushed forward. “He is coming out of the corn! The ’coon has started for the woods, and he is after him. Come on!”

He leaped the fence; Jack and Moses and Mr. Pipkin followed; and they all ran diagonally across the pasture towards Peternot’s woods. All at once the sound of Lara’s barking became stationary, and more violent than before.

“He has treed him!” said Percy; and so it proved. They found the dog yelling, in great excitement, at the roots of a scraggy pine in the open field, and making occasional wild leaps at the trunk, up which his game had escaped. “Here’s your ’coon,” said Percy. “Now what shall we do?”

“Father don’t care about that tree,” replied Moses; “he had just as lief it would be cut as not.”

“Then here it goes!” laughed Percy; and, taking the axe, he began to chop. But Lara kept running about and leaping at the tree, endangering his own head, and Percy had to take care of him.

“Lucky the tree ain’t on old Peternot’s land,” remarked Mr. Pipkin, as he took the axe.

The trunk was not large, and soon the hunters began to watch eagerly to see which way it would fall. To give Lara a good chance, Percy had cut in on the side towards the cornfield, hoping to bring the pine down in that direction. But it leaned a little

the other way ; and just at the critical moment there came a gust of wind, which carried it over towards the woods. It fell with a crash ; and almost at the moment Lara was bouncing over and through the tops after the 'coon.

“Here he is !” screamed Jack. He had stationed himself between the tree and the woods, in order to head off the game, in case it should get the start of Lara in that direction ; and he now had the satisfaction of seeing an animal, about as large as a large cat, run swiftly away in the moonlight, not more than two rods off.

Jack followed ; and Lara, having been baffled a moment at the tree-top, was on the track again too soon to allow the 'coon to reach the woods. He turned, and ran up a tall poplar, before the very eyes of the boys, and almost between the teeth of Lara. The dog was an instant too late ; and now here he was barking up another tree.

“Father'll hate to have that cut, it makes such a good shade for the cattle,” said Moses, regretfully.

“Climb it !” cried Jack ; “climb it, and shake the 'coon off ! Let me try ! Give me a boost, will you ?”

Percy and Mr. Pipkin “boosted” him, so that he had but a yard or so to climb before he grasped the lower limbs ; then he quickly disappeared in the branches.

“What's going on here ?” said the voice of Phineas, who just then came up, attracted to the spot by the felling of the pine and the sound of voices.

"Hello! where did you come from?" said Moses.

"I thought you'd given up the 'coon hunt, so I went to set my woodchuck-trap before the moon went down," Phin explained. "'Coon up this tree?"

"Yes. See him anywhere, Jack?" cried Moses.

"Not yet," Jack answered from the branches.

"Wonder what Lion's barking at over yender!" said Mr. Pipkin.

"A 'coon, I suppose," said Moses. "I've heard him for the past ten minutes; but he'll stay. We can't catch but one 'coon at a time."

"Lion treed a 'coon!" sneered Phineas. "I don't believe there's any 'coon! I tried to call him away, but I could n't. I want Jack to call him."

"Jack has something else to do just now," said Percy, looking up into the tree. Just then Jack's voice was heard again.

"I see the fellow! He's way up in the top, as high as he can get! Wait a minute. Now look out down there, — I'm going to shake!"

The hunters below ranged themselves on the side of the woods, while Lara stood under the tree, expectant, his head thrown back, his eyes turned upwards, and his mouth opening and shutting, and uttering wistful whines and yelps. There was a heavy rustling of boughs above, at which he leaped and danced, in eager anticipation of the descending game, — but no game fell.

"I tell ye, he sticks!" cried Jack. "Wait till I get a little higher!"

Another and still livelier clashing of the topmost branches of the tree ; and yet nothing came.

“Ho !” said Phineas, “’t ain’t so easy to shake a ’coon off! and you ain’t quite so smart as you thought you was !”

Jack did not heed the taunt. After another vigorous shake he cried, “I wish I had the gun up here ! I could put the muzzle right to his head. He ’s fast in the little notch there, and I can’t move him. I’ll cut a good stout stick, and see if I can’t poke him out.” A branch was cut and trimmed, and the poking began. “He ’s savage !” cried Jack. “By George, he ’s fighting me !”

“I’ll get the gun up to you in a minute,” said Percy. “Hand it to me, Moses, after I get into the tree.”

But before he began to climb, Jack screamed, “Look out !” And he had just time to spring away from under the tree, when down came a dark object, clashing through the lower branches, and striking the ground with a heavy thump. It was the game, which Jack had dislodged by a skilful twist and thrust of his stick.

Lara was on the spot almost at the same moment. A confused snarling and snapping followed, and then a violent shaking of the said dark object in the dog’s mouth.

“There’s your ’coon !” said Percy Lanman, quietly. “Lara has finished him ; — let go, Lara !”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE 'COON THAT LION TREED.

JACK slipped quickly down from branch to branch, and dropped from the lowest branch to the ground, just in time to see Lara's master take the dead game and hold it up by the hind legs. The boys were almost as much excited over it as the dog; but Phin beat all the rest in bragging about it.

"I tell ye, that's a dog for ye! Did n't he shake him! Lion never could have killed that 'coon! Lion's no dog at all for hunting! Call him, Jack! he thinks he's got something over there, but he's a fool of a dog!"

"I'm going to see whether he's a fool of a dog or not," replied Jack. "I don't believe he's barking so for nothing. Come on!"

He led the way, and all followed eagerly except Phin, who seemed suddenly to have lost all faith in his old favorite, and to be greatly disgusted because the rest put confidence in his barking. After trying in vain, however, to induce Jack not to go, but to call the dog, he reluctantly accompanied the party.

They found Lion barking at the roots of a butter-nut-tree, that stood in a bare pasture, near the lane that led past the cornfield to the barn.

Two or three rods farther on, close by the lane

fence, was a fine large elm-tree, which Percy looked at twice.

“Lucky for us the ’coon did n’t take to that,— and it’s a wonder he did n’t! Now we must be careful, or we shall get him out of the butternut, only to put him into the elm.”

“See!” said Phin, triumphantly, “Lara don’t say there’s a ’coon here!”

Indeed, Lara did not seem to strike any very fresh track about the tree at first; but now, prompted by his master, he began to sniff at the roots, and then to bark with Lion at the game in the tree.

The butternut was easy to climb, and Jack was for going up into it at once. But Percy said no.

“The fence will bother the dogs. We don’t know which side of it the ’coon will fall if you shake him off. Even if he falls on the side of the dogs, he can run through before they can get over; and we don’t want to give him a chance at that elm.”

“We can take the fence all away!” said Jack, proud of Lion’s exploit, and eager to get at the game. He declared that he heard a rustling in the branches, and thought he could see something up among them, although the moon had now set and it was growing dark.

“We’ll build a fire of some of these old rails,” said Percy, “and make a light we can see to shoot him by.”

“And have a supper of roasted corn afterwards!” exclaimed Moses.

"I don't think father'll want you to cut up the rails, or roast the corn, either," said Phineas. "I say, come away! I'll bet a thousand dollars there's no 'coon in this tree."

"I'll bet a thousand dollars there's something," said Jack, "and we're going to have a shot at it, any way."

He hastened to pull some splinters off the fence, and whittle some shavings, while Percy, with matches he carried for the purpose, started a blaze. Mr. Pipkin split up fragments of a rail, to add to the fire; and Moses went to the cornfield to find some good roasting ears. Soon a bright flame shot up from the corner of the pasture, casting a wide gleam around, lighting up the human figures and the dogs about it, and shooting its rays into the boughs of the butternut. Suddenly Jack seized the musket.

"I see him! I see him!" he screamed, and brought the gun to his shoulder.

"Here! here!" said Phin, running to stop him. "What are you going to do?"

"Shoot the 'coon! Don't you see him up there?"

"Don't shoot!" yelled a voice from the tree.

"Take the dogs away, and I'll come down!"

"It's Colonel Crockett's 'coon!" laughed Percy.

"It's a man, by hokey!" said the astonished Mr. Pipkin.

"A minute more, and I'd have brought him down!" said Jack. And he pulled Lion away, while Percy called off Lara.



THE 'COON THAT LION TREED.

Then the owner of the voice came slipping lightly to the ground.

“No harm!” said he, gayly. “I like a joke, even if it tells ag’inst myself; it’s all the same to me; for I’m the best-natered man in the world!”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PHIN'S REVENGE.

"THE 'Lectrical 'Lixir man!" — "Dr. Doyley." — "Good-natered John Wilkins!" — "Prince of the Healing Art!" exclaimed Mr. Pipkin, Moses, Jack, and Percy Lanman, all in a breath. To which Moses added, sharply, "How came you up that tree?"

"How does any biped without wings get up in a tree?" replied the doctor. "Nat'rally, I clim' up."

"What did you climb up for?"

"What for? To git away from that dog, — and I must request that you'll keep a tight holt on him, young man, or I shall have to shin up agin!"

"What were you doing here?"

"Havin' a pleasant and profitable conversation with that interestin' brother of yours, — jest a good-natered talk; I take such a fancy to him, you know! — when along comes this brute of a dog, and would have had me by the throat, if my young friend had n't hild him till I jumped into the tree."

"Why did n't you tell of this?" said Moses, turning to Phin.

"'Cause! I knew you'd go and tell father, and I did n't want to get a licking," whined Phineas.

"This, then, is the reason why you came and asked Jack to call Lion!"

“Yes; I tried to get him away, and could n’t. I’ll own up all about it, if you won’t tell father.”

“I know enough about it!” said a stern voice; and Phineas, turning, saw his father standing behind the fence, in the lane.

Kept awake by the barking of the dogs, and at last seeing a fire kindled in the field, the deacon had got up out of his bed, dressed himself, and gone to see what sort of game had been treed so near the barn. He had approached, concealed by the shadows of the fence, while he himself, glancing between the rails, saw by the light of the fire everything that took place. He now got over the fence, and stood angrily confronting the wily doctor.

“You unblushing scoundrel! what business have you on my premises?”

“Maybe you would n’t like to have me tell, before these witnesses, what my business is!” replied the doctor, with a sickly grin, in the firelight. “If you would, here goes!”

“You have the advantage of me; and you use it meanly and cruelly!” said the deacon, trembling with agitation. “I would appeal to your honor, if you had any to appeal to. I would appeal to your affection for this boy, — which you profess to feel, — but your own conduct shows that you are his worst enemy, instead of being his friend. I’ve a good notion to let the dog take you! — Phineas, come with me!”

So saying, Mr. Chatford seized the boy by the collar, and led him away. The doctor, who had stood

with folded arms, nodding and leering sarcastically, while the deacon was talking, now followed him with a glance which would hardly have entitled him to be considered the best-natured being in existence. In that glance were malice, cunning, and revenge.

“Good!” said he, with a mocking laugh. “Very good! Things is workin’! We’ll see! ha, ha!”

“Look here, doctor!” said Percy Lanman. “I know something about this business” (Jack wondered whether he had learned it of Annie Felton), “and I have a bit of advice to give you. Let that boy alone. Why, after all that has been done for him, do you wish to bring about his ruin? You are an unnatural —” Percy checked himself.

“Say on! speak it out!” said the doctor. “Ha, ha! well! I am patient; I submit to be misunderstood. Ah, if you knew my heart! But adieu! Keep back the dog till I am well off these premises, and I promise you never to set foot on ’em agin.”

“I advise you to make tracks pretty fast,” said Moses, “for we sha’ n’t hold the dog much longer.”

“Show yourself Prince of the *Heeling* Art, by the way you take to your heels!” cried Jack.

“Ha, ha! a good joke!” said the doctor, as he gracefully retired. “But no offence! for I am — I think I have shown that I am — yes, good-natered is the word!” And with a bow and a flourish he turned, leaped the fence, and disappeared in the darkness of the lane.

The hunt was over for that night. Moses roasted

the ears of corn he had picked, and Percy, Mr. Pipkin, and the boys sat for an hour round the fire, and ate them, and talked over the evening's adventures, and told stories; then they separated, the boys carrying home the raccoon.

The next day Phin kept his room, which his father had forbidden him to leave until he should have settled with him for his misconduct. His meals were carried up to him by his mother, who talked and wept with him, and implored him to "turn over a new leaf," and try to do better.

"There is Jack," said she, "doing his very best,— and see how cheerful and happy he is in it! Why can't you learn a lesson and take an example from him?"

"Jack!" said Phin with an angry sneer. "Don't say Jack to me! I hate him!"

"Why, what do you hate him for?"

"'Cause! you think more of him than you do of me, and that's enough."

"If any one in this house thinks more of him than of you, there's a reason for it. Your opportunities have been much greater than his; and you are smart enough,— if you only had a disposition to do well."

"I'll be revenged on Jack!" was Phin's only reply to his mother's last words; and she left him, with sorrow of heart.

His supper was brought up to him, as his breakfast and dinner had been. He ate a little; then, hearing the folks sitting down at the table in the room below,

he took from under the bed a bundle of clothes which he had already tied up, and dropped it out of the back window. After that he went into Jack's room, took a key from the pocket of Jack's Sunday trousers, and with it unlocked a chest at the head of the bed. In a corner of the chest he found another key that unlocked the till. In the till was a silk purse, a present to Jack from his dear friend Annie Felton; and it contained all Jack's hard-earned money. Every dollar he had received for his share of the wheat crop, together with what was left of his "sugar money," — about thirty-three dollars in all, — was in that purse, the gold in one end and the silver in the other, each confined in its place by a silver ring.

Phin listened for a moment, and glanced over his shoulder with a wild look, then slipped the purse into his pocket. He then locked the till, and the chest itself, putting both keys back in their places, glided out of the room, crept softly as a cat down the stairs and out at the front door; picked up his bundle behind the house, stooping low so as not to be seen from the windows; dodged behind the wood-pile, gave a low whistle for Lion, and disappeared in the orchard, followed by the eager, unsuspecting dog.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW PHIN AND LION WERE WELCOMED.

PEERING fearfully over his shoulder to see if he was pursued, running and skulking, Phin — still followed by Lion, who no doubt fancied some fine sport in prospect — passed the orchard, traversed the lane, the fields and the woods beyond, and reached the canal.

Then he first began to breathe freely, though his heart was still palpitating and his face still pale. He took out the purse and looked at it and “hefted” it, as with a guilty laugh, and a wild gleam in his eyes, he glanced backwards once more at the woods through which he had come.

“If I see them after me,” he muttered to himself, “I’ll fling it into the canal; — *Jack* shall never have it again!”

He kept the “heel-path,” crossed the waste-wear and the culvert, ran down along the edge of the pond, and, taking the village in the rear, hurried to the tavern. He inquired in the bar-room for Dr. Lamont, and was told that that gentleman was “somewhere round, maybe at the barn.” So to the barn he went.

There under a shed was the doctor’s wagon, mended and repainted so as to look almost as good as new,

and with his name and title, "*Dr. Lamont, Prince of the Healing Art,*" blazing in bright letters on one side, and "*Dr. Lamont's celebrated Electrical Elixir*" on the other. In the front part of the wagon was the doctor himself, reaching over and packing the box with a fresh supply of bottles received that afternoon by way of the canal. He looked up, and with a cry of pleasure saw his young friend approaching with his bundle; but before he could speak, Lion made a dash at him.

"Ho! hold him!" yelled the doctor, as, seized with fright, he jumped over into the box, among his bottles, and shut the cover after him.

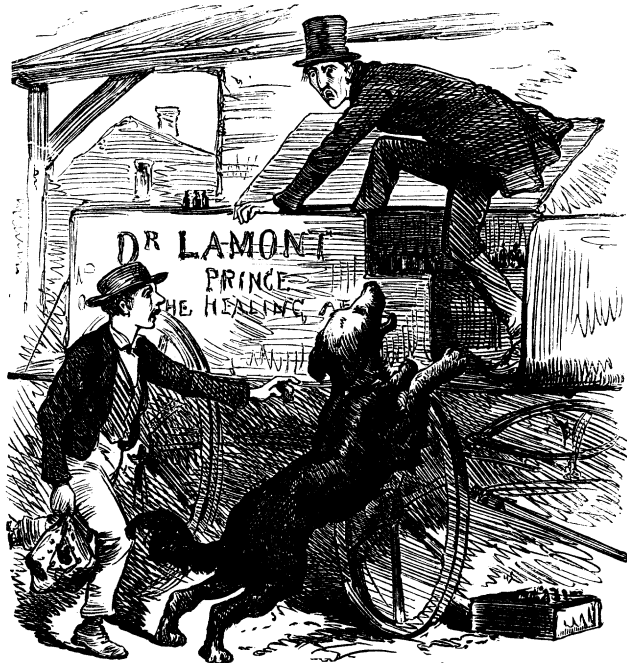
Astonished by the magical disappearance of his victim, Lion ran round the wagon, whining and barking, and leaping upon the wheels, until Phin grasped him by the collar and held him. Then the terrified doctor ventured to lift the lid of his hiding-place, and peep out.

"Got him? can ye hold him?" he said.

"I guess so." But at that moment Lion snarled and struggled so violently, that the poor wretch in the box dodged down out of sight and dropped the cover again.

"I've got him fast now," said Phin.

The cover was lifted again cautiously, and out came a hand, and a rope, and these words: "*Tie him! tie the brute!*" So Phin made one end of the rope fast to Lion's collar, and the other to a wheel of the wagon; after which the doctor took courage,



THE PRINCE IN HIS CASTLE.

and, opening his trap again, put out his head and shoulders, with a scared but smiling face.

“O my dear boy! my charming Phineas!” he said, “what ever possessed you” — a start and a growl from Lion made him dodge again — “to — to bring that ferocious beast along?”

“Did ye think I was going to leave him for Jack?” replied Phineas. “Not by a long chalk! I’d rather he’d be dead!”

“Kill him, then!” said the doctor.

“Kill him? kill Lion?” echoed Phineas, turning quite pale.

“You see, it’s impossible to have him with us! He’ll always be pitchin’ into me. My trousis’ll never be safe,—say nothin’ of legs and throat! Ah!” added the doctor, with a sigh, “I’d give fifty dollars if that dog was dead.”

“If he can’t go with us, then I won’t go!” Phin declared, with a disappointed and angry look.

“What will you do, then, my dear boy?”

“I’ll go back home first!”

“O, now, just think of it!” said the doctor, sweetly and persuasively. “Go back there and live on a farm all your days! a boy of splendid talents like you! pick up stun and hoe corn for a livin’! see that mean little canal-driver petted and put above you!—I’m sure a lad of your sperit can’t submit to that.”

“I d’n’ know!” Phin muttered, looking gloomy and dissatisfied, as he fingered Lion’s collar.

“On the other hand,” said the doctor, in honeyed accents, “think of the fortin that’s to be yourn if you go with me! You’ll see the world; have a sort of Fourth-of-July every day in the year; nothin’ to do but to drive the hoss and blow the trumpet while I sell the bottles. We’ll spend the winter in the sunny South, goin’ from city to city, from plantation to plantation, always happy, always good-natered, livin’ by our wits,—no hard work about it,—and pilin’ up the money! Then, when we git tired of this thing,

we'll sell out, and turn our hands to another; that's my maxim; — variety's the spice of life, and we'll have our share. Think on 't, my dear boy! only think on 't! then I know how you'll decide."

"I s'pose I shall have to go with you now," said Phin, his face brightening a little; "for I—" He looked furtively around, and added something in a whisper.

"Ah, have you? my lovely Phineas! That was a bold stroke, and it was your right. Of course you can't go back now. Better give it to me; le' me take care on 't for you. Hand up your bundle too. We'll have everything ready for a start."

So Phin passed up his bundle to the amiable doctor, and then, with a trembling hand, and a skittish look behind him, reached up the purse of money.

"Now," said the doctor, more confidently, as he dropped the purse into his own pocket, "about the dog. There's only one thing to be done, and you must do it."

"What's that?" Phin faltered.

"Drownd him!"

"I can't! how can I?"

"Easy enough. Rope's already on his neck. Take him to the bank of the canal over the culvert. Find a good-sized stun, tie the other end of the rope around that, and push dog and stun off together."

Phin's countenance was full of doubt and trouble. It was clear, they could not take Lion with them; neither could he bear the thought of leaving him to

comfort Jack; and yet—though he could easily make up his mind to sacrifice an animal for which he felt a merely selfish, covetous love—he lacked the courage to do the dreadful deed. The doctor's power over him, however, was now complete; and it was not long before Phin might have been seen crossing the street, and going out of the village the way he had come, leading Lion by the rope.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DR. LAMONT'S LITTLE GAME. •

THE wary doctor remained in his extemporized fortress of a wagon-box until the enemy was out of sight, — pleasantly employing his time in counting the contents of the purse, — then finished packing his bottles, and prepared to put into practice a little scheme for paying his hotel bill, without a needless waste of money.

“The best friends must part,” he said gayly to the landlord, as he entered the tavern. “My hoss, if you please ; — I go where duty leads me.”

“But your hoss don’t go till you’ve paid up all charges,” was the landlord’s not very cordial reply. “Though you pulled the wool over Lapham’s eyes, and he let you take the wagon away on trust, you can’t come any of your sharp games on me.”

“Lapham’s a man after my own heart !” said the doctor. “Such a gentleman ! so good-natered !” — turning to the bystanders.

To which the landlord replied rather gruffly, “As I’ve heard you say of yourself, I think he’s ‘too good-natered for his own interest,’ — in this case, at all events.”

“Ha, ha ! that *is* my fault ; and it may be Lapham’s. But I love good-natered men !” said the

doctor, with a smile of insinuating softness. "You think I've no money? Look at that!" And he displayed a handful of gold and silver. "Le' me show ye a little trick." He placed a half-dollar on the floor, whirled around on it, and stamped his foot. "Now is there a half-dollar under my heel?"

"I think there is," said the landlord.

"Ha, ha! I believe there is too!" He stooped again, and pretended to pick up the half-dollar, performing the trick so adroitly that any one who saw him would have been deceived, had not the edge of the coin been left sticking out from under his heel! He then whirled himself about two or three times more, tossing in the air a coin he had pretended to pick up; then stopped, and leaned over the bar. "Now," said he, "I s'pose you say there ain't no half-dollar under my foot?"

"I've no opinion about it," said the landlord, who at the same time winked at a village loafer standing behind the doctor. The loafer grinned, understanding that a neat little trick was to be played upon the trickster.

"O, yes, ye have; you've an opinion, one way or t' other. Come, now, I'll bet there is a half-dollar under my foot, or I'll bet there ain't, whichever ye please, for I'm the most accommodatin' man in the world."

The landlord waited until his accomplice had slyly stooped, removed the coin from under the doctor's foot, and showed it behind his back; then said, care-



THE DOCTOR'S LITTLE GAME.

lessly, "Well, if you insist, I'll bet the amount of my bill there ain't no money under your foot."

"Say *under his shoe*," remarked a quiet-looking young man, who had just come in. "You don't know how many half-dollars there may be under his foot, inside his shoe."

"A good idee!" replied the landlord. "Of course I mean under his *shoe*; — that's my bet."

The adventurer seemed slightly embarrassed for a moment, perhaps at the unexpected suggestion, but quite possibly at some disagreeable recollection associated with the young man's face, which was somewhat pitted, — a fire-lit scene on the edge of a cornfield, a group of 'coon-hunters, an ugly dog, and an angry deacon, for instance.

"I take the hint in good part," said he, recovering his equanimity. "It was shrewd, and I love shrewdness! I love and admire a shrewd man! Under the *shoe*, it is. How much is your bill?"

"Your board, off and on, and keepin' your hoss, — fifteen dollars. I'll receipt it, and we'll put that and your money in the hands of this young man."

"All fair and honorable," said the doctor, counting out fifteen dollars in gold. "If I show that there's a half-dollar under my shoe, the stakes go to me; otherwise to you. This young man may not be my friend, but I see honor in his face."

Percy Lanman received the stakes, little suspecting to whom the gold really belonged.

"But look here!" he said to the landlord. "You're just betting against your own money." The landlord screwed up one side of his face very hard, and scratched his cheek, looking puzzled. "Fifteen dollars is the sum he owes you; this, then, is rightfully yours already. Now, to make it a fair bet, he must put fifteen dollars more with it."

"So he must!" cried the landlord; and "So he must! that's a fact!" echoed the bystanders.

“Shrewd agin!” said the light-hearted doctor, gayly dropping three more golden half-eagles into Percy’s hand. “I shall love this young man! ha, ha! All ready?”

The trickster, who was to be tricked so finely, stepped aside. “Now,” said he, not the least astonished at seeing no money on the floor, “I s’pose you all say there’s no half-dollar under my shoe. Very good! this man has the one that was there;— I’ll take it if you please. Thanks! Now look! No slight of hand about this! Gentlemen, what do you see?”

Seating himself in a chair, he held up his shoe, and showed, sticking to the sole, in the hollow of his foot, a third half-dollar. A little wax, applied before he left the wagon, had enabled him to make this profitable use of so much of Jack’s money.

The landlord turned purple with astonishment and rage; but there was nothing to be said. Lamont, who knew when the visible half-dollar was removed, had won the wager by a deeper trick than that he had pretended to be playing. He pulled off the waxed coin, leaped to his feet, and extended his hand for the stakes.

“Excuse me,” said Percy; “not yet. Mr. Lapham is anxious about the money you owe him for repairs done on your wagon, and he asked me to come and see about it. I’ve sent a man to fetch him, and I think I’ll keep the stakes till his little bill is settled.”

Strange to say, the doctor did not appear altogether enchanted at this fresh display of the beloved

quality in the young man. But, quickly regaining his complacency, he said: "Ha! very pretty! very neat indeed! I like a good-natered trick, even if I be the victim!"

And, on the arrival of the wheelwright, he cheerfully accepted what was left of the money after the bill for mending his wagon — twenty-eight dollars — had been paid out of it. He then took leave of the company, got up his horse (the ostler refused to help him), mounted his box, and drove out of the village to the place he had appointed for meeting Phineas.

The boy, if prospered in his undertaking, should have been there before him; but he had not yet arrived; and although the doctor waited for him until dark, and he grew alternately anxious and furiously angry, still no Phineas appeared.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHY PHIN WAS LATE.

THE shades of evening were closing in, when Phineas Chatford, desperately resolved upon destroying the dog he could not take with him on his travels, and was unwilling to leave behind, quitted the village, leading the noble, faithful creature by a rope.

From the shore of the pond he climbed the embankment of the canal, where he pried two or three large stones out of the gravel before he found one to suit his purpose. At last he selected one; it was almost too heavy for him to carry, and, in getting to the culvert, he was obliged to rest it on Lion's back. The dog walked by his side, with an air of proud satisfaction in doing a service, never suspecting that the burden he bore was to serve as the means of his own death.

So they reached the part of the embankment where Jack had once made his celebrated escape from Constable Sellick.* On one side was the canal, along which a boat was slowly passing. On the other side, fifteen feet below, was the pond, the water of which was there conducted beneath the canal through a culvert of massy masonry. A little farther on was the

* See "A Chance for Himself."

waste-wear, where the surplus water of the canal poured over, in a shining cascade, into the pond.

At the top of the bank above the culvert Phin stopped, put down his stone, and waited for the boat to pass. He also looked anxiously to see if any person was coming from either direction. It was a lonely place at nightfall : nobody was in sight, save the boatmen, and all was still, — no sound but the crack of the driver's whip and the noise of the waterfall.

Phin now rolled his stone cautiously down the bank, till it rested on the top of the culvert masonry. He then wound the loose end of the rope about it, and fastened it with a close knot. During these deadly preparations, Lion looked affectionately in the boy's guilty face, and licked his hand.

The verge of the masonry was very narrow, presenting just room for Phin to rest the stone upon it. The bank was steep behind him, and it was, on the whole, an awkward place for his business. But at last he was ready. Stone and dog, tied together by the rope, were at the edge of the culvert, and Phin stood with braced feet behind, ready to launch them.

He waited a moment more, to see if any person was approaching ; and again Lion licked his hand. The next instant, dog and stone went tumbling over the masonry, and fell with a great splash into the water.

Scared by the sound, — terrified at what he had done, — Phin crouched against the bank, and looked all about him, hearkening for any sound, as if he had

committed a murder and feared detection. Seeing no object moving in the dusk, hearing no sound but the waterfall, he took heart, and glanced over the brink of the culvert. As he did so, he saw something stirring in the water. It was coming out. It came out, and rose up on the bank, black and shaggy and dripping, and shook itself. It was Lion, dragging the rope, with a large loop in it, out of which the stone had slipped as he struggled to get free.

For a minute Phin felt relieved to know that the animal — the fond, the faithful Lion, who seemed almost human in his intelligence and his attachments — was not drowned. Then he remembered his reasons for wishing him dead; and all his hatred of Jack revived.

After a little reflection, he hardened his heart again, and hastened to bring another stone, which he likewise placed on the verge of the masonry. It was not quite so heavy as the first, but it had a jagged side, about which he felt sure that he could tie the rope in such a way that it would not slip.

“I’ll finish the job now I’ve begun!” he muttered to himself. “I’ll do it this time!”

He found little difficulty in catching the dog, though he seemed somewhat shy of his attentions now; and once more he led him up the embankment.

“Come! poor fellow!” he said, coaxingly, patting his wet neck; but Lion held back. “Good Lion! fine old dog!” he said, and at last got him again to the edge of the masonry.

To prevent him from getting away while he was completing his preparations, Phin took a turn with the rope around his own leg, and then proceeded to tie the end of it, in a strong noose, to the stone. But now Lion seemed to be fully aware of the deadly mischief that was intended. Coaxing was in vain. He put forth all his strength, and, in the struggle to get away, dragged Phin from his footing. Phin slipped from the masonry, striking his head against a sharp corner of it as he fell, and dropped stunned into the deep water.

But for the hurt, which left him senseless, he might have saved himself by swimming. As it was, he sank helplessly, rose slowly, and floated with the sluggish current to the mouth of the culvert.

It was then that the generous nature of the dog asserted itself. Still dragging the rope, he plunged into the water, and swam with all his might to the rescue of the wretch by whom his own life had just been twice attempted. He seized the boy's coat-collar in his strong teeth, and paddled for the bank.

When Phin came to himself, Lion had drawn him beyond the abutment of the culvert, and was dragging him up out of the pond, on the sloping shore. It was some time before he realized what had happened; then, as he sat trembling, aghast, and drenched, on the gravelly bank, he remembered everything, he took in all: he had been saved from a terrible death by the nobly forgiving animal he had been trying so hard to kill.

For a while he felt too weak and dizzy to stand. During the few minutes he sat there he thought of a good many things. The shock and chill and fright, added to the pond-water he had swallowed, had taken away what little courage he possessed, and he wished himself safe and snug once more in his room at home.

“Why did I ever leave it? why did I run away?” thought he, crying miserably. “I’ll go back! I will!”

But then, there was the money he had stolen from Jack and given to the doctor! He must first recover that, or how could he dare ever to show his guilty face at home?

So, after recovering his strength, he got up, climbed the bank, crossed the waste-heap on the narrow foot-plank placed over it, and started to find the doctor. The evening was cloudy, and so dark that, in his weak and aguish condition, he felt dreadfully lonesome and afraid, as he hurried down the heel-path to the bridge. He whistled in vain for Lion. That sorrowful and indignant companion had started for home alone, as soon as he saw that Phin was safe, his whole look and manner seeming to say, “I’ve done my duty, and I never will have anything to do with *that* boy again!”

Crossing the canal at the bridge, Phin hastened down the road, and soon saw a wagon standing by the fence. It was the doctor’s; and, as he approached, the doctor’s voice hailed him.

“What made ye so late?”

"Could n't come any quicker. Got in!" murmured Phin.

"Is *he* — all right?" said the doctor.

"Yes," replied Phin, ashamed to confess the truth.

"Good! Now get up here as quick as ye can, and we'll be off."

"Can't!" faltered the wretched boy.

"Can't! why not? what do you mean?"

"I've changed my mind. Give me my money and my bundle, and let me go back!"

"Go back?" exclaimed the doctor. "If you do, you'll have to go without the money, for that's spent; paid over to that miserable wheelwright for mending my wagon."

Phin uttered a wail of anger and dismay.

"Come, come! Don't be faint-hearted! cheer up, my dear boy! Git in here, and we'll talk it over as we drive along; then you shall do as you please. Wet, are you? Here's the robe of the Prince of the Healing Art to wrap around you! Ha, ha! dog's dead, is he? That's my brave boy! Now the world is before us! no regrets, no tears, — all good-natered, ye know!"

So saying, the doctor folded Phin in his long green robe, placed him on the seat by his side, and, coaxing him with wily words, drove briskly away.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DISCOVERY.

PHIN'S absence from his room had already been discovered by Mrs. Chatford, when she went up to take away his plate after supper. But, thinking he would return soon, she had kept the fact a secret from her husband, dreading to increase his displeasure.

It was not long, however, before the deacon, coming in at the close of his day's work, said to Moses, "Go up and tell Phineas to come to my room." As Moses started to obey, Mrs. Chatford was obliged to confess that Phineas was not in the house.

"Has he dared —" broke forth the deacon, who suddenly checked himself. He heaved a deep sigh of anxiety and grief, then added, in a subdued voice, "See if any of his clothes are gone; let us know the worst."

"I have looked, and some of his clothes are missing; though I can't think he has taken them with the intention of really running away!" said Mrs. Chatford. "It is only a freak to frighten us, I am sure!"

"Lion has gone too!" exclaimed Jack, on coming into the house, and learning what discoveries had been made. And when, soon after, Lion came home,

wet, with a wet rope dragging by his collar, the family were thoroughly mystified and alarmed.

Then Percy Lanman arrived; and in answer to the eager question, Had he seen anything of Phineas? answered, "Yes, I had a glimpse of him going out of the village towards the pond, leading Lion by a rope."

"I see it all!" cried Jack, wildly excited. "Lion followed him, and Phin was going to drown him, — for if he is running away, he is going with that man, and that man and Lion can't get along together!"

"O Jack!" said Annie Felton, mildly, "how can you think Phineas would do such a thing?"

"Because he has more than once threatened to kill my dog, when he has been mad at me; and he has meant it, too!"

"Did you see anything of — that man?" the deacon asked, with a darkened countenance.

Percy described the scene which he had witnessed in the bar-room, and in which he had borne a part. "We were all glad that Lapham got his money," he added; "though we all wondered how the doctor had come by it so suddenly, for nobody believed he had a dollar an hour before."

"Gold?" said Jack. He rushed to his room. In a few minutes he came running back, with a face full of consternation and wrath. "Robbed!" he exclaimed. "I've been robbed! Every dollar I had in the world! and the purse *you* gave me!" — turning to Annie, — "he has taken all!"

This startling accusation was received with an out-

cry of incredulity and astonishment. At length the deacon spoke.

"After all my cares and my prayers," he said, with solemnity and sorrow, "I find I must give up all hope of that boy;— he has gone his own way; I cannot help it!"

"But I will follow him!" exclaimed Jack. "I'll hunt him and that villain to the ends of the earth, but I'll have my money back!"

"You forget," said Mr. Chatford, "that your money has probably gone to pay for the mending of the wagon. You might recover it of Mr. Lapham, if you could prove that it was stolen from you."

"Take it from that poor man, when he received it honestly in payment of a debt? I could n't do that!" said Jack.

"I am glad if you could n't!" said Annie Felton. "O Jack! you are richer to-day without a dollar than Phineas will ever be if he makes a fortune. Believe that."

"I do believe it," replied Jack, manfully. "Let it go! I can work and earn more. I am glad, Moses, you had put your money into your father's hands; he might have taken that, too."

"Rob his own brother?" said Mr. Pipkin. "I can believe a good deal of that 'ere Phin, but — his own brother!"

"O father!" then said Mrs. Chatford, weeping, "is n't it time? I think the boys should know, — there is no use in keeping the secret longer!"

“Yes, yes,” replied the deacon, “I’ve been thinking on’t. We have kept the secret even from Moses, for fear we might in some way wrong Phineas. We wanted to give that poor misguided boy all the opportunities we could, and shield him from prejudice and contempt. For that reason we kept the secret from him, too. But he knows it now. And you may as well know it, boys. Annie knew it before; and with our permission she has told our friend Percy. When we have told you, boys, you will perhaps think more charitably of Phineas, for you will see a good reason for his being as he is.”

“For mercy sake, deacon!” said Mrs. Pipkin, “what is it? Don’t keep us in suspense! I’ve known well enough there was *something*; now I’m dying to know what!”

The deacon took little Kate in his arms, and two or three swift tears trickled down his cheeks, in the lamplight that shone upon the little group. Neither one of his children had ever seen him weep before.

“Do you remember, Jack,” he said, “how, when that lie lay between you and Phineas at the time you broke into Peternot’s house, you charged me with partiality towards my own flesh and blood? Of course, you said, it was natural for me to believe him rather than you, because he was my son. I did not tell you how much you wronged me then. I believed him because I could not see his motive for lying. That was all. But I was wrong. And, Moses, let me say now that often, when I have

been called to settle boyish difficulties between you and Phineas, I have risked being unjust to you, for fear of being unjust to him."

"I have thought so," said Moses. "But I never could understand why it was."

"I will tell you why," said the deacon, nervously stroking little Kate's fair hair. "Moses,— my darling, — my children, — Phineas is not your brother!"

"Not our brother? O father!" exclaimed the child, while Moses stood silent and fixed with astonishment.

"Only by adoption. He is your second-cousin, on his mother's side; and that man — that Doyley, that Wilkins, that Lamont, whose real name is Reddington — is Phineas's own father."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. CHATFORD EXPLAINS.

FOR a moment the silence was broken only by a stifled sob from Mrs. Chatford's corner.

Of all who then for the first time heard the truth concerning Phin's parentage, Jack was the least surprised. He waited for the others to express their wonder and amazement, then said quietly, "I had partly guessed how it was."

"You, Jack? How?" asked Annie.

"That first evening at your house, — after Lion had caught Reddington (if we have got at his real name at last!) stealing the horse and sleigh, — I overheard something which made me think there was some such family secret. Then, you remember, I said he reminded me of somebody I had seen, and I thought for a while I had known him before. But I found out at last who it was he looked like: it was Phineas!"

"So he did, by hokey!" cried Mr. Pipkin; "jest that slick smile, and cunnin' look out o' the eyes. Wonder I never thought on 't afore!"

"Then when he came disguised as a phrenologist," said Jack, "and told so much more of Phin's real character than I believed such a quack could possibly have got at by any science, — all that set me thinking.

I had often wondered how Phin could be the brother of so generous and open-hearted a fellow as Moses, or a dear, true, affectionate girl like Kate, or the son of such parents. So at last I made up my mind that he was some relation to — what's his name? — Red-dington.”

“How did it happen?” asked Moses, who could not get over his astonishment. “Who is this Red-dington?”

“When he first made his appearance in Bartonville, where we used to live,” said the deacon, “he pretended he had found a silver-mine somewhere in the neighborhood, and was going to buy up a tract of land, and build extensive works for getting out the ore. He was just waiting for some capitalists to come to his terms, he said. Meanwhile he dressed pretty well, talked large, strutted around, and pretended to be making an examination of the country. He carried a hammer with him, and pieces of ore in his pockets, — which might have been silver ore, and probably were, though I never believed he broke them from any rocks in that part of the country. If he had really found a mine, I did n't believe he would make so much talk about it until he had secured the land where it was situated, unless he was a bigger fool than he appeared to be. But he was a glib-tongued fellow, told a smooth story about himself, and even got some pretty shrewd people to believe in him. He got credit at the tavern, at the tailor's, and I don't know where else, and even borrowed money

of several persons who expected to take stock in his mining company and make their fortunes.

"You have heard us speak of your mother's cousin, Myra Lemmick, Moses," continued the deacon. "She was a rather vain, flighty creature, good-hearted though, and she might have made some young man a good wife, if she had n't had the misfortune to have two thousand dollars left her by her father. That somehow spoilt her. She considered herself a great belle and an heiress, and rather looked down on the honest young men she had known all her life."

"She was flattered to death," said Mrs. Chatford. "It was n't so much poor Myra's fault, that she was vain."

"Well," said the deacon, "when this scamp Reddington came along, he quite turned her silly little head, and marry him she would, in spite of all we could say and do. Your Uncle and Aunt Felton, who lived in Bartonville at the time, joined with us in trying to show her the rogue's real character and dissuade her from the marriage; but 't was no use; marry him she did, for she was of age, and could do as she pleased. She was so angry with her relatives, on account of their opposition, that she was married at the minister's, and did n't invite one of us to the wedding."

"You forget, uncle," said Annie Felton, "or perhaps you never knew, that she did invite Forrest and me. We were children then; we always liked her; and Reddington had managed to please us

by little presents of candy and trinkets. So Forrest and I, having got mother's permission, went over to the minister's that morning and saw them married. It was the first wedding I ever saw, and I thought it delightfully romantic!"

"So did she, poor thing!" said the deacon. "But how it all turned out! In about six months she came back to us again, to beg for a home. Reddington had turned out a mere swindler, and had gone off with all the money he could borrow, together with her two thousand dollars, which she had foolishly put into his hands. It was an awful blow to poor Myra. It broke her pride, and her heart with it. She did n't live over five or six months, did she, mother?"

"About six. She was married in September, and died in October of the next year. She just withered and passed away like a flower," said Mrs. Chatford, with a deep sigh. "Our hearts bled with pity for her and her poor little helpless orphan baby."

"That was Phineas," her husband went on, as her voice broke down with emotion. "You were then three years old, Moses. We adopted him; and you never knew but that he was your own brother. Soon after, we sold our farm in Bartonville, and moved to this place, where we hoped his father would never find us out, if he should wish to claim his son. He had come back once, soon after Myra's death; I hardly knew for what, unless it was to get some hold on us through the child. He had spent or gambled away

all his ill-gotten gains, and wanted money of us; and I gave him some, on his promise that he would never come to trouble us or the child again. We always lived in dread of him, however; the more so, as we saw Phineas growing up with many of his father's traits of character; and it seems we had good reason."

"Why did you make that visit to Bartonville last summer?" asked Moses. "I thought it had something to do with that man."

"Yes, it had; we wanted to know if he had been seen there lately, and determine, if we could, whether he found us by accident, or had some design in searching us out. It seems he had been in the town, not long before he came to us; and he was probably on his way to find us when he made that attempt on Forrest's horse and sleigh. He must have been without money at the time; and that is probably the reason why he did n't come more directly to us."

"I shall always believe he robbed Paul Peternot, and was somehow concerned in his death, — and I am sure Lion thinks so!" said Jack, patting the noble dog's head, between his knees.

"And now, to think," said good Mrs. Chatford, "that Phineas is going the same way with his father! It is too dreadful! Somebody must follow them, and try to bring him back!"

The deacon felt that this remark was meant for him; and he replied, "I did all I could for the boy when he was here, and I tried to keep him with us; but I made up my mind if he ever took the course he

has taken, he must abide the consequences. If he comes back, — and I hope and pray that he will, — we must receive him kindly, and forgive him if he repents ; but he can never again be to us what he has been. From this day I adopt Jack here in place of the son we have lost ; he has been proved, and found worthy.”

“Yes, Jack is our son, Jack is our dear son,” said Mrs. Chatford, with streaming tears ; “but, O Phineas !”

CHAPTER XL.

ANOTHER LITTLE SECRET.

FIRM as he was after he had once made up his mind to any course, the deacon was easily persuaded to drive over to the Basin and see if any tidings could be had of the fugitives.

Moses said he would go on foot by the way of the canal, make inquiries in that direction, meet his father at the Basin, and ride home with him. As they set out, Mrs. Chatford pleaded with them both to do all in their power, in case they should find Phineas, to bring him back.

“ You need n't ask me that ! ” said Moses, showing a great deal of feeling ; for all his youthful affection for his supposed brother now came back upon a heart softened by pity and grief.

About half an hour later Percy Lanman, setting out for home, invited Jack to walk with him a little way. Jack was glad enough to go. The moon, which had been under a cloud earlier in the evening, now shone through glittering rifts, from dark blue gulfs of sky, making the night beautiful. The two friends crossed the fields, past the rustling corn and the shadowy wood-lot, talking earnestly by the way.

“ If Phin was born with such traits of character as

Mr. Chatford says, then how is he to blame?" Jack inquired.

"That's a question not easy to answer," replied Percy, thoughtfully; "and we may as well leave it to the Power that alone sees and knows all things. Certain it is that *we* ought not to condemn him; we should look with charity and forbearance upon the failings of every human being."

"Don't you think our birth and education make us what we are?" said Jack. But instantly the vast, shadowy thought came over him, — even like the shadow of the cloud which just then crossed the moon, — what had birth and education ever done for *him*, up to the time when he found a home and a new life with the Chatfords, under whose influence Phin had been all his days? Yet here he was clothed in self-respect, and crowned with manly hopes, walking with a dear and noble friend, — he, Jack, the miserable little canal-boat driver of less than two years ago!

"No doubt," said Percy, "we are born with the germ of our future destiny in our hearts; and circumstances — but we won't discuss that; we shall only get into the usual maze if we do. After all, we have a *conscience* that condemns us when we do wrong, and *aspirations* that tend to lift us upward, if we only heed and nourish them. Our sole duty lies in doing our best, with what gifts and opportunities we have. I don't know anything about your parents, Jack, but I know your early opportunities were small; how, then,

do I account for your present condition and prospects? You have been *doing your best*, — any one can see that; you have your faults, but you try to overcome them; you never shirk a duty, but meet it face to face, like a man; and this gives me perfect faith in you. Living up to this high principle, you will always be rich, though you have n't a dollar; you will be happy, for you will be active, helping yourself and others."

"Oh! to hear you talk so!" murmured Jack, his quivering voice showing how deeply affected he was.

"Poor Phineas!" Percy went on; "*his* principle in life seems to be to shirk every duty he can. I pity more than I blame him, because he lacks the will to do right and the love of doing right. Do you know, Jack, that one of the noblest, highest aims of life is to keep that will and that love alive in ourselves, and to stimulate them in others?"

"You have stimulated them in me!" exclaimed Jack. "O, what should I be, I have often thought, what should I ever have been, if it had n't been for you, and Miss Felton, and the Chatfords?"

Percy was deeply moved by this outburst of gratitude. For sole reply he laid his arm lovingly over Jack's shoulder, and pressed his hand. They walked on in silence, and had reached the banks of the canal, when Jack suddenly spoke up: "Do you know, I'm going to find out, if I can, something more about my parents, some day? I never thought much about them, when I was with old Berrick on the canal.

But it has been coming upon me lately, that my father must have been a good deal of a man; and I have the strongest curiosity — though I think it is something better than curiosity — to learn about him; yes, and about my mother, too, for I can't believe what was told about her by Molly and Captain Jack."

"That is a good wish, and I hope you will accomplish it," replied Percy. "But here we have come to the waste-wear, and I must send you back."

"This is just the place where Phin would have tried to drown Lion," said Jack; and proposed that they should go down to the culvert.

The moon was shining bright again, reflected in the pond below, which was all a-ripple with dancing and sparkling waves from the foot of the white cascade that poured over the wear.

"Do you remember," laughed Jack, "when I got away from Sellick by tumbling off here head-foremost, and swimming through the culvert?"

"And they poked for you with poles, and I dove for you, when you were half a mile away on the other side of the canal!" added Percy. "But what's this?"

"A big stone!" cried Jack. "I believe Phin brought it here to drown Lion with!"

The conjecture seemed so reasonable that they paused and looked all about them, half expecting to see or hear something of Phineas. But there was no sound, no motion, all about them, save the roar of the waterfall, and the fairy-like dance of the moonlit waters.

As the young man and the boy parted company at the top of the embankment, Percy said, with a tender pressure of Jack's hand, "And now, with Annie's permission, I am going to tell you a little secret, — a great secret to her and me!"

A strange fear suddenly came over the lad. Percy went on, "She and I thought that you ought to be one of the first to know it. We are — well, yes, engaged to be married; that's the commonplace way of putting it. And now, dear Jack, good night!"

Percy turned, springing with light and joyous steps along the embankment, towards the village. Jack, stupefied, stunned, watched him for a few moments, then threw himself, face downward, upon the bank. And there the moon shone upon him, and the night wind blew over him, and the waterfall sang in his ear, and the slow boats moved by in the canal, — all unheeded by the wretched boy.

I don't know how long he lay there, or just what his thoughts were, — if feeling did not overwhelm and swallow up all thoughts. At last he roused himself, and stood upon his feet.

The night was still calm, and brightly beautiful; the ripples on the pond still danced and sparkled, though farther off now, for the moon was nearing the west; and the musical cascade still gleamed in the white, cold light, as he crossed the foot-plank over the wear.

He remembered his fit of jealousy in the menagerie tent. He was passing through another such struggle

now, but one more severe. And again his better nature was coming out triumphant.

“I might have known it all,” he said to himself. “I never dreamed that she could be anything but a friend to me. O, she could never, never have been anything more, and I knew it so well! And he is the only man in the world half good enough for her. I will think only of them, — Heaven help me!” throwing up his arms, and turning his face towards the open sky. “I will pray for their happiness! and I will love them all the more!”

When he reached home, the lights were all out in the house. He entered softly.

“Is that — Phineas?” said Mrs. Chatford, starting up with a sudden, faint hope.

“No, it is Jack,” was the response; and the boy heard her sink down again with a heavy sigh.

He went up the chamber stairs, and, glancing his eye towards Annie Felton’s room, the door of which was open, saw the moonlight streaming in upon a still figure at the window. It arose, and came towards him with a sweet smile, — O, so sweet and tender!

It was Annie. She reached out her hand. Jack seized it, and pressed it to his lips, — tried to speak, — could only murmur, “I know! I am so glad for you and him!” — and fled to his own lonely room.

Lonely indeed it was that night. But before he slept, solace came to him in the deep, unselfish love for his two dearest friends, and joy in their happiness, which welled up in his heart. He felt that, if Annie

had given herself to any less worthy person than Percy, he should have died with grief and jealousy. But he knew that she had chosen wisely; that this thing was to be, and that it was well even for him; and he knew it better still in later years.

This sorrow and this sacrifice were also well for him; for out of them came a truer, tenderer manliness of soul, and a sweeter happiness, than proud success can ever bring.

CHAPTER XLI.

JACK'S JOURNEY.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Deacon Chatford took from his pocket a handful of gold and silver coin, and handed it to Jack across the table.

"What's this for?" said Jack, looking up in surprise. He had been very thoughtful all the morning, and this was the first time he had spoken.

"That's your stolen money, my boy. I went to see Mr. Lapham, and when I told him the circumstances, he was quite willing to give it up."

"But there is no certainty that this is mine!"

"In all probability it is; and Mr. Lapham is satisfied."

"But — how can I take it?" Jack did not know that the deacon had paid money out of his own pocket to *make* the wheelwright satisfied; yet he felt that there was something not quite right about it. "I can't take it, not now," he said, and handed it back. "Keep it for me — or for him; maybe we shall find out something more in a few days. Besides, what I cared most about, — the purse she gave me," — with a timid glance at Annie, — "is n't here."

"I'll knit you another," said Annie.

"Thank you; but it won't be *that* purse!" said the boy.

This problem of the money remained for a while unsolved, and it gave Jack a good deal of trouble.

One evening he started up suddenly from reading the deacon's newspaper, and walked the room and the yard for half an hour in a state of mental excitement.

On coming back into the house, he looked at the newspaper again, and then said, in a quiet tone, "If you have no objection, Mr. Chatford, I should like to make a little journey to-morrow. The work is pretty well along, and I think I might be spared for a day or two."

"Certainly," said the deacon. "And if *you* have no objection, I should like to know where you are going."

"I'd rather not tell just yet. I should like to — borrow — a few dollars, and your saddle, if you will trust me with it."

"And a horse? you can take any horse on the place, if you'll promise to keep out of the way of crazy elephants!" said the deacon.

"I intend to ride my own horse," replied Jack, with a blush and a smile. "Snowfoot is about well, and he's scarcely lame at all."

This singular start excited no little wonder and curiosity in Jack's friends; but as they saw him ride off at sunrise the next morning, on Snowfoot, followed by Lion, Moses thought he had guessed the secret.

"He's going to see Annie!" — for Miss Felton



JACK SETS OUT ON HIS JOURNEY.

had closed her school two or three weeks before, and had been driven home to her father's house by Percy Lanman.

It was a pleasant day in early autumn ; and, jogging along the country roads on his own horse, followed by his dog, Jack felt his heart overflow with a pensive, tranquil happiness. He did indeed take the track which led to Annie Felton's home, — and what

memories of her seemed to throng the way! — but a little beyond the tavern where he had had his first adventure with Phin's father, he took another road that branched off in an easterly direction, leaving her home to the right, and far behind.

He drew rein now and then, to inquire his way of persons he met or passed; and a little before noon stopped to lunch and bait his horse at a tavern. There he appeared chiefly interested in some flaming circus-bills with which the bar-room was hung, announcing an exhibition, that afternoon, in a neighboring village, of the wonders of riding, tumbling, swinging in the air, jumping through hoops, and so forth, shown in the high-colored pictures that lined the walls. It was, in fact, an advertisement of the passage of this circus through the country which had attracted Jack's attention in the newspaper the night before; and he was now on his way to meet it.

After dinner and a good rest, he got up Snowfoot again, and rode on, amidst a throng of country people flocking to see the circus, and soon came in sight of the white tents pitched on an open common, with gay flags flying over them, and a concourse of spectators setting in towards the scene of attraction.

On the way, he reined up before an old brown barn by the roadside, the dilapidated gable-end of which was literally covered by the gorgeous circus-bills. There he sat in his saddle, laughing with suppressed glee; for in the midst of athletes turning wild somersets in the air, and pyramids of horsemen standing

on each other's shoulders, was a small handbill, pasted in fact here and there over the great bills of the circus company, now diversifying the flank of a steed, and now the jacket of a striped and tattooed clown.

“THE CELEBRATED DR. LAMONT!

PRINCE OF THE HEALING ART!!

AND HIS UNEQUALLED ELECTRICAL ELIXIR !!!

THE GREAT CURE-ALL OF THE 19TH CENTURY!!!!

For sale on the Circus Ground!

“I guessed right this time,” thought Jack, as he rode on. “I thought he would be following the circus.” And indeed it was not the circus at all which Jack had come so far to see, but the Celebrated Doctor himself, and his hopeful son and heir.

He made Snowfoot fast to a wayside fence, to which many other horses were already hitched, and left Lion to guard him; then turned up his collar, pulled his hat over his eyes, assumed a stooping gait (reminding himself of Mr. Pipkin), and walked on with the crowd.

Presently, above the confused tramp and murmur resounded a brazen note,—or shall we say a tin one? for it had a decidedly dinner-hornish sound.

“Hello!” laughed Jack to himself again, “the doctor has had his trumpet repaired, or got a new one!”

And now, over the heads of the pedestrians, he

descried two figures erect on a red-painted wagon, — one at the rear, in brass helmet and green robe, brandishing some bottles and shouting; the other high up in front, a smaller figure, — that of a boy, in fact, — blowing away at the trumpet until he was red in the face.

“Walk up, gentlemen and ladies!” the doctor (for it was indeed he) was shouting under his lifted visor. “Here’s your celebrated ‘Lectrical ‘Lixir, composed of the extract of the skin of the wonderful ‘lectric eel; cures burns, bruises, coughs, colds, consumption, back-ache, headache, ear-ache, *and* heart-ache, — rheumatiz in every form and shape! Only fifty cents a bottle; three bottles for one dollar, ladies *and* gentlemen!”

Then — *toot — toot — toot* — went the trumpet.

“Cure warranted, or money *refunded!*” shrieked the doctor. “Any person troubled with deafness, lameness, sore eyes, rheumatiz in the j’intis, is invited to step up and be healed! No charge for the operation. Show won’t begin for half an hour yit; plenty of time, gentlemen *and* ladies! Any case of stiffness in the back *or* limbs cured in five minutes, with the magical influence of the celebrated ‘Lectrical ‘Lixir, compounded from the extract of the skin *and* ile of the wonderful ‘lectric eel!”

Toot — toot — too — too — to — o — o — t! from the top of the wagon.

“Probly ye don’t believe what I tell ye,” said the doctor, as no patients presented themselves. “But

look a' that young man up there," — pointing to the youthful trumpeter. — "Young man," he cried, "tell the people how you come to be travellin' with me."

"Ye cured me," said the young man, twirling the trumpet, with a grin.

"I cured him!" said the charlatan. "I was addressin' a crowd as I be now, when he stepped up, and I cured him. What was the matter with ye, young man?"

"Lame; had a fever-sore on my left leg," said the young man.

"Had a fever-sore of long standin' on his left leg; so lame he could n't walk," cried the quack.

"Then how could he *step up*?" some one inquired; while some one else echoed, "Long standin' on his left leg!"

"On his well leg, with the help of his poor but honest parents, he stepped up, and got upon my stand. What else was the matter with ye, young man?"

"Scrof'la," said the young man, always grinning.

"Scrof'la, or king's-evil," cried the quack. "One of the wust cases. It had nearly — but the young man shall tell his own story. — What had it done to ye, young man?"

"Destroyed the hearing of one ear."

"Destroyed the hearin' of one ear, ladies and gentlemen! Which ear was it, young man?"

"Left ear," said the youthful trumpeter.

"Left ear," repeated the mountebank. "Fever-sore

and scrofla, — deaf in one ear and a cripple in one leg, — and with one bottle of the 'Lectrical 'Lixir I affected an immejit cure, to the great joy and lastin' gratitude of his parents, who begged me to let him travel with me one month, for fear of a relapse. There he stands, a livin' moniment of the sublime vartews of the celebrated and world-renowned 'Lectrical 'Lixir, compounded of the double extract of the skin, ile, *and* liver of the wonderful 'lectrical eel! Walk up!"

And just then an old man walked up, or rather limped up, for he was quite lame. He had a few words with the Prince, and then, with his assistance, mounted the platform.

"Ladies and gentlemen! here's a man says he has been troubled with a stiffness of his right knee for ten year'; and with one application of the celebrated 'Lectrical 'Lixir I propose to work a mirackelous cure! Meanwhile my attendant on the wagon will 'tend to customers, — may as well make the most of your time, — secure a few bottles 'fore they're all gone."

Lamont, then, with some difficulty, succeeded in getting the old man's trousers-leg above the knee, exposing a calf and shin that excited the derision of irreverent youngsters. While he was at work, rubbing in the liquid, the living monument of its virtues, after a few vigorous notes of the trumpet, took up the eloquent strain.

"Walk up! walk up, gentlemen! Here's your

'Lectrical 'Lixir ! greatest remedy of the nineteenth century ! Only fifty cents a bottle, three bottles for one dollar ; cure warranted, or money refunded ! Take a bottle, sir ? take a — a — ”

The words died to a gasp, and the face of the youthful trumpeter turned all at once a sickly, bluish and greenish sallow hue, wonderful to witness. The cause of this remarkable change was not far to seek ; for there by the wagon-wheel, looking up with keen blue eyes straight into the eyes that looked down, was the round-shouldered young fellow to whom he had hoped to sell a bottle, and who was suddenly transformed into Jack !

CHAPTER XLII.

WHO WON AT LAST.

“PHIN CHATFORD! get down here!”

“What do you want of me?” gasped poor Phineas.

“You son of poor but honest parents! cured of fever-sore and king’s-evil! I guess you’ll have a relapse!”

“Don’t!” whispered Phin, as Jack got hold of him.

“You living monument! get down here, I say! I want my purse and my money!”

“I hain’t got ’em!”

“Who has?”

“I gave ’em to him.”

“Get them of him, then, or I’ll have you both in jail within an hour!”

Jack had by this time pulled Phin to the ground; and, still holding him by the collar, he led him around to the rear end of the wagon, where the doctor was applying his Elixir to the old man’s leg.

“There! better, ain’t ye? not so lame as you was, be ye?” he was saying; and the old man was beginning to imagine that the stiffness of his knee was relieved. “It’s a sure cure, ye see, gentlemen! And this is an old subject; youth is more s’ceptible; I could ’a’ cured a younger man in half the time. The ’Lectrical ’Lixir, ladies and —”

Just then the eyes under the helmet looked down on Phin and Jack; and the head in the helmet was evidently disconcerted. Phin pointed at Jack, and beckoned.

“Wait a minute!” said the doctor, nodding hastily. “I’m havin’ a little sale jest now.”

Jack took advantage of the delay to open a conversation with Phineas.

“How do you like this kind of life?”

“Well enough!” said Phin, sullenly.

“Had n’t you better go back home? you’ll be kindly received,” Jack assured him.

“I guess so!” grumbled Phineas.

Finding it impossible to persuade him, Jack said, “Why did you try to drown Lion?”

“To get rid of him!” Then, looking up with a quick glance of apprehension at the doctor: “Don’t tell him I did n’t drown him! I’ll get the money back for you, if I can.”

The throng soon dispersed; when the doctor, having had time to collect his wits, turned to the two boys.

“That purse of money!” faltered Phin. “He says he’ll have us both in jail, if I don’t give it back.”

“What pus of money?” Lamont innocently inquired.

“The purse he stole from me, and that you received from him, knowing it to be stolen!” cried Jack.

“Ingenious! and I love a neat little game; but old birds ain’t to be ketched with chaff,” said the doctor, with an insulting laugh. “If *he* has stole

your pus, clap *him* into jail, and mabby our good friend Deacon Chatford will thank you! But *I* don't know nothin' of the matter." And this was all the satisfaction Jack could obtain.

He felt that he had committed an error, in making a threat which he did not care to execute, even if he could have hoped to find a magistrate outside of the circus-tent to issue a warrant on his complaint. But he had thought of a better plan, which he now determined to carry into effect.

"You shall see what I'll do!" he cried, as he turned away.

"He'll do something!" murmured the frightened Phineas. "You never saw such a fellow, when he sets out to do a thing! Give him the purse, won't you? and the money, — you've got enough!"

"It's agin my principles to give back anything I once git into my claws," replied Lamont, taking off his helmet. "Run to the tavern for the hoss, while I pack up the wagon. We've made a perty good sale, and can afford to cut." And he began at once to prepare for flight.

As Jack was going from the circus-ground, he met a full-faced and somewhat burly young fellow, the sight of whom filled him with joy.

"Forrest Felton!" and he ran to greet his friend. "Where did you come from?"

"I am out here on a surveying tramp," replied Forrest. "A boy I had to carry my chain struck work, — said he was going to the circus, — so I thought I might

as well go too. But how came *you* here?" Jack told his story, to Forrest's great amusement. "And what are you going to do now?"

"I'm just going to see that my horse is all right, and get my dog; Lamont is afraid as death of him! I'll just lay siege to his old wagon, till he gives up the plunder, if it takes a week!"

Forrest laughed heartily. "I'll go with you and see fair play," said he. "Is that your horse yonder?"

"Yes; he's all right." Jack then gave a peculiar whistle, and presently Lion came bounding towards them. "And here is my constable!" he said, taking the dog by the collar.

While Jack was talking with Forrest, Phin had scudded across another part of the common to the public house where the doctor had put up his horse; and he was on his way back to the wagon, leading the beast by the bridle, when he saw, to his dismay, Jack and his two allies arrive on the spot before him.

Lamont, who was on the ground fastening up the end-board, heard a sharp growl, and, looking around, saw — the dog! the dreadful dog, that would not stay drowned, but had come to life again for his ruin! One moment of paralyzing fear, — and then the dexterity with which the doctor mounted from the earth, over hub and tire, to the very top of his wagon-box, would have done credit to any acrobat that day inside the tent.

"What do you want of me?" he cackled from his perch, much like a frightened fowl.

“You know what I want!” replied Jack, holding back the dog by the collar, “and what I’m going to have!”

“Help!” screamed the doctor; and some loungers about the tent came hurrying to the spot. “Somebody kill that brute!”

“Do you know this man?” cried Jack. “It’s the man whose horse you were stealing once, when my dog caught you; and his name is Forrest Felton.”

“I knew you then, George Reddington!” said Forrest; “and if I let you off, it was to get rid of you. Now I’m here to see fair play. You’d better give the boy his property.”

By this time Lamont, perceiving that he was well out of Lion’s reach, began to recover his audacity.

“Thanks for the advice,” he said, “but I don’t know nothin’ about his property. Very glad to renew acquaintance; and I’d come down and shake hands with ye; if you was in better company.—Come, my boy!” calling to Phineas, “hitch up, and we’ll be off!”

“Take care of that wagon!” said Jack, and released the excited dog.

As Phin approached with the horse, Lion growled frightfully at him, and he durst not lay hand on the thills.

“I think you’ll be off about the middle of next week, at this rate!” said Jack; “for I don’t quit this spot, or call off my dog, till I get what I came for. Why don’t you hitch up, Phin?”

“ I can’t ! ” whimpered Phin, vainly endeavoring to coax his old friend Lion.

“ Why don’t you get down and help him, doctor ? ” cried Jack, while Forrest kept the spectators from interfering.

Lamont took in the situation, in all its various bearings.

“ My young friend, ” said he, presently pulling a purse from his pocket, and counting a roll of bills, “ you’ve played a shrewd game, and you’ve won ! I love a shrewd game, even if I lose, — for I’m the best-natered man in the world ! See if that is all right, ” — tossing the purse stuffed with bank-notes down to Jack, — “ and have the kindness to call off your dog, and oblige yours truly. ”

The purse was uninjured, and its contents appeared satisfactory ; for Jack laughed with delight, as he put it into his pocket, and retired with Forrest and Lion.

Thereupon Lamont lost something of his good-nature ; and, creeping down over the forward part of his wagon, he sprang upon Phineas like a cat.

“ Ha ! you villain ! you said the dog was drowned ! you lied to me ! ” And then followed a noise of beating and cuffing, accompanied by yells from Phineas.

Two or three days later, Deacon Chatford received a letter, from which the following is an extract :—

“ I have found the *Prince of the Healing Art* and got back my purse, and as much money as Phin stole



"WHY DON'T YOU HITCH UP, PHIN?" — Page 278.

from me ; so you can hand *that* back to Mr. Lapham, with my compliments. I saw the advertisement of a circus in your 'Republican,' and thought he would be following it with his 'Lectrical' Lixir,' but I did n't say anything to you about it, for fear you'd think I was going on a wild-goose chase. I have seen Phin, and tried to get him to go back home, but he won't, though I don't think he is having a very nice time with the doctor, judging by the cuffs and the yells I heard just after I left them. I met Forrest Felton, who is out here surveying land, and he wants me to carry the chain for him a few days ; I think it will be a good chance for me to learn something of practical surveying, and if you can spare me from the farm, I think I will stay. But tell Moses and Mr. Pipkin they need n't fear but that I shall be home to help at the corn-husking. Forrest is a splendid fellow ; I could n't have got back my money if it had n't been for him and Lion. Snow-foot is improving ; the journey has done him good. My love to all at home. And good by.

“ From your affectionate son,

“ JACK H. CHATFORD.”

The deacon wrote back, telling Jack to stay away as long as he wanted to ; and in fact the boy did not go home until after Annie Felton's wedding.

