The Grammar School Boys

E.J. Burbury

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Chapter 1.

It was a fiery August day. The sun had for many weeks been pouring his fierce and burning rays upon the earth, which now lay so parched and dried beneath them, that the heavy night dews failed to restore the vigour of the plants and herbage, and the whole country in mountain and valley, town and forest, seemed to faint. Indians, and those accustomed to the heat of the tropics, said that the climate reminded them of that eastern one from which they had been so glad to escape, but English people, those especially who had never left their own temperate atmosphere, sickened and died as if plague−smitten. Few there were who escaped without some serious illness, and even of those few, the healthiest and the strongest of the population, not one but was languid, weak and indisposed to exertion.

In the hospitals and chambers of consumption the mortality was fearful. None seemed to rally, who where ill before this heat commenced, and upon whom it had come when their powers were debilitated; so the land was full of wailing from end to end. Go where you would, pass up what city street, or far off cottage lane, you might, and closed windows or mourning garbs suet you equally. No place, however retired, none, however guarded, or within the reach of whatever luxury and care, but had lost some old face, or childish gamboller. The destroying angel was abroad, and but few of the lintels were holy.

Fever, fever, the terrible heat, was the burthen of the incessant cry which shocked the ear from all sides, and made the English language seem but as the vehicle for one long bitter wail. Truly, the verse of Longfellow, was realized:

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachael for her children crying,
Will not be comforted.

It is on one of the fiercest of these days that our tale begins.

There is in Bury, a long wide street stretching from the bridge of the town considerably into the country. It is scarcely so much a street as a road, bordered with houses of many grades, for, until these railway times, it was a great thoroughfare, along which coaches and mails used to run southward. It is called the Abbey Road, for years ago, when walls and gates kept our good towns safe against hostile visitors, one of the city gates stood here, as well as the grand old Abbey, whose remains still recall a something of the day when its church vied with the proudest Cathedral in the land, and its mitred head held baronial sway, and guided the councils of the nation.

But posterns and warders, monks and chantries, have long since passed away, and Bury Abbey Road now only presents the appearance of a long handsome street, adorned by many large and well−built houses. Into one of the smallest of these, dear reader, I must take you now.

It is a small upper bedroom. The bed is uncurtained, the floor is carpetless, the furniture scanty, everything not urgently necessary, has been removed to allow the little air which comes from the body of the house, to circulate freely. The chamber is forlorn and desolate, save of the extreme of human rest, and human agony. Upon the mattress covered with a white sheet, lies an object, the nature of which is clearly defined by the sharp and terrible outline which it presents to the beholder. There needs no word to tell him that he stands in the solemn presence of the dead.

Beside the bed, her face buried in her hands, weeping with most bitter agony, kneels a Lady. Her sobs are heartrending, and every now and then, as she raises her head, and her eyes fall upon the ghastly object before them, she draws herself together, as if the blow which has subdued her mental powers, had crushed her physical strength like−wise. And certainly there is no attitude which the human figure can assume, which is so eloquent of the utter prostration of body and spirit, as the cowering crouching one in which that poor Lady lay.

After a little time another person enters the room, and casting one long sorrowful glance upon the bed, kneels down beside the mourner, and tenderly passing his arm round her, whispers Mother, dear, dear Mother, do not weep so bitterly; but, for the first time in her life, the Mother was deaf to the voice of her child, and a long long time elapsed before she appeared even conscious of his loving words and caressing action. And then turning suddenly, she threw her arms round the boy's neck, and dropped her head upon his shoulder, uttering that piercing cry of anguish, which once or twice before had thrilled the hearts of all who heard it.

My own, own Mother, said the brave−hearted boy, take comfort, do not grieve so terribly: For all our sakes bear up.

Oh Lawrence, Lawrence, how can I take comfort now that he is gone: So tender, good, and kind as he was, and again the paroxysm returned.

He was, he was indeed, said Lawrence, the tears falling fast though silently down his face, while his eyes rested mournfully upon the rigid form beside him. He was indeed, a good, dear, kind Father.

And for a time Mother and Son wept sorrowfully in each other's arms. But the firm well−regulated mind of Lawrence, child though he was, soon bade him check his vain and impetuous grief, and partly by entreaty, partly by gentle force, and tender upbraiding, he succeeded at last in leading his Mother from the room.

And while they go, their relative positions reversed, the child guiding, and the parent following, you and I, dear reader, will learn who they are, and what has been their previous history.

Some years before this time, Wyndham and Sybil Towers, then very young and newly married, came to reside in Bury. He was a Physician, of great natural abilities, with much kindness, and generosity of heart, as well as fascinating manners, and personal attractions; but unfortunately without that perseverance and resolution which is so necessary for every man who has to work his way upward in one of the most tedious professions upon which he can enter. Still he was an universal favourite; for although everybody saw and lamented his indecision of character, and infirmness of purpose, yet everybody liked, and many consulted him. His professional talent was undoubted, and in several urgent cases to which he had been summoned, his measures had been so prompt, and their success so signal, that a more persevering and energetic man would have made them the certain stepping−stones to fortune. But, unhappily, Doctor Towers' energies died out with the immediate causes which called them forth. He was indefatigable while the danger and excitement lasted, but when patience, daily work with small or no signs of the invalids amendment to reward and encourage him were required, then his interest abated, and his attention too. Thus it came, that although Doctor Towers was a frequent and most popular guest at the houses of all the principal people in his own town and neighbourhood, and his professional opinion held in great estimation, his practice was very small. Still, unlike the generality of men of his temperament, his personal expenses were small too. There was no coarseness of selfishness about him. If he could not persevere in his profession, and earn a handsome competence for his family, neither would he spend what he did earn in luxuries or indulgences for himself. He would not go day after day to see a patient whose condition was stationary, but if he thus lost guinea after guinea, he would sit down uncomplainingly to the frugal meal of home, and neither wish nor ask for the most trifling addition; and this very forbearance of complaint, where certainly he had no right to make any, bound his wife's heart closer to him. Her love, which would have lavished all upon him, was grateful for his content. She did not see, that loving generous Sybil! that, that for which she was so grateful, was only a more refined and subtle form of selfishness, or if now and then she could not help but see it, the love she felt, and the duty and obedience she had sworn, kept her silent.

They had enough to live upon, and although Mrs. Towers and her four beautiful children were more plainly dressed, and had fewer indulgences than any others, of the same position, yet Sybil was happy. Home and home pleasures were dearer to her than any other enjoyments, and as the unmistakeable grace and elegance of her children, looked out even more decidedly from their coarse plain dress, than they would have done from costlier garments, her maternal pride was satisfied. With some little difficulty, for the annual payments were serious deductions from his professional income, Sybil Towers persuaded her husband to insure his life for two thousand pounds, and this had been effected only three years, before he died.

When it was too late, when fever and death had claimed him for their own, Doctor Towers saw the sin and cruelty of his past life of indolence, and with an earnestness worthy of the cause, implored his children to take warning by his example, and avoid the fatal rock upon which he had struck.

Into the hearts of two of his hearers, this warning sunk with abiding effect, and the others were too deeply shocked at seeing the face they loved bedewed with the tears of remorse, to forget it easily. But between Lawrence and Minnie, and Wyndham and Maude, there was as wide a difference of disposition as between their parents.

Lawrence was the eldest, next was Maude, then came Wyndham and Minnie. There was a great deal that was good and beautiful in the disposition of each of these children, but there was a great deal also to fear, to check, and to nurse into quicker life.

Lawrence, at his father's death, was thirteen years old. He was a quiet brave boy, with a most resolute and determined will, a perseverance nothing could subdue, and fair average talent. His love for his mother was the ruling passion of his nature, and next to her he loved his wayward and beautiful sister Maude. He was the most unselfish of human beings, would make any sacrifice for those he loved, but was too proud to suffer them to think that he considered what he did a sacrifice, and far too great−hearted to boast of it. He would have died in torture for love or duty's sake, and have made no sign. This was his form of pride.

Maude at twelve years old was as beautiful as a fairy, and as haughty as their queen. She was generous and affectionate, though indolent and wayward; and, notwithstanding her unusual capabilities, sadly averse to cultivate them. Her love and pride never urged her to sacrifice her own comfort or fancies for the good of others.

Wyndham, who came next to Maude, was of a frank and generous nature, as proud as his sister, but more courteous and impulsive. He was very clever, and by fits and starts, as children say, would do wonders, distancing his older and more persevering brother signally; but a victory once obtained, the exertion necessary to secure it, was too uninteresting and plodding for him, and the vantage ground was even more easily lost than won. He was very like his father in all things, except that he was more selfish; he was as fickle as the wind,

Last of all came Minnie, a sweet child of nine years. Without the beauty of her brothers and sisters, she had all their best qualities; the pride of Maude, but more chastened and unselfish; the perseverance and filial affection of Lawrence, without his leaven of reserve, and the generosity of Wyndham, without his self−esteem. She was not what people call a clever child, but she was that better thing, a good and high principled one. She would never attain the pinnacle which both her brothers and Maude might easily climb, did they choose to strive, but the chances were, that with her patience, firmness and quiet determination, she would far outrun Maude and Wyndham in the race of life.

Such were the children with whom the widow was left, having only the meagre income arising from the two thousand pounds for which her husband had insured his life, to support and educate them.

Many hearts would have sunk, and many spirits have been crushed into helplessness by the prospect which now lay before Sybil. But she was one whom great emergencies rouse not cripple, and whose love was that active living principle, which could never sink or flag, while those she loved needed her exertions.

The pittance upon which she had now to live and educate her children was small indeed, but not for long did her courage fail or falter; she felt that, humanly speaking, everything depended upon her, and she rallied all her powers of mind and body to answer the call. At first, when the blow fell, and the last tones of that beloved voice she was no more to hear on earth were still ringing in her ears, her grief was unappeasable; nothing could reconcile, nothing could comfort her, she was frantic and unmanageable; no one could entice or withdraw her from the body of her husband, and the agony of mind she endured was terrible to witness. Her children seemed to be forgotten, food and rest were utterly neglected, and not one thought or sense alive, but that he was gone, whom, in despite of faults and follies, she had loved with her whole heart.

But after a time the storm of grief abated, and the consciousness of all that was necessary to be done, came with its full force upon her mind, and then with an effort, which it was difficult to make, and still more difficult to continue, she resumed the patient duties she had for a time forsaken.

And patience and fortitude, courage and hope, were indeed called for now. The interest of two thousand pounds used with the most rigid economy, was a miserable income on which to support, clothe, and educate four children as befitted the sons and daughters of a gentleman, and poor Sybil's heart sank at the prospect. But God, who never removes one prop without in some way replacing it, gave to the widow an unexpected aid in the thoughtful brave heart of her young son Lawrence; child as he was in years, in resolution and endurance he was a man. He had already laid out a plan for himself, fixed his eye upon the goal he meant to reach, and was bending all his energies

to accomplish it. College, college, to go eventually to college. To gain a Fellowship; by its means to support his darling mother and sisters, and aid Wyndham; and then, unfettered by the thought of their necessities, to work onward at the Bar, was his dream, his one passionate aspiration, and to achieve this most difficult end, all his powers were applied.

And with a wisdom, rare at any age, but especially so at his, he overlooked no obstacles, imagined no miracles, but quietly, faithfully counted the cost, and resolved to pay it. He did not deceive himself, he knew that he must suffer much, work much, bear and deny himself much, but the knowledge never made his resolution falter; the end was worth the sacrifice, and he did not hesitate.

But all this was hidden in his heart, Lawrence was too proud to tell it, too proud to make a boast of what he meant to do. To people generally, he seemed a quiet passionless boy, industrious and well principled, though not particularly clever; and while they thought Mrs. Towers happy in having so steady and good a son, not one suspected his real worth.

When his father died, Lawrence had been four years at the Royal Free Grammar School of the town, but had only attained a place in the upper fourth form. This position did not satisfy him now, he knew that to progress at this rate would never take him to the eminence he coveted, and thenceforth he determined that every other thing which was not absolutely necessary to be done, should give way to study. He knew that his talents were not brilliant, that it would cost him many hours to achieve what Wyndham could do in one, and therefore that perseverance was the only weapon which would ensure him the victory, but in all history he had bright examples of what great things perseverance can do, and what had been accomplished once, might he well knew be done again.

Chapter 2.

One of the first things which Mrs. Towers did after the funeral, was to remove from her pretty house in the Abbey Road, to one of half the size and less than half the rent, at a short distance further from the town.

It was a pretty little cottage, with four tiny bedrooms, a miniature parlour, and a kitchen: A large vegetable garden, well stocked with fruit trees, and what was almost better still, a long sunny flower garden. The old Lady to whom the cottage had belonged, and who had occupied it herself, was lately dead, and as her only son to whom her property descended, cared more to let his mother's cherished home to some one who would love and tend her plants, and trees, and flowers, than to obtain a high rent, he gladly accepted Mrs. Towers for his tenant, and she was equally pleased, for in these flowers and plants consisted one great means, so Sybil hoped, of increasing her income. She was a clever gardener and botanist, and well skilled in rearing flowers, arranging them gracefully in bouquets, and preserving their fragrance and beauty during their journey from place to place. Among the very few luxuries she had brought with her from her father's house upon her marriage, was a small moveable green−house, which had afforded her many hours amusement and pleasure, and which she now removed into a sunny angle of the cottage wall, and looked upon as one of her greatest treasures. She next made an arrangement with Florists in Birmingham and Wolverhampton to receive weekly all the flowers she could gather, which she sent by the night coaches on the evenings of the days preceding the markets; then all her spare vegetables and fruit she sold to the market people who called with their great baskets in the bright summer mornings soon after the sun was up. Then she had a large awkward yard half surrounded by sheds, broken pigsties, and poultry houses, which had formerly been attached to the farm the late owner had occupied, and this she hoped one day to convert into a place of abode for her future hens and chickens. But clever and industrious as Sybil and two at least of her children were, the entire care and labour attendant upon the garden was more than they could manage, and Lawrence's brain, which was fertile in resources, hit upon a most satisfactory expedient now.

Long before the period of which this tale commences, and when Minnie was a very little child, the servant who had lived with Mrs. Towers from her marriage, and who had nursed all her children, left her to marry the gardener

of a neighbouring family.

The distress of the children at losing Susan was very great, especially as after her marriage, she and her husband went to live with his parents at Manchester, and so they lost sight of her entirely. But the close air of a large manufacturing town did not agree with Susan long. Before she had left her happy, airy Bury home, twelve months, she was a shadow of her gay and blooming self, and every letter which reached Mrs. Towers from her was full of melancholy tales of sickness. At last, just before Doctor Towers died, Susan was ordered by her medical men to return to her native air, and she wrote to her old mistress, to ask if she thought it probable, that her husband would obtain employment as a daily gardener if he relinquished his present situation and returned with her. Doctor Towers' illness and death had effaced all memory of this letter from Sybil's mind, but now Lawrence reminded her of it, and suggested that if Susan and George could occupy their kitchen and spare bedroom, rent free, they would in return render valuable assistance in the house and garden.

Susan is so neat and handy, mother said he, and knows all your ways so well, that she will be quite a treasure. She will soon get well in this healthy place, and it will be her pride I know to help and cheer you. And George; he used to be a first−rate gardener. I have heard Inglis say, that when he lived with Major Inglis, their fruit and flowers were always earlier and finer than those of any one else. Oh yes, we must have them, they will be worth their weight in gold to us.

Lol, said Wyndham, you're a conjurer, never was any one endowed with such ideas as you have: you've projects for everything under the sun, and all good ones too. Fertile in expedients you ought to be called, after the fashion of those knavish round−heads we were reading of last night, whose qualifications were expressed in their names, Fight the good fight of faith, for instance, eh, Lol?

It is an excellent idea Lawrence, and I think a very feasible one, replied Mrs. Towers, Susan would indeed be a great comfort to me, and I hope that being with us would be equally beneficial to her. I am very very glad you thought of it. I will write to−night and propose it to her.

She will be sure to come, quite sure, said Maude, and I shall be so glad. I shall not have to be so busy, and she will curl my hair, mamma, won't she, as Sarah used to do? It takes me so long I have not patience to do it myself, and she will get breakfast and tidy the rooms, and dust, and all those tiresome fidgety things, that I can't bear? Oh, I do hope she will come.

I will do those little things, if' Susan will help mamma to sew, exclaimed Minnie, she does look so tired at night; and I can't work well enough yet to be of any service to her, but I shall some day.

Aye, hope on, hope ever, cried Wyndham, who appeared to be in a great humour for quotations, you sewed up that hole in my glove quite respectably yesterday; you will be able to sew on my shirt buttons bye and bye.

She made that shirt you have on Wyn, said Maude, I wish I was half as industrious.

Ah Maude, I'm afraid you and I are the two good−for−nothings of the family. Well we can't all make shirts, and plan plans, can we Loll? so now let us leave mamma to write to Susan, Maude to curl her wig, Minnie to cogitate upon her deficiencies, and go and have a bathe. I challenged Inglis to swim to−day; he says he can go up the stream as far as the old oak, and I say he can't, but I can, so let us go, I promised to be there by three o'clock, so that we might get back before his calling−over at half−past four.

Maude was quite right. Susan accepted the offer of her former mistress joyfully, and promised to be in Bury in a week.

Oh what a bustling week that was to the children. Over and over again, twenty times at least each day, was every portable article in the rooms that Susan was to occupy, removed to a different station. Even the boys were busy in this self−imposed labour of love, for both remembered the active untiring kindness of their old nurse, and joined heartily in the wish of their sisters, that every thing should wear its brightest looks to greet her.

The conveyance by which Susan and George intended to travel, was to arrive in Bury in the evening, and would pass along the top of the cottage lane, leaving them there.

Very early in the morning, as if fearing all would not be ready in time, Minnie got up to dust the little bedroom, straighten the unwrinkled counterpane, place the looking−glass in a new position, and put the largest slip of bed carpet beside the washing table, the very same place from which she had removed it the night before, Of all the children she of course had the slightest remembrance of Susan; all that she could perfectly recollect, being a tall slight figure attired with almost quakerish neatness, who for many nights sang her to sleep, and wept as she sang. But her mother's favourites were always Minnie's, and she loved Susan dearly because her mother did; therefore not even Lawrence who had known her so well, and missed her so much, was more anxious that every thing should look its best to welcome Susan, than Minnie was.

No one was awake when the child rose, and she moved about so stealthily lest she should disturb her mother, that to her great delight she had the whole house to herself, until it was time to call up the boys to breakfast. This she prepared herself, without any assistance, save that which was always provided the night before, in the laying of the stick fire, all ready for the morning match.

Why, Minnie, said Wyndham when he came down, and the unusual absence of his mother was explained by the laughing boast, that Mamma and Maude were asleep. I begin to think we have not managed well. I don't see why we should let Susan have those spacious rooms of ours free, gratis, for nothing, when we might let them for a handsome sum with attendance, I had no idea of the capabilities of our establishment, or I should have proposed it. Breakfast at half−past six, boiling water, fresh radishes, new milk from down the lane, what could the heart of knight and cavalier ask more?

Nothing certainly, but where are the knights or cavaliers to come from now, Wyn? said Minnie with a sigh; for the cherished romance of her heart was, as her mischievous brother well knew, a love of the legends of old times, and all their glorious chivalry, there's nothing knightly in these days.

Alas the day! said Wyndham, we are fallen upon degenerate times, maiden.

Now out upon you for a roundhead, cried Minnie laughing, no true cavalier ever spoke in that canting way; only the hypocritical, cowardly, treacherous.

Nay, maiden, nay, thou speakest harshly. Thy hasty temper outruns thy discretion; in which unbecoming fashion, thy tea−kettle appears about to follow thee, see the ungovernable water is deserting its citadel, and making a pool upon the floor.

Then take it off, roundhead, I'll serve thee no more. Fair sir, and she turned to Lawrence who was poring over his book, in what can I pleasure you? Eh, what, what do you say, Minnie? cried the student starting, Breakfast? Oh yes, certainly.

A gay burst of laughter from his tormentors explained the jest, and with a good humoured smile, Lawrence laid down his book, saying well, however unromantic breakfast may sound to talk about, I confess that it was uppermost in my thoughts when I spoke. Pardon, fair lady. Had I been studying Froissart as you and Wyndham have been doing, I should doubtless have responded to your question in more knightly parlance.

Very good indeed, Lol. Explained like a brave knight and a true. After such an apology we may descend to the matter−of−fact business of the table. I think, eh Minnie?

You have my permission, gentle Sirs. The apology is knightly made, and freely accepted. Sir, I pray you. And with many courteous bows and speeches the mimic knights and lady took their places. When the meal was over they all adjourned to the garden to see that every thing was in perfect order for the expected guests, and having satisfied their anxiety, the boys set off to school.

St. George be praised, said Wyndham as he took off his cap, and bowed low at the little gate in token of knightly farewell to Minnie, we shall return at noon.

To−day is half−holiday, explained Lawrence.

Literal Lawrence, said Minnie laughing, I knew that yesterday.

That evening four children might have been seen sitting at the top of the lane where Mrs. Towers's cottage stood. One had taken possession of a stile, and the others of a fallen tree which lay along the green sward by the road−side.

They were talking merrily, and now and then stopped altogether, to listen for the approaching sounds of any vehicle which might be coming towards them. Sometimes the eldest girl would utter an impatient sigh, and then the youngest of the party ran into the road and looked up it as far as she could see, to detect, if possible, a glimpse of the wished−for waggon coming up the hill.

It's of no use, Minnie, it's of no use, it won't be here for an hour. I knew that when we set off, only Wyn was so impatient. I do wish you would sit still and not fidget so.

So I will if you will not sigh as you did just now, you look as weary as if we had walked to Berwick.

Well it is so tiresome, to sit here, watch, watch, watch, for a thing which can't come for an hour at least.

Susan said she should be here at seven o'clock, and it was more than half−past six when we left home, so she can't be very long now, observed Lawrence, but if you are tired Maude I will walk back with you to the cottage.

No thank you, I do not choose that Susan should suppose that I am less eager for her arrival than you are.

Well then be as patient, lady fair, said Wyndham, look at me, nobody could tell, if I didn't move, that I was not patience on a monument.

With that horrible vulgar whistle? replied his sister crossly; I can't think who has taught you that ungentlemanly habit.

Nature and W. Wharncliffe, laughed Wyndham, two celebrated vulgarians.

Hark, listen, cried Lawrence, sprin1ng up, is not that the rumble of wheels?

And coming along shaking and jostling, making the earth rumble as it passed, was the long expected waggon. It was what people used to call a fly waggon; whether in these railway days such things still exist in remote and primitive districts, dear reader, I don't know, but in the times of which I write, such modes of conveyance were very common, and greatly patronized by the poorer classes. Well, on it came, the horses' bells jingling, the

waggoner's whip cracking, and the horn lantern swinging behind, till it stopped at a little lane rather lower than that where the children stood.

Not here, not here, cried a voice which reached the listeners distinctly.

Oh she's come, she's come, that's Susan's voice, exclaimed Lawrence eagerly, why Minnie what's the matter, you're as pale as a ghost are you ill?

No, no, only eager.

My dear, dear, children, said the same voice, for by this time the waggon had come up and stopped.

Is that you, Master Lawrence, and Miss Maude, and Master Wyndham too, and dear little Minnie; oh how are you all, how you are grown, how glad I am? and talking and weeping alternately, Susan jumped down.

And your mamma, how is your mamma? asked Susan, as she walked on holding Minnie's hand, which every now and then she squeezed lovingly, how does she bear this great shock?

Better than we could have hoped for, said Lawrence, she is still very sad and low−spirited, but now that you are come, Susan, you must cheer her and comfort her.

Yes, said Minnie quietly.

My dear child, the sight of your good little face will cheer her more than I can, answered Susan tenderly, gazing into the baby features she remembered so well. You are just like what you were, Minnie, when you were a baby, only larger. You have just the same happy gentle face you used to have, and I think you must have the same heart too.

I can answer for that, said Maude, Minnie is as good as she looks.

And you are good too, for saying so, replied Susan, smiling affectionately upon Maude's face, which, glowing with generosity, was turned towards her, You are none of you altered, I think.

Except for the better, Susan; except for the better, said Wyndham, though I was always perfect, I believe.

You are just the same, Master Wyndham, I can tell by that speech.

Perfect people can't be better you know, Susan; that accounts for my remaining in status quo. Susan laughed, then after a minute's pause, said, I am afraid your mamma feels this change very much?

Not so much as I feared. She is always employed, and that I think prevents her from pining for the comforts she has lost, and we do all we can to lessen her sense of the change, replied Lawrence, in a subdued voice.

Poor lady, poor lady, she was so tender−hearted, feeling everybody's sorrow. I wonder how she bears up at all under this dreadful trouble.

Because she is an angel, I do believe, said Lawrence warmly, and God helps her.

Right, master Lawrence, right.

There she is, standing at the gate watching for us, said Maude, let us run on.

Chapter 3.

There are few lands on earth so highly favoured by God as this our Island home. Signal marks of God's gracious love are to be found everywhere. Not a hospital not a charitable society not a benevolent institution, that stands upon the fair face of England, but is a special blessing sent from God upon her. And these tokens of his love, like the blood−smitten door−posts of the ancient Israelites, may be the marks by which the destroying angels who wield the swords of pestilence and war, are warned not to afflict us with their terrors.

England is eminently a land of charity. She is also, it is true, a land of speculation and money worship, and for these last sins, she is often heavily visited by those terrible commercial panics which spread such dismay and ruin; but while, like Cornelius, her alms are going up daily to heaven, the heavier national calamities, which destroy the peace of other nations, will be averted.

And of all the blessings which past ages have left as legacies to their immediate successors, and to us, one of the very greatest are the Free Grammar Schools, which, principally founded by royal munificence, are scattered through the length and breadth of the land.

It has been sadly the fashion of late to under−rate the advantages which these schools offer to the country, or, with a reckless and disrespectful spirit, to involve them in all the annoyances and expenses of law. And this, not from the pure and holy wish for reformation not that Christian right may be done to those who suffer wrong not that the errors accumulated by long time may be quietly and decently removed, but for the evil angry love of meddling and litigation.

I once saw in a large old country house, long deserted by its fashionable owner, the exquisitely sculptured capital of an antique column. It stood alone in a little dark stone−floored room, neglected and forgotten. It was covered with dust and thick matted cobwebs, which, on one side especially, where the draft from a broken wall fell, completely obscured its rich and delicate carving. One of my party gathering up some old feathers which lay upon the floor, formed them into a kind of brush, and tenderly removed the dust from one portion of the pillar, whose beauties then stood out as fair and perfect as when they had left the chisel of the sculptor. After a lingering gaze upon this relic of former genius we left the room. Some time after, however, I returned to shew this beautiful work to a friend, and just as we reached the apartment, we heard a heavy fall. Upon entering the room, I found the column fallen, and three men in the garb of gentlemen, standing by it. Atoms of the pure white marble, graceful Acanthus buds, lay here and there, struck off by the sharp heavy fall, and the wrecked and shattered column was split and prostrate.

Ah, said one of the party as I entered, that comes of roughness, if you had been content to sweep or blow off the cobwebs as I said, this would not have happened.

Mine was the quickest way, at any rate, replied the spoiler.

Yes to ruin, returned his companion, as they all left the room.

I stood a long time gazing sorrowfully upon the scene, and then I went too.

But ever since, when I hear of venerable institutions, old forms and customs, round and into which the dust of ages, in the shape of errors and abuses, has crept, I think of the sculptured column in the old country house; and I remember that the tender and loving hand of my young friend swept gently away the accumulated disfigurements of years, leaving the original clear and fair as ever; but that the rude irreverent blow of one whose garb belied his nature, and who neither loved the fair thing for its hidden and intrinsic beauty, nor honoured it for its age, utterly destroyed it. The object of both was avowedly the same, but the end how different.

From that column's fate I took a lesson, which I would fain, dear reader, have you take too; especially if you are young. Avoid as you would a sin, the popular cant of the day, which aims at the very life of holy and honoured things. Purify, renovate, restore, if you will; reform and remove all such abuses as time and power may have created, but do it reverently, and look that yours be the right hands to do it. It is not all men to whom God, from whom all power cometh, appoints the mission of reform.

Far be it from me to say that there are not many and grievous abuses existing in England, and not in England alone, but everywhere, where man reigns, and human laws exist, but I do say that they are not half so many, nor are they half so great, as low and ill−disposed people declare. And among the most vilified, and best deserving of this class, are the Free Schools, which have lately been made the targets for calumny and ingratitude to shoot at. But honourable men who in themselves or their children have experienced the priceless benefits of the education thus provided, the incentives to exertion, and reward of industry afforded by the Exhibitions, Scholarships, and Fellowships, attached to these schools, gratefully appreciate and respect them. Hundreds of boys yearly receive a first−class gratuitous education from these noble institutions, and to all is equally open a chance to gain these exhibitions and scholarships, which in many cases are sufficient for their support at college.

Superior merit and superior industry are the only roads to success, and for a boy's insufficiency in these, no one is responsible hut himself. Free schools are like every other school. They cannot make idle boys work, nor, whether boarders or town boys, place them upon the same footing with the industrious. There is no charm about any school which can do this. Boys as well as men, must make their own way, by the force of their own energy and perseverance; and in the Grammar Schools the sons of the poorest burghers have the same opportunity to gain the highest places as those of the richest man in the county, who sends his sons as boarders to the Master's House.

Some Free Schools have, by the will of their founders, greater privileges than others; some admit to their benefits all inhabitants of the towns in which they are founded, others receive only town−born boys and sons of burghers. But whatever the differences in the limitation or extension of their charity, there is no difference in the educational advantages of the pupils. Whatever the school teaches, is taught alike to all. With the guarantee for honourable usage which the names of such men as hold the masterships of these schools afford, it could not be otherwise, and it is worse than idle, to upbraid them with feeling and shewing undue partiality for the boarders, and neglecting the poorer town boys. It is a most unfounded charge. A master will always prefer an industrious clever boy to an idle careless one, and whether he be boarder or day scholar, will encourage and assist him: To discover merit, and bring it forward, is the teacher's only aim; he gains credit by his pupil's success, and a boy who distinguishes himself by his talents or industry, reflects more honour upon his master than twenty ignoramuses, even if they are the sons of nobles. It is his pupils advancement in learning, not his rank or money, which brings distinction to the master; how absurd then it is to fancy, that he prefers one set of boys to another, simply because they board in his house. One thing, however, is true, but for that the masters are not accountable, that the boarders do generally get on better than the town boys. And this from no undue preference or privilege, but because they live in an atmosphere of learning, closed at night within their large school walls, roaming about the great rooms, passing the quiet studies where working boys are busy at their lessons, their minds are led to study, there are no outer distractions to entice them from it, and the natural consequence is, that they progress faster than the boys who are beyond the school walls, are beyond its discipline, and are free to idle or work as they please. If day−scholars were under the same restraint that boarders are, had the same quiet places for study, and as few inducements to be idle, they would do just as much; it is because they have not, that the difference exists, and for this again the masters cannot be responsible.

Upon the boys and their parents the whole must rest. Every facility, every help, is equally given to all the pupils of the school, and for what takes place out of school, those only can be accountable who have charge of the boys, and the boys themselves. If those out of school" hours are spent ill or idly, the consequence will be, that the pupils so wasting or misapplying their time, will be distanced by their more steady and industrious companions; and this is true of boarders and town boys equally. When parents therefore are disappointed at the progress their sons make, let them be just in attributing the fault where it is due; either the boys are themselves to blame, or their

home arrangements are unfavourable for study.

There may be no quiet private room for them to read in, meals may not be punctual, and precious half−hours may be dwindled away in waiting for them, brothers may entice them away to play, or disturb them when at work; a thousand circumstances may combine to make the day−scholar's home, although a most honourable and well−regulated one, the worst possible place for work, and if this is the case, it follows, as a matter of course, that those boys of whom the reverse is true, must win the prizes and exhibitions.

It is not that boarders have more of the master's instruction and regard, but that their parents provide them with better means and opportunities for study, and therefore they get on.

And how these means and opportunities have been used and improved, is attested by the array of great men's names, which adorn the registers or walls of every Grammar School in the land.

Let there then be no jealousy between the two divisions of a school; no envy, no rivalry, no suspicions. Each class has its separate privileges, let each use them wisely, carefully, and faithfully, as trusts from God, given to be improved and accounted for. More depends upon yourselves, my dear young readers, than upon your masters, or upon the accidental circumstances of your being either a boarder or a day−scholar. If you have industry, patience, integrity, and perseverance, you must succeed; the responsibility rests upon yourselves, and believe me it is a solemn one. God gives you education and opportunities, and to Him you must be accountable for the use you make of them. Honour in this world, happiness in the next, are in your own hands. No one can help, no one can retard you effectually but yourselves, and this I hope to exemplify in the following pages.

Chapter 4.

There were at Bury School at the same time that Lawrence and Wyndham Towers were day−scholars there, two boarders with whom they were very intimate; Harry de Vere and Archer Trelawney. Harry was the sworn friend or chum, as boys call them, of Lawrence, and Archer of Wyndham. Harry lived in the house of the head master, Doctor Ashton, and Archer in that of the second master, the Reverend Edgar Foley.

It is very rare that such friendship as existed between these four boys, ever takes place between the day boys of a free school and the boarders. Although, for the honour of all parties, it must be acknowledged that a much better feeling exists on this point now than formerly, when the boarders looked upon it as decidedly infra dig to hold any communication with the town boys, and when in consequence these poor victims to a false pride, were obliged to make their escape from school with the greatest expedition. Woe to the urchin who without a legitimate claim to the flat cap was found after school in the sacred precincts. He must flee as for his life, and happy was the nimble lad, who darting away down school lane, turned sharp round the left hand corner, and before he was caught, was out of the bounds of his tormentors. But all this belongs to the legends of the school. The masters tell such tales, and some of the townsmen too, but they are mostly traditions, few speak of them from personal remembrance and between all the pupils now, boarders and town boys, prevails that gentlemanly courtesy, which, while it does not descend into familiarity, is kindly, frank, and befitting those who work together.

Still, as I said before, intimacies between the two divisions are even yet very rare, and as in the eases of Lawrence and Harry, Wyndham and Archer, are generally attributable to accident.

Mrs. Trelawney had been a patient of Doctor Towers, and Archer was his god−son; the friendship therefore existing between the families was very great, and when the Trelawneys left Bury for London, and their son became a boarder instead of a day boy at the school, Mrs. Towers promised her friend to replace to him, as far as possible, the parents he was about to lose.

Archer was an artful clever boy, always ready with an excuse for every fault, which was usually so specious, that although his master doubted his integrity, he could not disprove it.

Foremost in every scheme and mischief, aider and abetter of every quarrel in hall, and fight in the ball court, or cricket ground, he yet managed so cleverly, that his dupes could never fasten his agency upon him. No one ever heard Archer Trelawney advocate a row, or openly encourage rebellion; but, wily and quick−sighted, he was at the bottom of all. Not for the fun or excitement, but for the satanic pleasure of raising himself upon the ruin of others, and gaining the advantages they lost. If Archer had taken half the pains to be a good boy, that he did to seem one, he might soon have ranked first in the school, for his abilities were considerable, and his manner pleasing. But the straight road was ever the hardest for Archer. He would scheme to obtain the merest trifle, and plot for the thing which a straightforward request would have secured at once.

All this, however, neither Mrs. Towers, Wyndham, nor any one else knew; therefore he was kindly welcomed to the cottage, whenever he was able to go, and usually spent the holiday Saturdays there.

Two years before our tale commences Harry had saved Lawrence's life while bathing in the Severn, and thenceforth the boys were inseparable. He was Lawrence's sole confidant, the only one person to whom all his hopes, fears, doubts, misgivings, and aspirations were known. He was not popular in the school, for he was moody, silent, and studious, and rarely entered into the games and plays of his companions. Still there was in many points a great similarity between the characters of the friends, although in many it must be confessed, that they were opposites.

Lawrence was proud to a fault, but proud of all belonging to him, rather than of himself. Harry was proud of himself, his superiority to the petty ends and aims of other people, his power to achieve his will.

Lawrence was careful; Harry was lavish. Both had the same perseverance, but exercised it for different motives. Lawrence worked for his mother, and toil was sweet; while Harry's home was almost nominal. He had not even seen his father for eight years, and he shunned the name of that mother who had deserted him and his infant sister in their babyhood. He worked to gratify his own ambition. Like Lawrence, Harry's integrity was unimpeachable, but unlike Lawrence, his temper was moody, irritable and contemptuous. Heir to great wealth, destined one day to fill an important place in the world, as the possessor of riches and power, the boy bitterly felt the injustice and want of affection which left him year after year unnoticed at school. As a young child, his heart had overflowed with love to everybody; he was known for a singularly tender and gracious manner, but the melancholy circumstances of his home, the scarcely concealed aversion of his father, who hurried him to school from his sight, changed him completely. Child as he was, when he left his father's house, he was still quite old enough to remember the sudden neglect, the causeless aversion, the cruel speeches, to which he had been subjected, and a sense of their injustice embittered his spirit, and made him shy and unsociable.

During his first vacation, (the only one which he spent at home after once leaving it for school,) he and his sister were attacked by small pox. After a few week's severe struggle with the disease, poor little Eleanor died, and though Harry's life was spared, he rose from the bed of danger so scarred and disfigured, that none but those who had attended him through his terrible illness, recognized him.

Poor boy, this was a great affliction, since his father, an ardent admirer of beauty, already prejudiced against him from family circumstances, now turned entirely away. Thus Harry's naturally warm and generous heart was chilled and soured, and he returned to school so altered in disposition, so captious, and unsociable, that the boys soon shunned, and when they could, tormented him. But fortunately for himself he was a brave boy, and in the attacks which were two or three times made upon him, came off victorious; so that in time, lads of his own age became afraid of his prowess, and older ones returned his avoidance.

With the masters he was in some degree a favourite, for his lessons were always well done, he was never in a serape, and his steady conduct was a model for the whole school; but although they respected, few of them loved him. He was so unlike a boy, had so little of the fun and mischief, the love of play and frolic, which usually characterize youth, that people could not understand him, and being ignorant of the causes which made him the solitary reserved being he was, they had little sympathy with him.

Thus it was, that until he saved the life of his schoolfellow, Harry de Vere lived almost alone; but from that time he had a friend, a true, earnest, faithful friend, who loved him well, and trusted him entirely.

With Mrs. Towers Harry was not a great favourite, for he was very shy, and often said abrupt things which sounded rudely, but which were solely caused by his nervousness and solitary habits.

In mother particular too Harry was sadly less fortunate than his companions. He had no settled home for the holidays. His father, although abroad, would suffer him to hold no intercourse with his mother's family; and of his own, there was but one brother who could receive his almost deserted son. This gentleman lived in Scotland, was a confirmed Hypochondriac, and therefore as ill−fitted to make a boy's home happy, as can be imagined, but between his house and Doctor Ashton's was Harry's only choice. So Christmas after Christmas, and midsummer after midsummer, the lonely boy wandered about the desolate halls and courts of the school, companionless and sad.

The presence of this solitary pupil was often very embarrassing to Doctor Ashton, and involved a responsibility he would willingly have avoided, but he was too kind, and entered too thoroughly into the feelings of youth, to condemn Harry to spend more than one, out of every three or four vacations, with his uncle.

Twice in each year when Mr. de Vere wrote to Doctor Ashton, he sent through him a message to his son, and having done this, and supplied the boy lavishly with money, he appeared to think his duty towards him was done. Every indulgence that money could procure, and the rules of the school admit, were at Harry's command, since his allowance from his father was more than double that of any other boy in the School, and he had besides, the interest of a small property left to him by an aunt, and which was at his sole disposal. To many boys this command of money would have been most dangerous, but to Harry it was the reverse, it afforded him the means to indulge in those charities in which his heart delighted, and which were dearer to him than any personal gratification. Of money therefore he was very lavish, and had the sums he spent upon persons wholly unworthy, been squandered upon himself, he might justly have been called a spendthrift.

Archer Trelawney who wished to stand well with his rich school−fellow, brought him many invitations to spend the holidays at Trelawney Court, but there was something in Harry's nature which recoiled from Archer, and without knowing why, he disliked and avoided him.

Chapter 5.

One day, soon after Susan was established at the cottage, Harry observed that the cloud which had for many weeks hung over the spirits of his friend, weighed them down more painfully than ever, making him appear thoroughly ill. He was out of school first, and loitered about the archway and outer court, until Lawrence and Wyndham appeared, then going up to them, he linked his arm within that of Lawrence, and said I want to talk to you Towers, come with me till dinner−time.

I can't to day. I promised my mother to take her some flower seeds from the new shop on Pride Hill.

Wyndham can do that, or you can do it afterwards; I must have a talk, so come along.

Yes, I'll do it, said Wyndham, I'm going to Leake's for some books, and I can get the seeds at the same time, where's the paper, Lol, I shall forget the names else?

Now Towers, what's the matter, asked Harry, when he and his companion were out of hearing of their schoolfellows, you're in trouble about something, what is it?

Nothing. I can't tell you.

But you must old fellow. Perhaps I can help you, at any rate I've a right to know.

You can't help me.

How do you know, I dare say I can.

Indeed you can't, and it only vexes me to talk about it, was this all you wanted to say?

Of course it was. But I'm not going to be put off in this way. If you've got into a scrape I'm the proper person to get you out of it, so tell me at once what it is, Wyn's tick up at the cake shop again?

No, not that I know of; I hope not.

Want new books?

Got on idle list?

What an idea! no, of course not.

Well what on earth is it then?

Nothing, at least nothing that you can help me in.

Then it's something at home. Do tell me or I'll get leave to go to the cottage and ask Minnie.

She could not tell me, said Lawrence with a sigh.

Then its a private fix of your own, and you're bound in honour to tell me. Come don't be so close, if I can't help you, at any rate it will be a satisfaction to talk it over.

Well then, I'm afraid this is my last half.

Last half, what do you mean, you're not going to die?

No, but I don't think I shall come to school again after Christmas.

Why, what for, what crotchet have you got in your head now?

None, replied the boy mournfully.

Then what do you mean?

Just what I say, I'm afraid I shall not come to school after the next holidays.

Harry stood still and gazed earnestly into his friend's face, then said

I see you are in earnest Towers, which I didn't believe at first. Don't be angry at me for vexing you, and do tell me what has happened to cause this change.

It's no change, I have feared it ever so long. They walked on for some time in silence, Lawrence occupied in swinging his strap full of books, and Harry kicking every pebble which he met. At last de Vere said in a low voice, and not looking at his friend,

Is it about money?

Yes.

I thought so, well old fellow, and again he linked his arm within that of Lawrence, can't we manage it?

No, I think not. I know that my mother's means now are barely sufficient, even with the greatest economy, to support the girls and herself and therefore that Wyndham and I are a heavy burthen upon her. One of us she may perhaps manage to keep at school, but both I am sure she cannot, and as I am the oldest, it is but right that I should try and do something for myself.

Has she said so?

No, but I see it in her face every day that I come and go.

But what do you mean to do then? You can't be educated so cheaply anywhere else, and there are the exhibitions and things you may get from here, to help you on at college.

College, repeated Lawrence with a heavy sigh, I'm afraid that dream is over now.

No no, it must not be, we must manage better than that. You've always said you'd go to college, and go you must.

Must, is a word all very well for rich fellows like you de Vere, but it's downright nonsense for poor ones like me.

Not at all, not at all; every fellow has a right to use whatever word he pleases, and if you choose to say must, why you've as great a right to do so as anybody I know.

Yes, there's no law against it, I believe, but one, and that's a great one, common sense.

Now don't preach Towers, I can't stand it. I hate preachifications mortally. But listen to me. You know I've lots of tin, more than I ever want to spend, more than I care a fig to have, for what on earth can a fellow do with money, shut up as I am. I'd sooner have a chum like you than double the tip I get from my father, who doesn't care a rap about me, and if I lose you I shan't care what I do, or what becomes of me. I shall get into my dreary miserable way again, like it was before I fished you up out of that hole there; or I shall get reckless like that poor wretch Forsyth who was expelled last half, I know I shall, I feel it coming over me now.

Don't talk nonsense de Vere, I never thought you'd laugh at me.

I never was more serious in my life, don't I look so. I'm grave as an owl.

And I'm as stupid; so let us turn back now, I want to get home.

Not yet, not yet, you've not told me your plan yet. I say Lol, old fellow, don't think me unkind, it's not unkindness that makes me talk so, but I can't bear to see you cut up like this, so I try to laugh it off, but if you don't like it, I'll be as serious as I feel. Now tell me what you mean to do.

I don't know. Apprentice myself to some trade, perhaps.

But the fee, or premium, or whatever they call it; what can you do about that?

As other people do, who can't pay it. Find some cheap trade where they will take work, instead of money.

A carpenter's or blacksmith's for instance, a very good plan I dare say, but with one slight drawback,

What?

Want of possibility: you're not the cut for it.

Why not, but there's twenty other trades; stationers, and and

And tailors, and drapers, and butchers, and and

Yes, all those, said Lawrence quietly, It's of no use laughing at me, de Vere; what must be, you know, must be. I am quite resolved.

To become a member of one of those illustrious crafts?

Yes, if needs be. I shouldn't choose it, but it can't be helped. I know my mother can't do as she's doing now, and it is not right that she should, but I mean to spare her the pain of saying so, by getting something ready to propose when I tell her I'd rather not come here any more. Perhaps we may manage that Wyndham should stop, but if not, he must do as I do, it's God's will.

I thought we were to go to college together, and that you were to get the Sidney medal, and a scholarship, said Harry in a tone of vexation.

So I hoped, but it can't be. It won't matter to you de Vere, for you will find twenty better friends than me, but it will be as much as I can bear. Nobody knows what a disappointment it is to me.

And the boy's voice grew husky as the tears rose in his eyes.

Let us speak to the Doctor, or Mr. Foley, Towers. Perhaps they can think of something; we ought to make a struggle, I am sure we ought.

No, no, it could do no good, what could they do? what could they forego? we pay nothing.

No, but they might propose some way that we can't think of, you are such a favourite of Mr. Foley's, he'll hit upon some plan I'm sure.

No, no, I'd rather not. It may be pride, but I should not like it. While I've health and strength I ought to ask favours of no one; besides that I can't see even ff1 would, what the masters could do. No, let it rest: if it's God's will that I should stay, he'll open some way for me, without making me a beggar to the masters.

That day in afternoon school, one of the boys said

Ten weeks to−day to Christmas holidays.

Harry de Vere heard the remark and started; it awoke him from a day−dream.

A few hours afterwards he stood in Doctor Ashton's Library, waiting for the private interview for which he had asked. He had waited some time, for the Doctor was engaged, and he began to grow fidgety and nervous. Twenty times he counted the rows of books, the compartments into which the shelves were divided, the chairs, the pens in the inkstand, and the flower−pots in the great oriel window; and still he went over them again and again, without the faintest idea of what he was doing.

At last he heard his master's voice bidding adieu to some one in the hall, then the door handle of the room in which he stood turn. His colour came and went. An interview with Doctor Ashton was a momentous thing.

Well de Vere, said the Doctor, what's the matter, nothing wrong I hope.

No sir. I only want to know if you please, if you've made any arrangements for me for next holidays.

No, nothing different I believe. You will have your choice as usual, I suppose, between School Lane, and Glen Vue, at least I have heard nothing to the contrary. I wish I had anything better in view for you my boy, but at present I know of nothing, why do you ask though, Christmas is a good way off yet?

Yes sir, but I have a favour to beg, I want to explain something to you if you have leisure.

Certainly certainly sit down.

Like his friend Lawrence, there was something very straightforward and manly about Harry's manner, when the natural shyness of talking to his master wore off, and the look of quiet and kind attention with which Doctor Ashton prepared to listen to him, reassured him at once. There was a slight blush upon his face as he spoke, but that soon died away, and he became as self−possessed as when with his companions.

May I speak to you in confidence sir, said the boy. It is less about myself than some one else that I want to speak to you, and I think I have no right to do so, without you promise to hold my communication sacred.

It is a very strange request, replied Doctor Ashton, bending a keen glance upon the lad's features, very strange indeed, you know that I never encourage tales de Vere, in fact that I despise them, but if anything has come to your knowledge that I ought to know, you are bound to tell me. Think well before you speak, and if the thing you wish to say is frivolous, or unnecessary for me to know, I will forget this visit and ask no further. But if it is anything which affects the conduct, or welfare, or integrity, of any one of whom I have charge, you are bound to tell me honestly, and trust to my discretion.

It is no tale. Nothing to any one's discredit sir, answered Henry respectfully.

Then speak freely. I give you the promise you ask.

Thank you sir. You will see at once why I asked it, when I have told my story, and I think you will say I am right. It is about Towers senior, that I want to speak.

Towers! why what's the matter with him, you are great friends I believe, and I am glad to see it, he has always been one of the steadiest and best boys in the school.

Harry's face brightened with pleasure.

He will leave us at Christmas, sir, I'm afraid.

Why where is he going?

We don't know, sir. He cannot bear the idea of leaving, he has so set his heart upon gaining an exhibition, and making his way at college; but since his father's death Mrs. Towers' circumstances are much reduced, and Towers fears that she will not be able to keep him and his brother at school, and he thinks he is too old to be a burthen. He loves his mother surprisingly, and to spare her the pain of telling him that he must leave here at the holidays, he means to enquire for some business to which he can be put at little or no expense, and then to propose the change himself; but it's a great blow to him, sir, a very great blow.

He meant to be an honour to us then?

He did indeed sir, and go where he will, he'll be an honour to us. There's not his equal in the school for work, and good behaviour, and I'm sure Mr. Foley will say so, he's never in a scrape, never was on idle list since here he's been; never was flogged, never shirks his lessons, never had a B against his name, he's not a popular boy like his brother, because he fags hard, but all the boys like him, for he's as true as steel, and

Harry stopped, the Doctor detested slang, and in his eagerness he had forgotten himself.

Never mind, de Vere, never mind this time. Boys, like men, are unfortunately apt to use cant phrases when they are excited. It's a bad habit, don't let it grow upon you.

No sir indeed I

Say no more, de Vere, say no more. It would be difficult to be angry with you I think, for even a more exceptionable speech just now. Your enthusiasm for your friend, does you credit my boy. I am greatly pleased at it, not only because it proves that Towers, of whom I have always had a high opinion, is really worthy of it, but because it shows that you can feel warmly in a good cause.

The boy's lip quivered. Doctor Ashton saw it, but made no remark, though it disabused him of a long formed opinion that Harry de Vere was cold−hearted, and without affection, and from that hour a new sympathy and interest for the misjudged boy, arose in his heart. Harry's loyalty to his friend, even at the moment of its expression, met its reward.

It will be a sad thing that such a boy as this should be lost to us, and to the benefits we can give him, although at this moment I do not quite see how it is to be avoided, still you did very right to come to me, very right. Does Towers know that you intend speaking to me?

No sir, oh! no. I wanted him to let me speak to you, or Mr. Foley, but he wouldn't; not from any disrespect, sir, but he's a gentleman's son, and he feels like one, he couldn't do what

It is quite right that you and I should do for him if we can. I perfectly understand and appreciate the feeling of both of you. Neither you nor he could I think, as gentlemen and friends, feel and act otherwise than you are now doing, it is highly honourable to both, and I must say that it would be well for us all de Vere, if, in such emergencies as these, each showed to his fellow the true, zealous, and delicate friendship you have done in this matter.

Harry's scarred face flushed crimson. Such words from Doctor Ashton were priceless, and in the joy of receiving them the boy looked positively handsome.

But you have something else to say to me I think. This has nothing to do with your vacations, but I fancy your project has.

And the Doctor smiled.

Harry laughed frankly and gaily. From that moment all awe of Doctor Ashton vanished, and respect and affection took its place. He was so delighted at the idea of Doctor Ashton entering into his little mystery. After that evening, Harry thoroughly understood the feeling of personal devotion, with which the followers of Charles Edward, regarded their Prince.

Well de Vere, I have guessed it, have I?

Yes sir, and I am so glad. I thought perhaps you would make an arrangement for me to spend my holidays at the Cottage: I know my father won't mind how much you pay, if you approve of the place, and with this addition to their income, Towers and his brother can come as usual. Besides it will be a real benefit to me; Towers works all the holidays, and when I'm with him of course I shall do se too.

Oh no doubt. said the Doctor laughing, no doubt. Well I like your plan very much, but what will Mrs. Towers say will she consent to receive you do you think?

Oh yes sir, I am certain she will, if

The boy stopped suddenly.

If what, de Vere? We must not let her know, I think, why we make the application, she must suppose it is for your good and gratification.

Of course, sir, of course. I would not for the world have her think I was impertinent enough to suppose any one was laid under an obligation but myself. If such an idea ever enters her head, there will be no chance of carrying out the arrangement I know, she has become so sensitive lately. Oh! sir, you must be very cautious.

I see I must. I am afraid I shall not conduct the matter quite as diplomatically as you have done, de Vere; still I think I shall succeed. And now good night, my boy. Have you anything more to say?

No thank you, sir, at least only one thing, if you please. If you approve, would it not be better to put off speaking to Mrs. Towers for a few days, Towers only told me to−day, and if you make this proposal directly, he will suspect at once.

Very true. I shall have occasion to see Mrs. Towers in the course of next week, and will then make an opportunity of suggesting our plan. Can you restrain your impatience until then?

Oh yes, sir, as long as you choose, because now the matter is in your hands, I consider it settled. Good night sir; thank you a thousand times.

Chapter 6.

When the boy had left the room, and the head master was alone, it would be difficult to describe the mingled feelings of satisfaction and anxiety, which filled his mind; satisfaction, to find such noble and unselfish sentiments in a boy of whom he had had the care for six years, and anxiety, lest he should not improve and cultivate to the utmost, a nature which was so capable of excellence. The responsibilities of his position, the knowledge that in the eye of God, he was, in a great measure, answerable for the improvement, regulation, and right direction, of the minds of which he had voluntarily taken charge, appalled and humbled him.

But happily for himself, and the school over which he presided, he was a man, who living habitually in the fear and love of God, took instant counsel with his Eternal Master in all seasons of emergency and trial. And no one but that Master, knew how often day and night his servant bowed his knee before him, imploring help, and strength, and wisdom, to do right with the souls entrusted to his charge.

Doctor Ashton, was one of the few men who look upon the office of master of a school, in the high and holy light in which we must believe that God and his angels regard it. To him, it was no mere matter of emolument or fame, scholarship or defeat, but a solemn duty. He knew that he was educating the future, with the present, that the seed he sowed now in the hearts of a hundred boys, would blossom and bear fruit, in at least a hundred families, that ages yet unborn would be influenced by his deeds, his doings, and his neglect; and having undertaken the responsibility by far the most weighty upon earth, next to that of a Parochial Clergyman, in that it is of a man's free choice that it falls upon him he never lost sight of it. He walked before God, humbly, knowing that for every deed and impression, every act of commission and omission, he must give a strict account.

His greatest fault, and that was only an error in manner, was his seeming austerity. More of the boys feared, than loved him; but of the few who knew him well, or to whom had ever happened such accidents as had this night occurred to Harry, thawing the foreign crust of reserve which the Doctor's manner generally wore, not one but loved him enthusiastically, not one whose boyish chivalry and true faith, would have hesitated at any self−sacrifice to please him.

He had a great respect for talent, for he was an elegant scholar, and, strangely enough, he was peculiarly sensible of the charm of manner, which for the time, perhaps, exercised undue influence over him, but with a rare exercise of justice and penetration, the clever, unscrupulous, boy, however fascinating his manner, or specious his address, eventually made only his due way. Doctor Ashton was not to be blinded, by his most innocent prejudices.

No wonder then that such a man as this should, when his pupil left him, kneel reverently before God, and return him humble and hearty thanks for the deep satisfaction he had permitted him to enjoy.

The next day, and the next, the gloom on Lawrence's brow deepened, and Harry, who feared for his own discretion if he associated with him as usual, feigned every possible excuse for avoiding his society. For some time Lawrence received his friend's apologies with perfect confidence, really believing that all the extraordinary and unusual occurrences and reasons, which he assigned for his pre−occupation did exist; but when the same excuses were offered day after day for a fortnight, even his unsuspicious temper became excited, and he began to think Harry was intentionally avoiding him. At first, when this idea suggested itself to Lawrence's mind, his true and loyal nature rejected it instantly, and he gave Harry every opportunity of explaining or justifying his conduct; but when he found that instead of availing himself of the openings, he rather shunned them, his pride and wounded friendship urged him to withdraw entirely. And the evil spirit of doubt once admitted, it was easy for the boy to trace back the estrangement to that conversation when urged by Harry's importunities, he had so freely confessed his poverty and fears. Poor boy, he was tasting now, although unnecessarily, that bitterest of all human griefs, the doubt of those we love; the first dreadful knowledge of deceit.

Ah! dear reader, be you aged man, or careless youth, believe me when I say, that of all the injuries which man can inflict upon his fellow, the very greatest is that betrayal of his trust, which robs him of his childish confidence in integrity, and sends him forth into the world doubting and fearing. Believe me, that if there can be such a thing as

a choice between two heinous sins, it would be better, infinitely better, to rob your fellow creature of all his worldly goods, and leave him penniless, than by your treachery and falsehood, to rob him of his faith. An industrious honest man may gain once more the means to live; but no industry, no effort of mind, no exertion of talent, can restore the undoubting and blessed trust in human truth and goodness; without which, life is one long suspicion, and which once gone, is gone for ever.

Poor Harry! kindly as he meant it, he had done cruelly; to such a true heart as Lawrence, nothing could repay the bitter pang of doubting his friend, it was a misery for which no gift in the power of man to bestow, could compensate, and often in after years de Vere sorrowed for his mistaken kindness.

One evening, about a fortnight after Harry's interview with Doctor Ashton, Lawrence was working busily in the garden, trenching, under George's superintendence, some thriving celery plants, when he saw his mother approaching hastily. Her manner was excited, and her step hurried; her usually pale face was flushed, and the trace of tears was evident upon it.

Lawrence Lawrence, she cried.

In a moment Lawrence threw down his spade, caught up his straw hat from the trench into which it had fallen, and was by his mother's side.

I want to speak to you, Lawrence, she said eagerly, come here into this walk between the hollies, no one will see us there, and with a quick movement she threw her arm round her son's neck, and turned with him into the sheltered path.

Doctor Ashton has just been here, and he has made me so happy, said Mrs. Towers, the tears again rushing to her eyes, so happy, and I have been very miserable lately, Lawrence.

And you never told me, exclaimed the boy reproachfully.

Why should I? your life has been saddened too much already, why should I distress you more by imparting an anxiety you could not relieve, and which, happily, you now need never know?

A faint smile came over the boy's face.

Well, mother dear, keep your secret, only tell me what he, Doctor Ashton, said to make your eyes sparkle so beautifully, and look as they used to do, long, long ago? asked Lawrence, kissing the hand which hung over his shoulder.

Not much, Lawrence, and yet a great deal. He did not stay long, for I think he saw that I wished to be alone, and indeed I did. The unexpected relief, which the plan he came to propose offers, from the anxiety I have lately suffered, was almost more than I could bear. The removal of a heavy weight, like its infliction, often makes us stagger.

Yes, I can easily understand that; though I cannot bear to think that you have borne such a weight.

But it is gone now; at least it will go, if you all like the plan which Doctor Ashton has proposed.

We are sure to like anything you like, mother.

Then I shall be quite happy, thanks to the Doctor and your friend de Vere.

De Vere?

Yes, the Doctor's mission was upon his account. You know there has always been some difficulty about his home during the holidays, and this year that difficulty appears greater than usual. Doctor Ashton and his family are under an engagement to spend the vacation with Mrs. Ashton's parents, and as de Vere cannot endure the idea of passing his Christmas in Scotland, the Doctor will be much embarrassed if he cannot establish him properly during his absence. It seems that after various ideas, something or somebody suggested to Doctor Ashton, that we might, perhaps, consent to enter into an arrangement to receive de Vere regularly for the holidays, and for this he proposes to pay three guineas a−week. When the Doctor first mentioned this sum, I hesitated at the amount, which it seems to me is very large, but Doctor Ashton overruled my scruples, saying that in the matter of de Vere's holidays, he has *carte blanche* from his Father, who is too rich to allow expense to be of the slightest consideration.

And de Vere, himself, what does he say? asked Lawrence.

He is delighted at the idea, and Doctor Ashton says urged it so strongly that I cannot help suspecting the proposal originated with him. But it matters not whence it emanated, the relief is the same, and I am most thankful for it.

And so am I, dear mother, since you are, but I cannot quite understand how it can be so beneficial to you.

Because you do not know all of which I have been so fearful.

Do I not? asked Lawrence, archly.

No, how can you? I never told you, or any one.

Indeed you are mistaken, you have told me many times.

You are wrong, Lawrence, you are thinking of something else. I never told to any one, the greatest anxiety I have endured since we have been alone.

Not in words, mother dear, but there are other ways of learning secrets besides confession, you know.

What do you mean?

Only that you and I have been grieving over the same thing for weeks with this difference, you have been grieving for me, and I for you. Do you think, mother, that I who love you so dearly, cannot read your sorrows in your face?

I hope not.

Indeed I can, and I hope I always shall, I cannot bear that you should suffer alone, and for me.

But if' you cannot help me, why should I make you suffer too?

I should not suffer half so much *knowing* anything, as I do now, when I only fear and fancy. I know I am but a child in age, mother, but I do not think I am childish in my love for you; and I do think that if you would only trust me so far as to talk over your troubles with me, I could console, if I could not help you. Try, dear mother, you can but give it up again.

Mrs. Towers did not speak, her heart was too full for words, and she did not choose to betray the emotion she felt, but after some time she said, quietly

What then do you think has vexed me so much lately?

The fear that Wyndham and I, must leave school.

You have read my face indeed Lawrence, that was my fear.

I knew it was, I have known it from the first. And it was my thought too, mother, for I felt it was impossible that you could, upon your small income, afford to keep us both at home. And to show you that I understood the difficulty, I intended to propose to you that I should be apprenticed to some

Apprenticed you oh, Lawrence, said Mrs. Towers, bursting into tears.

Yes, dearest mother, and why not? Great men have risen from all positions. Look at John Hunter, at Franklin, at Quintin Matsys, and a hundred more. God's help, and man's endurance, can master anything. And for the name of trade, why mother, dear, at the last great day it will matter nothing what we were called here, Titles will be lost in the good man's deeds.

I thought you were ambitious, Lawrence?

So I am; but not, I think, of any particular name or place. I wish to be great, and that, by God's favour, I *will* be. There are great men in all positions, and where God places me, there I will do my best, and then, in His eyes and yours, mother, I know I shall be great, but do not cry so owny, continued the boy, using the caressing term which he and his sisters and brother had coined when little children, or I shall wish I had not said all this; let us talk about de Vere, and his coming here. Have you quite settled it?

Mrs. Towers shook her head, she could not speak.

I am glad of that, because if you will let me, I should like to speak to him first. Do you really think that his coming, would enable you with comfort to go on as we have done since we came here.

Yes, replied Mrs. Towers, in a low voice, if you and Wyndham remain contented with the same frugal treatment. His coming will increase our means one third.

When are you to decide?

Tomorrow. I promised Doctor Ashton to write, or see him after school to−morrow.

May I see de Vere first?

If you wish it, of course. But I fear you do not like the plan, Lawrence, and if so, do not hesitate to speak frankly.

Indeed you are mistaken I do like it, but I want an explanation with de Vere about something which has vexed me.

Then indeed you had better see him. It would not be well to enter upon any arrangement, while a misunderstanding remains between you.

The next morning, to Lawrence's great surprise, when he met Harry at the Chapel door, instead of the hasty nod which had vexed and puzzled him for so many days, de Vere came up with a cordial smile, saying

You're late old fellow, what's kept you?

Before Lawrence could reply, the hall door of Mr. Foley's house opened, and out the master came. The boys capped as he passed through them, and as they followed him into the small lobby, the Clergyman half turned to Lawrence and Harry, and said,

Will you breakfast with me this morning?

Thank you, sir, replied de Vere, answering for both.

At nine then.

This was only the third time this compliment had been paid to Lawrence, and he justly considered it one of the greatest marks of approbation that he could receive. And if this was true of the masters in general, it was especially so of Mr. Foley, since he never was known to ask to his house or parties, an habitually idle or careless boy, however popular he might generally be. To go to Mr. Foley's then, was an honour of which the boys were proud and ambitious. Archer Trelawney, although a resident in Mr. Foley's house, never progressed beyond the boy's hall and study; after the first half year of his school life at Bury, he never visited his master.

When chapel and school were over, the boys had but one quarter of an hour before breakfast, and Lawrence went with Harry into the little washing room appropriated to the use of the boys during the day, to brush off the dust from his shoes and clothes, and smooth his curly hair. When this was done, they went out into the entrance court, and sat down upon the long bench under Mr. Talbot's windows, and nearly opposite the Doctor's gates.

As soon as they were seated, and Harry had produced his knife for the purpose of putting an extra flourish to the initials he had cut some days before, Lawrence said, abruptly,

Are we friends, de Vere?

Friends! repeated Harry, turning round with a stare of astonishment, what do you mean?

Nothing, if you don't.

Nothing, if I don't, what are you driving at, Towers, speak out!

You have been very strange lately fought shy of me everywhere hardly spoken, and made excuses to get rid of me. In fact, shirked me regularly; now I want to know if you meant it?

Meant it, of course I did, did you ever know me do a thing I didn't mean.

Then, said Lawrence, our friendship is over. I am not so poor spirited as to force myself upon any fellow's company.

Perhaps not, returned de Vere cooly, but if a fellow forces himself upon yours in this way, just tell me how you're to help yourself.

And saying this, he rose, and putting his arm within that of his companion, turned round and stared at him.

You're rude, de Vere, said Lawrence, jerking his arm violently to free himself, and speaking under his breath, for his temper was roused.

Well, I know that, and you're silly.

Am I, retorted Lawrence, struggling.

Yes, to quarrel and take offence with your best friend, because he tells you the truth. I did shirk you, but I had a reason for it which you deserve not to know, for being such a muff as to suspect me.

You could have no reason for shirking me, and then owning it in this way.

Would you have had me shirk you, and deny it, you piece of contradiction?

Well then, what would you have had me do, just tell me, and let me see if I can't oblige you.

Nonsense, if you want to shirk me, I'm not inclined to disappoint you.

Very well. I'll tell you then when next I wish to indulge myself in that way; for the present, I should prefer your society. Come, Towers, what's the matter with you? you're as touchy as I am, you're not really offended, are you?

What would you be in my place? answered Lawrence, angrily.

I don't know, perhaps savage, perhaps amused perhaps I should fume, perhaps I should laugh, it depends very much upon who it was who vexed me. If it was any one I cared about, I should be savage.

At this moment the school bell chimed nine.

Come, Lol, don't let us spar, till we fancy we are in earnest. If I have vexed you, it was with a good motive, and so you'll own when I tell you what it was. You're the last fellow on earth I'd wilfully vex, and that you ought to know by this time. Now let's go to Mr. Foley's; what, you're not convinced yet? I had a secret, and I was afraid you'd find it out, are you satisfied now?

A light seemed to break upon Lawrence.

Had it anything to do with the Doctor's visit to my mother yesterday? he asked, eagerly.

I'll tell you some day come along, it is past nine.

'When the boys reached Mr. Foley's house, they found him busy in his terrace garden. The door leading to the steps upon the terrace, was open, and when Mr. Foley saw his visitors enter the dining room, he called to them to join him at his work.

I want to tie up these carnations before breakfast, the wind blew them about sadly last night. Will you help me?

Oh yes, sir, with pleasure.

Here is some bass then. You have each of you a knife I dare say.

When the carnations were all secured, Mr. Foley and the boys stood together upon the upper terrace admiring their work, and discussing the relative beauties of the flowers, and had just decided upon adjourning to breakfast, when one of the small hard balls used in the fives court, and aimed by some unknown hand, struck Mr. Foley so violently upon the left temple, that it caused him to stagger, and catch at de Vere for support.

For a few seconds he appeared to be stunned, and the blood trickled rapidly from the wound. The boys were dreadfully alarmed, and as they could not leave him to bring assistance, called loudly, hoping that some one would hear them, and come to their relief. But the boys were all either at breakfast, or in their studies, the servants employed at their work, so that the cries upon Mr. Foley's terrace were never heard.

Happily, however, the blow was not sufficiently powerful to deprive Mr. Foley of consciousness, it only stunned him for a little time, and in a few minutes he was enabled, by a great effort, to walk up the steps to his dining room.

Once there, and seated in an easy chair, restoratives were quickly applied, so that by the time the medical man who had been sent for came, a large swelling and violent head ache were all the traces left of the blow.

Chapter 7.

While the Doctor was with his patient, Harry and Lawrence returned into the garden, and close by the spot where they had stood before, but almost hidden from sight by a lavender bush under which it had rolled, they found the ball.

The instant Lawrence saw it, he changed colour, and taking it from Harry, examined it closely.

Whose can it be? said de Vere, it's a ball I've seen somewhere I know it by that blue face.

Do you, repented poor Lawrence, rubbing the ball hard against his sleeve.

What are you doing, you'll rub out the mark? said Barry, stretching forth his hand to stop him.

Shall I well what does it matter? replied Lawrence, turning sharp round to avoid the interruption.

Everything, if we lose that mark we may have some difficulty in finding out who threw the ball, while if it remains, we can easily trace him, it's so very peculiar I should know it among a hundred. Why Towers, what have you done are you mad? cried de Vere, as with one sweep of his arm Lawrence sent the ball spinning far out of sight, and then stood gazing silently upon its track.

What ails you this morning, Towers? repeated Harry, angrily, you seem to me to be out of your senses; how on earth are we to find that ball again. Such a vile, cowardly, diabolical, blow, I'd give the best thing I have, to know who struck it, and I'll find it out yet; I will know whose ball that was.

It was mine, said Lawrence, quietly, turning to de Vere with a face from which every trace of colour was gone.

Yours?

Yes.

Impossible!

It was on my desk that you saw it, the blue mark was a likeness of Trelawney.

There may be two there must be, said Harry, vehemently, now becoming as pallid as his friend.

No I know it is mine I have another reason for being positive. Trelawney was savage at my drawing him, and struck his knife across the face. I saw the cut on that ball.

But you were here, said de Vere, recovering his composure, everybody knows that, so even if the ball was yours, somebody else must have thrown it, you could not.

Of course.

Then why did you throw it away?

Because it was this morning upon my table at home.

Then how? oh Towers! exclaimed de Vere, as the suspicion which had blanched Lawrence's cheek, rushed into his mind.

But it is impossible, Wyn.

Don't say it, de Vere, for God's sake, don't say it.'

But I will say it, you are wrong, you are suspecting the wrong person. If that ball really is yours, somebody has got at it, who owes you a grudge, and it was more to hurt you than Mr. Foley, that it was thrown. We must find it out. Don't look so miserable, Towers, it was no more Wyndham who threw that ball than it was me, and so we shall find; cheer up.

But Lawrence could not cheer up. He knew what de Vere didn't, that a great jealousy of Mr. Foley's notice of himself had long existed in the mind of his brother, that he fancied himself unjustly slighted, and that only that very morning he had used angry and passionate words when he overheard the invitation which had been given. Trelawney had been his companion at the time, and Lawrence too well knew his artful, cautious, and evil influence, to doubt that this was the result. To him the truth was terribly apparent, he had no doubt that, urged by Trelawany's taunting, cunning words, Wyndham in a moment of passion, had thrown the ball, never intending to hurt Mr. Foley, only to frighten him.

Up and down the terrace, silently and sadly, the two boys walked, for although de Vere never for an instant shared his friend's suspicion, yet he grieved to see the suffering in which that suspicion involved Lawrence, and he remained silent from respect to his feelings.

At last a servant appeared at the garden door, and told them that Mr. Foley requested they would take some breakfast as quickly as they could, in a room to which he would lead them, and then go into school. The man further said that his master's head ached so severely, that he would be unable to attend to his school duties that day.

I don't want any breakfast; I'd rather go into your study, and be quiet, said Lawrence.

And so would I, I could not eat, even if I sat down; so we won't trouble you, Tyler.

And away they went. There was no one in the study when they entered, and Lawrence sat down, and hid his face in his hands.

Come, Towers, don't fret, said Harry, affectionately, there is no need for it. I wish you could feel as sure as I do, that Wyndham has had nothing to do with this business it isn't like him. He might get in a towering rage, and knock a fellow down, but to go on the sly, and strike a coward's blow like this, isn't in him. It's much more in the way of that precious friend of his. Lawrence made no reply, and de Vere went on.

What makes you so sure? There's something in the background you haven't told me. I know there is; I don't want you to tell me anything you don't like, Towers, but if any thing has happened which I don't know, to make you fancy that you have cause to suspect Wyndham, perhaps if you'd trust me with it, we might find out between us that it's no cause at all. You arc rather given to doubt people, as I know by experience, and your suspicion of your brother, may be like that you nursed up about mc, quite without foundation. If you can trust me, tell me, if not, I shan't be offended.

And so urged, Lawrence told all. His friend's face grew thoughtful and perplexed, as the narrative went on, and when it was finished, Lawrence said

Well now, what do you think?

Just as I did before that Wyndham is not guilty, but that somebody has a plot to make him appear so, and that it will be difficult to clear him if once his name is mentioned. Luckily, nobody saw the ball but us.

What shall I do?

Nothing. You're not bound to tell your suspicions; and if we keep quiet, we may find out the right person, by seeing who makes the first stir, so be silent.

But this was soon proved to be impossible. The next day Mr. Foley was very ill indeed, the next much worse, and the affair began to assume a serious aspect.

All this time, in obedience to his friend's advice, Lawrence had maintained perfect silence, although, as soon as it was known that he and de Vere had been with Mr. Foley when he was wounded, all the school crowded round them to enquire and surmise, but the brief unsatisfactory answers they gave, quickly dispersed their persecutors.

At last, however, on the afternoon of the second day, Doctor Ashton sent for Harry and Lawrence into his study.

Lawrence's heart beat fast, and his breath came quick, but de Vere was as calm and self−possessed, as if he were going up to repeat a well−learned lesson.

This is a sad affair, said the Doctor, when the boys were seated in the chairs to which he pointed, Mr. Foley is seriously ill, and I have sent for you, to see if you can give me any clue to discover how, and by whom, the injury was done. You were both with him when it happened, and may, I hope, be able to help me in my search for the offender. Did you see anybody?

No, sir."

The blow must have been directed from the left end of the terrace by the library. There are no trees there, are there, where a person could shelter himself?

No, sir.

Did you look round when Mr. Foley was struck, to see if you saw any one?

No, sir.

How was that?

We were too much frightened by Mr. Foley's appearance.

Aye, at first perhaps, but afterwards?

When we did look round there was nobody about, except some little girls playing in the ball−court as they went through.

Have you any idea what it was, that was thrown at Mr. Foley? It could not have been a stone, that, would have fractured the bone, and yet it must have been small and hard?

Harry, who had answered all the previous questions, made no reply to this.

The Doctor repeated it.

It was a fives ball, said Lawrence, in a low voice.

Indeed! exclaimed Doctor Ashton, moving in his chair, for he was beginning to get excited, this is very strange; you never mentioned this before. Where is the ball?

I threw it away, sir, replied Lawrence, respectfully, but in a very low tone.

Threw it away! the ball that struck Mr. Foley?

Yes, sir.

Good heavens! boy were you mad? cried the Doctor, angrily.

Lawrence made no reply, but looked down, sad and unhappy.

The only evidence! the only clue! no disinterested and sane person could have done such a thing. This must be explained. There is something in this, I fear, more than I see at present. Where were you standing when Mr. Foley was struck?

Close to him, sir, replied Harry.

And Towers?

Close to him too as close as we could be, for we were looking at a bunch of Clematis, which he pointed out.

Neither of you then could have done anything, without the other seeing it?

No, sir certainly not, answered de Vere, firmly, his face flushing, as he knew from his master's steady gaze the suspicion which had crossed his mind. His frank tone, and clear undaunted eye, satisfied the misgiving in the Doctor's thoughts.

Do you know who struck the blow?

No, sir, *I do not*.

Do you?

No, sir, I do not know, replied Lawrence, faintly, as before.

You do not *know* do you suspect then?

Lawrence made no reply.

Answer me, sir, I will have no equivocation. I am sorry to say that I do not understand your conduct in this matter at all. I desire you will answer me. Have you just cause to suspect anybody?

Still Lawrence spoke not.

The Doctor's colour came and went. He was not the man to be braved with impunity; Harry saw the rising storm, and in great distress, replied

Do not be angry with me for speaking, sir, but indeed Towers cannot answer your question truly.

How how is this you seem deeply involved in a mystery, young gentleman. You must be very well aware that such an explanation as this, or rather such an evasion, will not satisfy me?

I know it, sir, but I do not know what else to say indeed I do not.

This is very strange, said the Doctor, looking keenly at the distressed face of Lawrence, and the clear and honest, although agitated, countenance of de Vere, do you know who Towers suspects?

Yes, sir, and I know as well as if I had been by, that the boy he suspects, is innocent, replied Harry, firmly.

How can you tell that?

Because it is against his character.

The Doctor looked from one to another of the boys. The idea which had first occurred to him when he heard of the loss of the ball, returned; at last he said, sternly

You were both close to Mr. Foley?

Yes, sir, not half a yard apart, replied de Vere, in a brave unfaltering voice.

His tone again perplexed Doctor Ashton it was so unmistakeably the tone of integrity:

Well then, how is it that Towers suspects a boy whose character is, you say, so much opposed to this assassin−like act?

Indeed, sir, I cannot tell you; to tell you that, would be to tell you all, and bring suspicion upon the innocent. Pray do not be angry, sir. It is not from disrespect, or pride, or obstinacy, that I do not answer you, but from a real conviction that by doing so, I should do wrong.

Well, upon my word, this is the most extraordinary conduct I ever remember to have met with in my life. A gentleman is assailed, and seriously injured in his own garden, and of the two persons who are with him at the time, one makes away with the only evidence by which the assailant can be traced, and the other refuses to say upon whom the suspicion of his very singular companion rests! And you expect me to be satisfied with this?

Harry looked sorrowfully, but respectfully, at his master: he did not speak, for his sense of justice told him, that Doctor Ashton's hard sarcastic words, and manner, were fully warranted by appearances.

Do you know the danger you incur, the punishment for such mysterious and contumacious behaviour?

Lawrence looked up, frightened at these terrible words, and was about to speak, when Harry interfered

Do not speak, do not to save me, betray an innocent person Towers. You are quite, quite wrong, believe me that you are, and so you will discover one day. Pray forgive me, sir, added the brave boy, turning to Doctor Ashton, and do not think me insolent, or defiant, I am willing to bear any punishment you think fit to inflict, sooner than betray a boy to suspicion, whom I verily believe to be innocent.

Very well, sir, you have chosen your course, and mast abide by it. You will return to your study, and remain in confinement there, until you choose to give the information I ask. If that is not within a week, and Mr. Foley becomes worse, I shall send for your Father, and the consequences may be fatal to your future prospects. You cannot have forgotten that unhappy boy who was expelled last year. De Vere became deathly pale, but he bowed silently.

Upon you, Towers, I pass the same sentence, absence from school for one week, if before then, you do not confess all you know: after the expiration of that time, it will be a matter for grave consideration, whether even upon confession you can be permitted to return.

In spite of himself, tears rose to Lawrence's eyes as he looked at his friend; and again be was about to speak, when Harry rose, and came forward, saying

Good bye, Towers, we shan't meet perhaps for a week, and all that time I can do nothing to discover the real truth of this business, but you can, you will be at liberty, and must exert yourself. Things look very sad now, but I am not cast down, and don't you be either; only be sure that you are suspecting the wrong party, and all will come right yet.

Chapter 8.

Great was the astonishment and consternation in the School, when the result of the Doctor's interview with Lawrence and Harry was known.

The boys formed themselves into little groups in all corners, and talked the matter eagerly over; various were the surmises and opinions, and almost universal was the surprise and sorrow. Neither of the delinquents was what is called a popular boy, but all their companions had entertained the highest opinion of them. Neither was ever remembered to have told a tale, or shown up a school−fellow, to have done n mean or shabby action, or forfeited his word, and therefore, although they seldom joined the games or larks of the majority, there was little, if any, hostile feeling against them.

Well, I can't make out what's been discovered, said George Camac to a party of his companions, Towers and de Vere were both with Mr. Foley when he was hurt, but if they did it, he must have seen them, and then he'd have said so at first.

It's a queer business altogether, and has a very odd look, said Archer Trelawney, carelessly, I shouldn't have thought either of them would have split.

Nor I! exclaimed Milford.

Nor I! if they have split, but we don't know that they have, or that there was anything to split about, said a new boy, named Verulam.

No, we don't know, but it looks uncommonly like it, replied Archer, something has come out, of course, or the Doctor wouldn't have expelled one, and locked up the other.

He hasn't expelled him, cried Verulam.

Well, I don't know what you call it then home till he does something or other he's refused to do, and any body who knows Towers, knows he isn't a likely fellow to give in when he's once taken a freak into his head.

I thought you were his friend his Brother's regular chum, said Verulam.

So I am, but one's not to shut one's eyes like a beetle, I suppose.

No, but there's no need to open them like a one−eyed jackdaw, to see all on one side.

What do you mean by that, Darky? said Archer, calling Verulam by the nick−name the boys had given him, for his swarthy complexion.

Just what I say, and if you don't like it, you know how to mend it.

Come on then! cried Trelawney, squaring, I don't mean to have any of your impertinence.

Don't you perhaps you'll have that then! And with a sharp ringing blow he struck Archer upon the face. That'll teach you not to play fast and loose, and to keep a civil tongue in your head.

What's Towers given you to bully us? asked Trelawney, savagely.

Not us not us; we're not against him, cried several of the boys.

Less than I'll give you, if you don't look sharp, master Fox.

I'm not going to fight, just under Mr. Foley's windows, I'll leave that for you, cried Archer suddenly, dropping his arm.

Sneak! said some voice in the crowd.

Say what you like, cried Archer, I don't care, you won't provoke me again. Mr. Foley don't like rows, and I'm not going to be the one to vex him now he's ill.

Thoughtfully spoken, said Mr. Dauncey, one of the masters, who had approached unobserved by any but Trelawney, and overheard the last sentences, pray continue to be as careful when Mr. Foley is well.

Most boys would have been disconcerted at the cool sarcastic tone of Mr. Dauncey's voice, but Trelawney was never at a loss, and taking off his cap, in his graceful respectful manner, he said

I hope I shall, sir. I've never been in a fight since I was at school, and I hope I never shall be.

No! why I thought I saw something very like one just before I came up?

I've not struck a blow, sir, upon my honour, replied Archer.

Your arm was certainly raised?

On guard, sir on guard. Ask the boys if I struck.

What was it about?

Oh nothing, sir. Please don't ask me.

Why not?

Because other boys don't know the Doctor as well we do, sir, and they can't see the justice I don't mean that, but please don't say any more, it's all a mistake.

No, it's not a mistake I said nothing I don't mean, and nothing that I won't stick to! cried Verulam, boldly.

Very well, I daresay it was all my fault, I know I was hasty, but I was vexed let's shake hands, and forget it.

No. replied Verulam, firmly, I'll neither cheat nor be cheated, you shan't humbug me, whatever you may other people.

This was an unlucky speech, for as he spoke, the boy's eyes unconsciously fell upon his master, who fancied that the words were intended for him: and as months before, he had punished a boy upon Archer's clever misrepresentation, the speech had a peculiar significance. Mr. Dauncey was a most just and honourable man, the last master in the school who would punish rashly, angrily, or without what he considered ample cause, and feeling this, he was extremely sensitive upon the subject of the solitary ease in which he had ever been known to be led away by an unsupported, though specious, tale. True it was that Archer Trelawney's story had never been denied, and that even to this day he persisted in its truth, but although the web of deceit was so cunningly woven, that no eye could detect n weak place, still it was none the less perceived, and mistrusted, by every one.

But, as it happened, Verulam had never heard the story, and his words were solely intended for him to whom they were spoken; he was therefore as much astonished as hurt, when Mr. Dauncey said

You are not very particular in your choice of language, young gentleman, if that is a fair specimen of it. You have evidently been much to blame in this quarrel. Antrobus, he continued, addressing one of the Praeposters who passed by, see that these boys break up this noisy party, and disperse.

Trelawney's luck again, whispered Camac to his neighbour, as he moved away, everything seems to favour him who'd have thought this would have turned out for him, and against Verulam?

Nobody who didn't know Trelawney, and that he's clever enough to make white, look black, when it suits him I wouldn't offend him for a trifle.

Nor I.

Nor I till the next time, and that shall be the last, said Verulam, who now joined them, I neither fear him, nor care for him; I will neither tell lies, nor make white look black, but I'll teach him to fear and care for me both. Our next row shall be the last, and he shall remember it.

And thenceforward, although he knew it not, there was a watchful, untiring eye upon all Trelawney's movements. Nothing that he did, little that he said, escaped the knowledge of his enemy. His hatred was like a bloodhound upon his path, following him step by step.

Verulam was a quick clever boy, full of bold and straightforward ingenuity, and having once formed a plan, was not likely to be baffled in carrying it out. He had observed the cautious, wily tact with which Trelawney always contrived to lead others into mischief, and avoid implication himself, and he determined to leave no exertion untried, to unmask and expose him.

Meanwhile the happy Cottage circle was sadly changed. Lawrence, who felt his disgrace bitterly, seldom left the room where he pored over his lessons all day long. Mrs. Towers, to whom of course his motives were unknown, was grieved and mortified by what appeared his obstinacy in refusing to give any explanation, (she had yielded to his earnest entreaties that she would not at present enquire from the Doctor,) and the girls were almost heartbroken at the change. Wyndham, who had besought and prayed for his brother's confidence, and only met short and abrupt rejections, now offended and angry, left him to his own will. While Lawrence himself, suffering unmerited shame, obloquy and distrust, threatened with the ruin of all his hopes, with the life−long disgrace of expulsion, moved about silent and sad. Had he followed the impulse of his own heart, he would have told Wyndham frankly of his suspicion, and asked him either to confess its justice, or disprove it, but the memory of all that de Vere was bearing, that it might not be told, the entreaties he had used, the plans he had urged, made it appear a point of honour to remain silent. Besides there was a strange, undefined, although strong, belief in his mind, that in some way that he could not see, help would arrive. That even, in the last extremity, God would make some way for him to escape, and therefore he was silent, only praying for the aid which He has promised, to all who suffer wrongfully.

In this way nearly a fortnight went on, Mr. Foley continued very ill, and a gloom hung over the whole school. A small unoccupied study had been appropriated to de Vere, and except at morning chapel, and evening prayer in the upper school, he was never seen by his companions. It was remarkable how cheerful and well the boy looked under this severe punishment, he seemed to have changed characters with Wyndham Towers, who since his brother's disgrace had lost his happy buoyant spirits, and had become silent and unsociable. Yet there was nothing insolent, daring, or even disrespectful in Harry's demeanour, on the contrary, it was unusually courteous and deferential, equally free from the slightest tinge of servility, or indifference.

Doctor Ashton was perplexed and annoyed; believing, as he did, that Harry was in some strange way connected with the assault upon Mr. Foley his unexceptionable conduct now, puzzled him exceedingly. He was also as much surprised as displeased, at the continued absence of Mrs. Towers, who ought, he very justly supposed, to have made instant enquiries respecting the cause of her son's temporary expulsion. Altogether the affair was very mysterious, and at last became a subject of serious uneasiness.

Mrs. Ashton, with whom alone of all the school, Harry had ever been a favourite, was deeply grieved by his unaccountable behaviour. Nothing could induce her to believe him guilty, and yet how could he be innocent. Twice during his holidays he had been her sole companion, and she had learned to have great faith in his integrity. If he were doing wrong, it was, she felt assured, from a mistaken view of what was his duty. Nothing could persuade that kind and gentle lady that Harry had knowingly done ill, or connived at it.

Let me see him, Doctor Ashton, she said to her husband, when, at the expiration of the third week of the prescribed month, he told her that he was about to write to Mr. de Vere, preparatory to Harry's expulsion, I am sure that he will confess to me, if he does not believe himself bound to secrecy. I cannot bear the idea of his being

expelled. Poor boy no mother, no friends. He must not be expelled, if it is possible to avoid it.

Harry was sitting at the window of his little room, gazing out upon the clear autumn evening, when Mrs. Ashton entered. He sprung from his chair instantly, and stood respectfully before her. She had always been very kind to him, and he knew that some benevolent wish to serve him, was the reason for her visit now.

I am very sorry to see you here, de Vere, she said, taking a chair beside the one from which he had risen, sit down, I want to talk to you. Mr. Foley is very ill.

Indeed! I thought he was much better, I am very, very sorry. He is in no danger, I hope?

I do not know I trust not, but we cannot be certain at present. It was a cruel blow, de Vere.

It was, indeed, a shameful, cowardly blow, replied Harry, warmly, so kind, and good, and just, as Mr. Foley always is to us all, it is an infamous thing.

And yet you screen the boy who did it?

I! oh no, if I *knew* who it was, even if it were my own brother, or best friend, I would keep no faith with him.

I do not understand you, de Vere, why are you here except for concealing the author of this outrage?

Not for that oh, not for that; you surely did not think I knew who it was; oh, you surely did not think so ill of me, and Mr. Foley, the kindest friend I've had in the school! And as he spoke, the fire of indignation flashed brightly in his eyes.

Then what is it for? Towers knows who the boy is, and the missile with which the deed was done, and he has destroyed the last; and you refuse either to disclose the name of the guilty party yourself, or allow him to do it?

I beg your pardon, madam Towers does not know, he only suspects.

Why not then say whom he suspects?

Because the evidence against the person he suspects is so strong, that if he cannot disprove it, although he is innocent, he will be judged guilty.

But if he is innocent he can disprove it, of course?

Not if the whole thing is a plot, as I believe it is, to ruin him.

A plot! surely you are dreaming, de Vere, who is there in this school who would lay plots to injure his companions?

Time will show.

It will, indeed, said Mrs. Ashton, solemnly, may it prove you innocent.

It cannot prove me guilty, either of act or part, or knowledge of this deed, replied Harry, proudly.

Have you well considered the consequences of such extraordinary silence, de Vere? The disgrace of being expelled, and for such n reason; the ruin of your future prospects, the anger and distress of your Father, the

mortification and disappointment of Doctor Ashton, who has taken so much pains for and with you, and the ingratitude to Mr. Foley?

The boy bent his head between his hands, and Mrs. Ashton continued

Think of all this, de Vere, and consider well whether you may not be misled by a false sense of honour. You are very young to judge for yourself in so serious a matter, and remember that no after circumstances, no future explanations, or even discoveries, can wipe away the disgrace of expulsion from this school. It will cling to you through life do what you will, go where you will, the fame of this degradation will follow you. It will impede your progress, baffle your energies, and, perhaps, ultimately subdue you. I have known of more than one such result even in my experience. Now, is it wise, is it right, to incur this danger? Can you reconcile it to your sense of duty to God, your Father, and yourself? and, even if you could, do you owe nothing to the School where you have been educated, and the Masters who have instructed and borne with you; have you no care for the well−being of your companions, whose comfort, safety, and integrity are endangered by the presence of any person who could do the evil deed from which we are all suffering now? Have you a right to forget everything and everybody but yourself, and persist in following your own idea of honour without consulting others and older persons, who would care as jealously for you, as for those in whose behalf they now appeal to you?

But I have promised, pledged myself, and he is innocent innocent as I am; no, no, I cannot betray him to ruin! cried Harry, in great agitation.

I do not ask you to betray although it is sin to keep a guilty secret to the injury of others I only ask you to confide in some person in whom you have faith, and to take his opinion. If he says that you are doing right, you will suffer with satisfaction, knowing that you are so; if wrong, you will give up your own views for the welfare of your own companions. Oh, do this, de Vere, I entreat you do this.

I wish I could, indeed, indeed I do. If it were only to please you, I would do it if I could, but I cannot; the more I think of the circumstances, the more certain I am that the person upon whom suspicion must rest, is innocent.

Then cannot you convey to the minds of other people the same conviction you are not the only honest, candid judge in the school. There must be others who know the person as well as you do, and who would judge him by that knowledge?

There is only one person who knows him as well, and he, I dare say, would rather have nothing to do with it; he is of course so angry.

Whom do you mean?

Mr. Foley.

Would you confide in him?

I don't know. I dare hardly say I would, it is such a terrible responsibility for me to take no, it must remain as it is.

If Mr. Foley is well enough to see you, will you talk to him, as you have done to me?

Oh yes, if he will listen to me; but if I could tell anybody, it would be Doctor Ashton.

Then why do you hesitate? one more week, and it will be too late.

I cannot help it. Do not be angry with me, I am very, very grateful for your kindness, and I would do anything in my power to prove it, but this is impossible.

Do not say so, see Doctor Ashton or Mr. Foley, confide in them, and follow their advice. Your welfare must be as dear to them as that of any boy in the school; they will do nothing at the expense of your integrity, they will sacrifice nothing that you ought to hold dear, even for the sake of justice. Let me entreat you then to see one or other of the masters; do not give me the pain of knowing that you have wilfully destroyed yourself. Eight years since, de Vere, when first you came among us a little solitary boy, I tried to make this school as much as might be, like a home, and if I have succeeded, if you owe any one comfort or happiness, or protection from unkindness to me, return it to me now by listening to my entreaties in your behalf, spare me the real pain, of feeling that I have thrown away my regard.

Dear Mrs. Ashton, said the boy, his voice trembling with many emotions, I do owe you very much, more than I can ever repay; I own it gratefully, but I cannot, and I ought not, to return good deeds with evil ones still I will do all I can. If, by the expiration of the month Doctor Ashton fixed, the real criminal is not discovered, I will then tell him how I am placed, request permission to see Towers, and, if he will give me leave, tell the Doctor all I know. But let the affair end as it may, I do beg you to believe that I am guiltless of any part in it, which could displease you, and I solemnly declare that I do not know the person who threw the ball, and that I believe he who is suspected, is as innocent as I am.

And such is the charm of truth, that Mrs. Ashton did believe it.

Meanwhile, Verulam was not idle. By some mental process, which he could neither trace nor define, he had come to the conclusion that Archer Trelawney was the assailant of Mr. Foley. Nothing which happened, nothing which Archer did or said, caused or confirmed his suspicions; his manner was the same as usual, his habits, sayings, and doings the same, and yet every day made Verulam more positive that he was right.

To find the ball which Towers or de Vere had thrown away, was now his great object, for he saw at once that there must be something singular about it, to have made them so anxious to destroy it. This wish he communicated to Inglis, a town boy, and friend of the Towers', who was also the boy who had been unjustly punished at Trelawney's instance.

You have hours and hours after we're locked up, he said, and can search unmolested we can judge pretty well the length of a cast from the terrace, and we'll take the ground yard by yard, but we'll find it.

But there's the Doctor's garden?

I'll ask his leave to search that, too, I know he'll give it, when I tell him what it's for.

You won't tell him whom you suspect?

What a muff you must take me for; no, thank you, I'm not so green as to go to Doctor Ashton with such a tale as that, after my row with Trelawney the other day.

As Verulam had expected, Doctor Ashton readily gave his permission to search his garden, he was to the full as anxious as the boy.

Chapter 9.

It is an invaluable custom in Bury School, for the boarders to assemble for prayers every night at nine o'clock, in the large upper school room, previous to which, a passage of the Holy Scriptures is read and explained to them by the head master.

Immediately before the desk at which the Doctor sits, are two forms, the nearest of which is very close to him. Upon the evening following Mrs. Ashton's visit to de Vere, it happened that he, Trelawney, and Verulam sat together upon this bench, exactly opposite to Doctor Ashton, and the bright lamp−light streamed full upon their faces.

The passage chosen by the Doctor, was the latter part of the 11th verse of the 140th Psalm, Evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him.

There was something singularly appropriate to the circumstances which had lately taken place in the school, in this brief and solemn passage, and the manner of the head master, always impressive, was this night peculiarly so.

It was evident that the selection of this striking text had been made with great care, and with a view to some particular object, and what that object was, and whether it was likely to be attained, was soon perceptible in the countenances of the three boys who sat together opposite the master. Harry's face was clear and bright, with an expression of confidence and hope Verulam's was eager, watchful, and attentive Trelawney's was anxious, nervous, and uncomfortable. He turned from Verulam's steady, unquailing gaze, and changed colour repeatedly.

There is one single word in this verse which is most significant and full of meaning, said Doctor Ashton, looking up from his notes, and speaking to the boys, and that is *hunt*. No word could be more expressive, none convey more clearly, the idea which the Psalmist intended. It implies swiftness, determination, zeal, and activity. A resolution which will not fail, a perseverance which will not be tired, and a purpose which will not be baffled. The prey once started, the quarry once in sight, it is hunted to the death. No sportsman, as you well know, having set his game on foot, wearies till the chase is done. If it escapes, again and again the cover in which it was lost, is drawn, again and again it is tracked and pursued, and at last, wearied and panting, worn out with fatigue and useless cunning, the victim is run down and killed. Now, if this is true of earthly sportsmen if they, having no wrong to avenge, no pledge to keep so perseveringly follow their game to its death, what must be the pursuit of an offended GOD, who has pledged Himself to the overthrow of the wicked, and who has life and death, prosperity and ruin, concealment and discovery, in His hands? The evil deed once done, upon the track of the doer is let loose a train of avenging circumstances, each one an agent of punishment, and all working together silently, but surely, for his ruin. Sleeping or waking, plotting or at rest, GOD's eye follows him. No plan, however warily or cunningly framed, no device, however cleverly executed, can deceive, or avert the doom which has been incurred by guilt. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And the best laid stratagem, the most artful concealment, are as transparent to GOD, as the daylight is to us. Nothing can escape Him, for The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Night, with its solemn darkness, which, to our sight, shrouds all the deeds done under its cover, is no cloak to Him, for to Him darkness and light are both alike. Haste, the multitude of beings upon earth over whose actions, GOD keeps watch, can never protect us, For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings. Upon every single living creature, child and man, prince and peasant, does an unsleeping eye rest continually. No youth, no insignificance, can hide us, no age, no importance, protect us.

Time is in the eye of an Almighty Lord as nothing, for to him A thousand years are as nothing, seeing that is past as a watch in the night. And rank and riches are no protection, for GOD accepteth not the person of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor. If then darkness cannot hide, insignificance cannot screen, time nor riches protect us, we must be in the hands and in the power of an Almighty Being; and if He is almighty, and it is true that, GOD is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of Man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? then it must follow that His promises and threats are immutable, and that what He speaks, He will most surely perform.

And now what has He said by the mouth of His servant David,? That evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him. A fearful and terrible threat, but one which has over and over again, been fulfilled in the sight of all men. I should think there is scarcely a boy now before me, however young he may be, who has not seen in the case of others, or experienced in his own, the truth of this. He has done wickedly, deceitfully, disobediently he has had no confederate he has told no companion, and he thinks himself safe from detection. No one, he believes, can tell of, or betray him, for he was alone, unaided, and, therefore, unseen. Well, all goes on quietly for days it may be weeks or months the deed is, perhaps, almost forgotten, and he is perfectly easy, rejoicing in the success of his cunning, and thinking how cleverly he has managed. But, all at once, some little circumstance that he had overlooked, because (as he thinks) it was so small, some careless word, some unnecessary caution, awakens suspicion, leads to enquiry, and eventually discovers all.

It was such a little thing, he says to himself, I didn't think it was worth caring about; who would have thought *that* was of any consequence? no one, but it was GOD's doing, the means he had from the first appointed, to overthrow the crafty plan, and it was sufficient.

It is absurd and presumptuous above all things to imagine that we can conceal a crime, or escape its punishment. Ask your own hearts, your own experience, if you ever succeeded in your plans to deceive GOD's vigilance. Has not some unexpected circumstance, some unusual occurrence, never provided against, because never foreseen, *always* betrayed you; and if it has not, if any are now triumphing in the thought of successful wickedness, of evil not found out, I would have him not boast; life is not over, each day is charged with its own mission, one will be that of discovery, for be sure thy sin will find thee out. It may not be to−day, or to−morrow, this week, or even this year, but it is none the less sure, because it is delayed. I have known instances of sin, which have been hidden from man's sight for years, discovered at the most critical time of the sinner's life, and cause his utter ruin, and the higher he has climbed the ladder of life, the greater has been his fall. It is always very merciful of GOD, when he suffers the sins of childhood to be discovered early; for my experience, as well as that of all who have the care of youth, furnishes many, and sad cases, where the reverse has been His will. I have seen the boyhood, youth, and manhood, of a promising and clever person, utterly destroyed by the commission of one sin, and the ruinous scheming and struggling, to conceal it. Through every action of life, through every circumstance, hope and endeavour, ran this fatal memory, rose this undying obstacle for, remember this, no sin ever stands alone, unless repentance and confession follow immediately upon its commission. And believe this also, that the man whose boyhood has been familiar with schemes, and lies to hide them, will, as a man, continue the same course, only exerting deeper craft and cunning to conceal his vices. An evil youth, except in rare instances, matures into more evil manhood, and respecting the fate of such, we have the solemn warning of the text, which I am endeavouring to explain to you, Evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him.

Let me then entreat all of you to beware of sinning in the false and delusive hope that you may conceal it, and if there be any now present, upon whose conscience a guilty secret lies, let him be sure that no artifice, no care can hide it long, *it must come out*, for GOD is pledged to hunt it to its overthrow, and nothing but repentance can avert his wrath.

Now let us pray humbly and earnestly to GOD, that upon the minds of all of us, he will graciously impress so wholesome a conviction of his hatred of sin, as to make each shun it with unfeigned abhorrence. And, above all, let us implore him to give us grace so to believe the text we have now heard, that we may regulate our lives in his fear and obedience.

Blunderingly, stupidly, as if half bewildered, Trelawney knelt down, but his strange manner, contrasting, as it did, with the ease of his companions, attracted the Doctor's notice. Suspicion was excited, and the first ray of light broke upon the darkness. The prayer was hardly said, the grace hardly spoken, when Archer rose from his knees. He had not been thinking of what he was doing. and a pause in the sound of the Doctor's voice, caused him without thought to imagine that prayer was over, and so he rose, the only standing figure in the room. The moment he glanced round, and saw his kneeling companions, the truth flashed upon him, and in great confusion

he met the steadfast look of his master, whose penetrating eye rested steadily upon him. He was as pale as marble when the whole school having risen, the Doctor said

You are strangely nervous to night, Trelawney, the prayers and remarks seem to have made an extraordinary impression upon you.

I have been ill all the day, sir; I was lying down when Camac called me to prayers.

The Doctor looked to Camac, who replied

Yes, sir, and when he got up he seemed so giddy that he could scarcely stand I wanted him to let me tell Mr. Dauncey.

Oh, very well, that is some excuse for this irreverent behaviour, which, I must say, is unusual with you. On the ground of illness, I pardon it.

And thus the Doctor's newly−aroused suspicion was quieted. Not so, however, Verulam's, for he knew that the illness of which so much had been made, was only fatigue from cricketing, and the giddiness only the result of being half−awakened from a tired sleep.

Chapter 10.

The next morning, after school, several of the boys, among whom were Wyndham Towers, Trelawney, and Verulam, met in the lower hall adjoining Doctor Ashton's house. A trifling dispute had arisen among the fourth form respecting some play arrangements, about which they could not agree, and they had met to decide it. One of the Praeposters, a good−natured lad, to whom all the juniors liked to appeal, had consented to sit as judge, and everybody who could give any evidence upon the disputed point, was summoned to do so.

Now just divide yourselves, said Antrobus, into two parties. All who hold the same opinion go together, and, above all things, if I am ever to get at the facts, don't talk above one at a time.

But to confine school boys' tongues by such arbitrary rules is no easy matter, and before many minutes every boy in the room was talking as fast as he could.

Silence, silence, *silence!* shouted Antrobus, who's to tell what you say in this row. If you can't agree to talk one or two at a time, let it be put to the vote. Let each party choose a spokesman to explain its views, and when he has set the matter forth, let each of those who agree with him put a ball into some fellow's cap marbles shall be ayes, and fives−balls noes.

A very good plan Trelawney speak for us, cried one faction.

Yes, and you for us, Verulam, said the other side. Verulam spoke first. Honest, straightforward, and manly he did his party justice, but no more. Nothing was turned or twisted, to make it look right. Nothing was exaggerated or denied, everybody was satisfied, no one dazzled. He neither gained recruits from his opponents' ranks, nor lost a friend from his own.

Trelawney spoke next, and shrewd, clever, and careful, in a high degree, was his speech. He had observed every weak point in his adversary's ease, and turned it skilfully to his own advantage. All that was feeble in his own, he either passed by entirely, or glossed over. That which he could not wholly conceal, he tried to justify: upon that which was tolerably good, he expatiated until it looked brilliant, and every now and then, as he proceeded, he had

the triumph of seeing his party increased by deserters from the enemy. At last, amid loud cheers from his friends, Trelawney bowed over the concluding sentence of his speech.

Now for the votes, said the boys.

How do you go, Towers, you don't join either of us? how do you go?

Betwixt and between. he said, laughing, I don't think either of you are right.

Then you can't vote.

Well, I shan't break my heart.

Oh, stuff, vote half one way, half the other, cried Camac.

Silence! silence! and vote, shouted Antrobus, here give me a cap, and I'll hold it while you drop in your marbles and balls; it must be a large tile though, or it won't hold them all. Remember, marbles are ayes, and balls noes. Gently, gently, do, do things quietly; now then every fellow go to the window when he has voted, so there will be no confusion.

When all the voters had filed off as directed, Antrobus said

Now, Trelawney and Verulam as the champions of your parties, come forward and count the votes when I turn them out upon the table all the rest form a circle round it. Hollo! Verulam, you're beat hollow, the ayes have it to a dead certainty.

One, two, three, four balls, counted Verulam, but what a queer one this is, he continued, looking at an old fives ball, on which was a roughly−drawn portrait.

Where did you get it from? where is it? give it me, cried Trelawney, attempting to seize it.

I shan't, its not yours, what right have you to it more than any one else? said Verulam, holding up the ball above his head.

I have a right to it, give it me.

I shan't, is it yours?

Give it to him, Verulam, it's mine, said Wyndham.

Yours! I thought you told me you had lost it, cried Trelawney, turning fiercely round.

So I thought I had, but my mother found it this morning, in the pocket of a jacket I haven't had on for a month or more.

It's a lie; you knew you had it all along, said Archer, furiously.

You may think so if you like, but what good would it have been to me to tell a lie, replied Wyndham, angrily, what could it matter to anybody but me, whether I had lost the ball or not?

How long is it since you saw it last till to−day? asked Verulam, in a calm voice. The tone struck Trelawney instantly; he saw his indiscretion, and would fain have repaired it.

What does it matter, if the ball is Towers', give it him Verulam, I don't care about it, and I'm sorry I spoke so sharply.

No, I shall keep it I've a notion it may be useful, replied Verulam.

Nonsense man, what good can a shabby old thing like that, be to you; give it him back, and I'll give you a spicey new one that I bought yesterday.

No, thank you I've a fancy for this ball, and I mean to keep it, at any rate for an hour or two.

Two words to that, I should say, returned Trelawney, anxiously, the ball's Towers's.

Oh, you may have it, its an old thing, good for nothing, there's a great gash on one side of it, said Wyndham.

Thank you thank you, cried Verulam, joyfully, its worth a Jew's eye to me, and leaving the business in which he had been engaged, he began to move away through the crowd.

Where are you going, stop and finish the counting, said the boys.

I can't, I've something to do at once.

Nonsense, it can keep a few minutes, I daresay, said Archer, let's settle this counting, and then go where you like.

Yes, yes, said Antrobus, one thing at a time.

So, ungraciously enough, Verulam returned, first depositing the ball safely in his trousers pocket, and buttoning it carefully over.

There was a great deal of disputing, and many quarrel. some, angry words between the tellers as they fulfilled their duty, and at last Verulam threw the balls violently upon the table, and turning away, declared he would count no more. In his passionate haste, however, he stumbled over the end of a form, and fell, carrying Trelawney and Camac with him.

Now that serves you right, said Antrobus, as they struggled to disengage themselves from each other, and the form, you'll manage to do your duty quietly now I hope, you riotous champions. One would really think that it was a personal, instead of a party quarrel.

But all the quarrelling now, was on Verulam's side. The fall had completely sobered Trelawney, who was as quiet and silent as a mute.

Now then, said Verulam at last, I've done, ten balls and eighteen marbles, and this ball of Towers', and he put his hand into his pocket to produce it, then became deathly pale, as he cried out

I've lost it! somebody has robbed me, taken it out of my pocket.

Robbed taken it out of your pocket gone, repeated the boys.

Yes, I put it in, not five minutes since, when you called me back to count these balls, and now it is gone.

It rolled out in your fall, suggested Antrobus, you seem ball mad, Verulam.

So would you be if you knew all I know about that ball. If any of you have taken it for a lark, he said, addressing his companions eagerly, only say so, and I'll buy it back with the best thing I have I'll give anything I've got for that ball again, therefore don't keep it, unless you wish to injure the innocent, and assist the guilty.

What are you talking about, Verulam? said Antrobus, what do you mean by innocent and guilty you are as mysterious as a fortune−teller?

Give me the ball, repeated the boy again, entreatingly.

I haven't got it.

Nor I nor I, cried everybody.

Then you have, said Verulam, turning fiercely upon Trelawney, and seizing him violently, you have robbed me!

Hands off! said Archer, coolly, struggling with him, say what you like, if you can prove it, but hands off.

Yes fair play, you're wrong, Verulam, cried the boys, interposing.

Am I I know I'm not, search him.

Yes, search me, and welcome, answered Trelawney.

Now then, said Inglis, hoist him up.

And in a moment Trelawney was laid upon the table, and every article of his dress carefully felt over.

Well, have you found it? he said, with his cool sneer, as the boys released him, what a bully you are growing Darky, I'll make you remember this.

It's a shame, said Camac, one of Archer's partisans, Verulams always saying some abominable thing or other.

Yes, it's too bad, cried some younger voices.

He deserves skivering, said a very shrill young tone.

Do I! exclaimed Verulam, turning boldly, but with a very pale countenance, upon his assailants, I warn you not to try it I don't want to fight to−day, but I warn none of you to touch me. You've got the best of me now, he added, hooking at Trelawney, but it won't last remember the Doctor's words last night. And now boys, listen to me I've never told a tale, or split on any one of you, since I've been in the school, but I'm going to do so now I'm going straight from here to Doctor Ashton, and whoever thinks I ought to be skivered for anything I've said or done, can find me there if he wishes it.

Coward! tell tale! sneak! cried a chorus of boys, as Verulam finished, but he bit his lip hard, that he might not speak, and reached the door without uttering a syllable; notwithstanding that one or two marbles and balls, struck

him on the shoulders and body as he moved.

Don't strike him, said Camac, mimicking, he'll tell the Doctor,

Tell pie tit, your tongue shall be slit, and every little dog in town shall have a little bit, cried a small voice.

For a moment the enraged boy stopped and turned savagely round, he felt as if he could do some furious thing, but he met the cool sardonic smile of Trelawney, and making a great effort, he mastered the impulse, and went out of the room. Wyndham was near the door, and Archer said to him as he passed

Follow me, for your brother's sake.

Before he had descended the steps, from the inner court, Wyndham was by his side.

What do you mean what have you to do with Lawrence? he asked, sharply, for he did not like the idea of tale−bearers.

Do you know why he and de Vere are shut up, and kept from school?

No, not quite, because they won't tell something about a ball, I believe.

Who threw that ball the one which struck Mr. Foley I mean?

I don't know do you do they?

I can't tell, and I *think* you can't; and Verulam looking steadily into his companion's face.

Of course I can't what is it you mean, Verulam, I don't like your way of speaking, I can tell you?

Wait a bit, come with me to the Doctor's, and see if you don't understand it then, and help me to free your brother and de Vere.

I have come, sir, said Verulam to Doctor Ashton, when he was ushered into the library where the head master sat, with a story which is half suspicion, half fact, but which, I think, you ought to know. It is relative to this affair of Towers and de Vere. First, I ought to say that Towers, junior, whom I have brought with me, knows nothing that I am about to tell you, he does not even know his brother's offence.

How has not he told you? asked the Doctor, turning to Wyndham, in surprise.

No, sir, he forbade my asking him I only know what all the school does, but no particulars.

Strange very strange.

Well, sir, resumed Verulam, I have very little indeed to say, but I should like you, if you please, to tell de Vere that a painted ball belonging to Towers, junior, and which he mislaid a month or five weeks since, was found this morning by his mother, in the pocket of an old jacket which he has not worn all that time. That he brought it to school to−day, that its appearance caused great excitement in the manner of Trelawney, who claimed it, and that I, having got possession of it, and put it into my pocket, was robbed of it ten minutes after.

Robbed! cried Doctor Ashton.

Why surely, what is all this mystery about? the coloured ball it was Lawrence's, was it *that* which struck Mr. Foley? Oh, I see I see why neither de Vere nor Lawrence would speak my dear, good brother, and the boy burst into tears.

Don't fret, Towers, said Verulam, we shall clear it all up now, will you see de Vere, sir.

This moment a new light is indeed breaking ring the bell, Verulam, and while I send for de Vere, explain what you meant about being robbed.

Verulam obeyed, but before he had concluded his story, de Vere entered.

You sent for me, sir, said Harry, in a nervous, doubting voice, for he was alarmed by the summons, and especially by the unexpected sight of Wyndam Towers.

I did; Verulam has a communication to make to you. Harry turned eagerly to him.

This morning Mrs. Towers found in the pocket of one of Wyndham's jackets, which he has not worn for some weeks, an old fives ball, with a drawing in blue ink upon it.

My dear Wyn. said de Vere, with emotion, and seizing his hand, how glad I am, I knew you were innocent.

What of what of, de Vere?

Striking Mr. Foley. The ball which struck him was so exact a facsimile of yours, that poor Lawrence, who felt certain that he had seen it on his table in the morning, was equally sure that you were the culprit.

Me! what could make him or any one fancy me guilty of such a vile thing, said Wyndham.

Circumstances the words you had used in the morning, your vexation at not being asked to breakfast with us, the exact similarity of the ball we found in the garden, to that which he had given you, these all contributed to make him believe it; but what he suffered in doing so, and what he has borne since, sooner than betray you, you cannot imagine, Wyndham I believe it has pretty well broken his heart.

This then accounts for his throwing away the ball, and you refusing to say upon whom his suspicion rested?

Yes, sir. The evidence was very strong against Wyndham, so strong, that nothing but being able to prove that the ball was not his, could clear him. But all along I felt that he was innocent, and that it was a plot to revenge Mr. Foley's neglect of an individual, and throw suspicion upon the dearest relative of the favourite. I thought so at first, and I am sure of it now.

So am I, de Vere, so am I, said Verulam, and I know that we suspect the same person. I have not told you that the ball was stolen from me the moment I was foolish enough to notice, and claim it.

This is a very grave charge against some one, can you substantiate it?

No, sir, not at present, though I will tell you at once whom I suspect. It is Trelawney; but when I accused him of having the ball he defied me, and though he was searched, we could not find it. He is as cunning as a fox, and doubles and winds like a hare; but we shall have him yet, he'll run his length, and then we shall catch him. He hates Mr. Foley, I know he does, for favouring Towers and de Vere, and one or two others, and never noticing him, and he's thought to revenge himself upon the favoured and the favourer, at once.

What reason have you for supposing that Trelawney dislikes Mr. Foley?

Many, sir, that I cannot express or define.

He asked me for my ball many times, said Wyndham, thoughtfully, but I told him that I had lost it, and he it was, who made me say such savage things to Lawrence, on the day he and de Vere breakfasted with Mr. Foley. He said Mr. Foley was unjust, and that Lawrence toadied him.

This is very serious.

It is, sir, but it won't last, and cunning as he is, he knows it; how he trembled last night when you were talking to us.

I must consider all this before I decide what to do, replied Doctor Ashton, in the meantime de Vere, return to your room; if, upon investigation, I find that all is as has been stated, you will be set at liberty, and your friend recalled to school. What you have already suffered will, I hope, be punishment sufficient for the act of disobedience of which you were guilty, in refusing to obey my commands. I acknowledge that your position was a difficult one, but had you obeyed and told me all, I might have helped you; in all such eases, the safest rule is the plainest one, do as you are bid do the duty that lies nearest to you.

Chapter 11.

As Doctor Ashton had promised, he made the most careful and minute investigation. Every person who could corroborate or disprove the statements which had been made, was examined, and the result was, Wyndham's complete exoneration, and the pardon of his brother and de Vere. Nothing however, no ingenuity or research, could connect Trelawney in any way with the affair.

Both the balls being missing, no comparison could be made of the original with its copy, and even if it could, there was no evidence to connect Trelawney with either. The abstraction of the ball from Verulam's pocket, suspicious as it certainly was, also remained unaccounted for. Many of the boys began to look shy upon Archer, and Doctor Ashton had strong and well−grounded suspicions, which, though he could not justify by actual evidence, were yet conclusive to his own mind, and influenced his manner considerably.

All this was very galling to Trelawney, who so loved and courted popularity; but as there was a large strong party of the school vehement in his defence, and who looked upon him as a most injured and traduced individual, he tried to reconcile himself to the shyness of the few, and the cool distant manner of his master.

The only one who seemed thoroughly out of favour with his companions, and to have gathered nothing but discredit, was Verulam. The partisans of Trelawney made common cause against him, and even his adversaries gave him the cold shoulder; so thoroughly do boys hate a tale−bearer even in a righteous cause. To say that Verulam did not care for this, would be to do the boy great injustice. He did care, and that deeply, for his heart was warm and true, but he did not show it, he had that rare companion of courage, patience, and he was content to bide his time. He had gained the fast friendship of de Vere and Towers, and with that he endeavoured to be satisfied. Doctor Ashton too, although Harry and Lawrence had disobeyed him, felt in his inmost heart, greater sympathy with their chivalrous devotion, than with Verulam's angry and ready exposure of his school−fellow, for like all high−minded men, Doctor Ashton, although compelled sometimes to receive and act upon them, cordially detested tales. There might be circumstances, and this certainly was one, which fully justified exposure and frankness, but while the Doctor was ever ready to acknowledge the good which had resulted, the serious injury which had been prevented by Verulam's candour, he could not forget the personal, angry feeling which had dictated it. It was less a sacrifice of one principle to a higher one, than an impulse of revenge, and the gratification

of personal dislike. Ah! motives, motives, how holy ye should be, to make even good deeds pure.

As soon as Mr. Foley was tolerably well, he sent for the two boys who had suffered so much upon his account, and talked to them long and affectionately. He praised them warmly for the friendship and brotherly love they had displayed to each other, and to Wyndam, and bade then cherish such feelings as treasures and gifts from GOD. He would not stiffer any allusion to be made to the suspicions entertained by Harry, nor listen to any reproach.

We do not know who did it, my dear boys, let us therefore be slow to judge we can never do wrong by not suspecting, but we may, and too often do, inflict cruel injustice upon others by our rash and hasty suspicions. We will be patient, GOD will bring all hidden things to light, and make His ways clear, in His own good time.

And now let us talk about yourselves I am very glad to hear that you are for the future to spend your holidays together I hope nothing will occur to disturb the arrangements.

No, sir, nothing, I hope. Doctor Ashton has been so good as to settle everything, and Mrs. Towers has consented to receive me, so I think nothing can happen to prevent my going.

That is right. It will be beneficial, I trust, to both of you. But now tell me something about your occupations during the last three weeks, you have not been idle, I hope?

No, sir, oh no, said both the boys, and then ensued a long explanation of what they had done.

Very well very well, indeed. Although you have lost your marks during the last three weeks, you will find the value of your work now, every week will show you that you have done wisely, and, if you try, you have plenty of time to bring up your marks yet before Christmas. At the three last examinations you both gained prizes, and I hope you will carry away some at the next. It is sad to go back.

Yes, indeed, sir, it would be especially so for me, said Lawrence.

So it would for us all, Towers: none of us can afford to retrograde.

Just at this moment Mr. Wharncliffe came in, saying, as he knocked at, and immediately opened, the door

What are you fellows doing here? chattering like a nest of magpies. Why, Towers! I've not had a glimpse of your physiognomy this long time it's quite a new face to me now. But what's this I hear about a tea fight Foley, there's a report that you're going to do something handsome in that way?

Yes, I've promised to take a party of the boys, next half−holiday, to Ditton, we shall have Ward's six−oar boat, and shall be very glad of your company. You and Towers can both pull, can't you, de Vere?

Oh yes, sir.

Then there's Antrobus, and Verulam, and Spalding senior, and Hankey, and you two that will be a good crew I think, and I'll steer. We'll have the tea fight at Ditton, and come back by moonlight.

Capital arrangement that for a recent invalid, moonlight is considered healing, I believe, is it not? asked Mr. Wharncliffe. The boys laughed. They always did at Mr. Wharncliffe, he was so gay, good−humoured, and kind. He was an immense favourite in the school, for he entered with spirit into all the sports and plans of the lads; and although he never suffered them to forget the respect due to his position, yet he contrived, at all proper times, to put them thoroughly at their ease.

After a little more talk, which now that Mr. Wharncliffe was come, was principally between him and de Vere, Mr. Foley said

I will not keep you longer now, for I have a great accumulation of business since my illness, which must be attended to. Good bye, I am very glad to have had so good an account of you during the past three weeks, I prophesy that you will speedily reap the reward. Remember me to your brother, Towers, and tell him that I hope to see him among our party on Saturday.

A bright glow of grateful pleasure gleamed in Lawrence's dark eyes, at this kind and thoughtful invitation, and the happy smile with which he looked up at his master, was the best and amplest reward, that kind heart could receive. No wonder that all the boys honoured, and all who knew him, loved Mr. Foley. Gentle, just, and patient, always ready to listen to extenuating circumstances in favour of an offender, anxious to give his pupils pleasure, impartial, though firm, liberal, but unostentatious he presented a perfect picture of a Christian gentleman.

The row to Ditton is always a great treat to the Bury boys, and when, as on this projected excursion, they are indulged by their chaperon, with the famous tea for which the place is celebrated, it is considered an event of considerable importance. A tea fight, as the boys call parties to that beverage, is always a great thing at the house of the masters, but a tea fight at Ditton, preceded and followed by a row, is grand indeed.

Greatly was Wyndam elated when his brother conveyed to him Mr. Foley's invitation, and the beaming look of pleasure, with which he met that gentleman next day, was observed and commented upon by the jealous Trelawney.

How long have you turned toady? said he, as he pushed and passed him, in the school lobby, you're bought cheap, tea at Ditton isn't a large price.

Saturday *the* Saturday came at last a lovely autumn afternoon, with a bright sun, a clear blue sky flecked with those beautiful white clouds, which Shepherds call mackarel−back, but which have not, to my fancy, the slightest resemblance to anything so lustrous and many hued and a light ringing air, through which sounds floated with a flute−like clearness, as if echoing from the sides of a silver bell. It was a glorious afternoon, and the boys elate with their holiday, the prospect of coming pleasure, and the buoyant atmosphere, shouted and laughed gaily, as they raced after each other through the grove.

Dear reader, do you know Bury grove? if you do not, the name will not convey or suggest to you nay just idea of its beauty. A rich meadow land sweeps gracefully to the river, along the banks of which, and following its course, is a beautiful avenue of lime trees. The tall straight columns of the trees, stand at regular intervals from each other and the river, and from their shafts, spring innumerable arching boughs, which, meeting over head, form themselves into the likeness of some grand cathedral aisle, and its rich pointed roof. The dim light admitted through this canopy, invests the place with a quiet solemn beauty, which adds greatly to its charm; and as you look up the long wide walk, your thoughts are carried far back into the past, and you almost expect to see dames and cavaliers in the sweeping trains, plumed hats and graceful attire of the last century, advance from the upper end.

This was Wyndham's thought as he ran down one of the shorter avenues leading from the town, and entering the long one just opposite the ferry, exclaimed

What a pity this avenue was not planted a hundred years before it was.

Why? asked Vivian.

Because it would be so delicious to fancy that poor Charles, and his glorious nephew, Rupert, with their gallant little court, used to take the air here: that these old trees have sheltered something better than such miserable−looking wretches as we are.

Thank you, for nothing, returned Vivian, laughing, speak for yourself, if you please, you may do that as contemptuously as you choose, but I decline being classed in the same respectable list.

Well, aren't we miserable, with these cutaway jackets, and horrid stiff−looking caps and hats? I hate the very sight of myself; we look like nothing but dressed−up pokers. I've a notion that we must strongly resemble the young roundheads in those villainous parliamentary wars.

Civil! we ought to feel flattered I'm sure, especially as you seem to consider those said gentlemen as so particularly estimable.

Estimable! Why nothing ever makes me so savage as even reading about them: a canting, rebellious, deceitful set! I don't believe there was one honest man among the whole lot.

Vivian laughed at Wyndham's vehemence, and Lawrence said

He's off on his hobby now, and there's no knowing how desperately he'll ride it cavaliers and roundheads are Wyn's weak points. I believe he caught the fever from the school air. I remember it first came on when he found that he was sitting upon a bench carved with two deep old−fashioned letters, which he immediately construed into P.S. Philip Sydney; and ever since, he has looked upon himself as the proper successor of that miracle of the age, and bound to uphold chivalry to the death.

Ah! you may laugh, replied Wyndham, good humouredly, as his companions doffed their caps to the representative of the past, but you won't laugh me out of my loves and hates. That poor fellow, Forsyth, used to say I'd a bee in my bonnet, but I daresay if it was put to the vote, you'd say I'd a whole hive.

Ah poor Forsyth, who knows anything about him? asked de Vere.

Somebody said he'd run off to sea.

I heard that he'd enlisted.

Enlisted! a Baronet's son?

Well, why not, when a fellow has been turned out of a public school, what else is he fit for?

Nothing much, certainly he's defunct, extinguished.

Serve him right, he's a public disgrace, said Vivian, if ever I'm recommended to leave, I shan't expect above half of you to know me.

Well, so long as you don't expect me to be one of the knowing half, I shan't care, replied Wyndham Towers.

You! you little helmet and glaive, magnificent cavalier, why I wouldn't know *you*, I should cut you dead, answered Vivian, strutting by with an air, and joining his forefinger and thumb, to make a mimic eye−glass, through which he looked patronizingly upon his companions.

And I should return the compliment, by looking straight on, and walking like this, said Wyndham, fixing his arms akimbo, and swinging past Vivian with such force that he sent him reeling out of his way.

And from that time, replied Vivian, pretending to limp, I should carefully doff my hat to your warriorship's shadow whenever I saw it approaching.

There's Mr. Foley hallo! out of the way! cried Hankey, making a desperate plunge forward, who'll be at the ferry first?

The boat was waiting when the boys reached the river, so the crew jumped in, and as Mr. Foley came down the slope, they stood up each with his oar, and uncovered head, and gave him a hearty cheer.

That's the way they receive grandees, said Hankey, who, from his father being an old post captain, was considered a great authority upon all nautical matters.

Well, Mr. Foley having duly acknowledged the honour he had received, and taken his seat, away went the boat like an arrow, straight into the middle of the stream; but she was so beautifully trimmed, that she never rocked or dipped, or swerved, but obeyed the impulse of the oarsmen as if she were a thing endued with life and reason.

One by one, as the work and heat of the sun began to tell, the jackets and caps of the crew were laid aside, and before they had long lost sight of Bury, the white sleeves, and bright curling locks of the boys, glanced uncovered in the sun−light.

Chapter 12.

Happily and busily, working hard to bring up lost time, the days of Harry and Lawrence went on from this period to the holidays. They were not so much together as usual, for both were preparing for the examination, and allowed themselves little space for pleasure; but their mutual confidence was restored, and each was satisfied with his friend's pre−occupation.

And Lawrence had particularly little time for amusement, since early and late, before lessons were begun, and after they were finished, he worked in the garden with George, and busied himself in repairing, and manufacturing, the poultry yard accommodation.

Under cover of the pretence that they were troublesome to him, Mr. Foley sent to Mrs. Towers a complete and valuable stock of poultry, which had arrived suddenly at his house one morning, and which he professed himself puzzled to dispose of. Nobody quite knew the secret of these hens' and cocks' arrival, although many suspected that Mr. Foley and a certain person, about whose ad dress he had been curious, and whose occupation it was to stock poultry yards with the finest and most productive fowls, were alone responsible for it. But be that as it may, it was a most welcome and gracefully−designed present; and as Mr. Foley did not choose to betray his secret, supposing that he had one, neither will I.

What a sensation the appearance and emptying of the crates made at the cottage; and how the birds cackled and crowed, and strutted, and shook their ruffled plumage when they were released. There were Cochin China, Dorkings, and Malays, Poland, and common barn−door fowls, pale buff, five−toed pheasant hued, pure white, and glittering black; in short, every family, whose character was good, had it's representative in the cottage yard.

A sack of barley had accompanied the crates, and upon Minnie's suggestion that the hens were hungry, Susan untied it, and threw her bounty far and wide. It was amusing to see how eagerly they ran, how soon forget the strange place they were in, and how they quarrelled and pecked each other in their selfish haste.

Oh! look at that poor little black chicken, cried Minnie, as a young hen, sharply pecked by the matrons, ran hither and thither among them, what can she have done to make those old hens so cross and unkind?

Nothing, Miss Minnie, replied Susan, except being young and fidgety; see how she teases the others by her flurrying way, she seems never to be contented.

Then she can't commit a worse offence against the peace of chickendom, and I hope the old ladies will peck at her, until she knows, and does better, said Wyndham.

Well, you shall settle the laws of the community, if you'll help me to settle their habitations, observed Lawrence.

Yes, indeed, we must house these pretty creatures well, for they will be very valuable, said Mrs. Towers, nothing could be more acceptable than their arrival. How good it is of Mr. Foley.

With the aid of Lawrence and Wyndham, who were both tolerable carpenters, George soon knocked up, as he called it, some temporary accommodations for the colony; and a portion of every day was, for many weeks, devoted to beautify and adorn them.

The care and feeding of this large family, devolved, by their own request, upon Maude and Minnie, and for the first two or three months, was zealously followed by both; but when the novelty wore off, and the days became short, dark, and cold, Maude grew indifferent and careless unwilling to leave her warm bed, or fire−side seat, and so the whole charge fell upon patient, quiet Minnie. But her loving, unselfish heart, was amply repaid for all the trouble her perseverance cost her, by the additional comforts which the produce of these fowls brought to her mother. Twice, during the winter, a sack of barley arrived at the cottage, as a present from Mr. Foley, who persisted in saying, that as Mrs. Towers had relieved him from the noisy presence of the clamorous family, and gratified him by preserving them from the cook, he was in honour bound to feed them. The profit, if there were any, was surely due to those who so kindly housed and protected them.

During all the winter, the birds thus fed and tended, supplied the principal shops with eggs and early chickens, at such a price as relieved Mrs. Towers' housekeeping materially; and Minnie, to whose attention much of this was owing, whose careful hands saved and distributed the broken egg shells, chopped meat and crushed oats, was as happy as the consciousness of being useful, could make her.

The examination went off well for Lawrence and de Vere. Both obtained the prizes for which they had striven, and both had the honour of being specially addressed by the head master.

You'll be in the sixth form next half, whispered Towers to his friend, as flushing with pleasure, Harry returned to his place, and, perhaps, Praeposter this time year I'm so pleased.

I'll be head boy if I live, said de Vere, resolutely. This Christmas the boys gave a grand *fete* in the upper school and library.

Charades and Proverbs were acted with great talent and spirit, and the evening closed with a handsome supper.

In these Charades no one distinguished himself so much as Trelawney. He was decidedly the star of the night. His handsome, graceful figure, faultless manner, and admirable acting, gained him repeated and continued applause while he received it so modestly carried himself so unassumingly, and behaved altogether so well, that everybody was delighted with him. Even Doctor Ashton and Mr. Foley, won upon by the inexpressible charm which this clever boy exercised over all upon whom he chose to exert it, were cordial to him this night. He had won two prizes during the examination, and what was sad and unaccountable beyond all was, that one of those

was the Divinity prize. Sad and terrible indeed it was to think, that a boy who had so read and studied the subject, as to enable him to carry off the prize from all the competitors of his form, and whose papers shewed so much thought and knowledge, should be so evil−hearted, and so deceitful.

It is only another warning that talents and genius, unblessed by God, can never work good to their possessor. Poor Trelawney! while you moved about among all that admiring company, receiving their praises and compliments, an object of envy to your school−fellows, and adoration to yourself, you were in the eyes of God, and His holy Angels, aye, even in those of one of your companions, an object of the deepest pity; there is not an honest, truthful boy in all the school, however backward or untalented, who is not preferred by God before you; and woe to you when it shall please Him to unmask you to the world, as you are now to Him.

Upon one person in the school, this continued prosperity and success of Archer, seemed to be doing mischief, and this was Verulam. No public exposure, no disgrace, could have added to his conviction of Trelawney's duplicity and wickedness. Could his whole life, with all its crafty plots and evil actions, have been laid open to his gaze, it would not have confirmed this opinion more. He knew him for what he was, and yet he saw him succeed in everything; deceive his friends, cheat his masters against their better judgment, and turn even untoward and dangerous accidents to his benefit.

The boy was angry and vexed at this. He forgot that a thousand years are in Gods sight but as a watch of the night, and he became doubtful and repining at the delay. And how many of us, even you and I, dear reader, daily fall into this great sin?

When we have detected a crime, do we not often, like Verulam, become impatient for exposure and judgement? Do we not often murmur at God's providence, and doubt His justice in His dealings with the wicked? and do we not repine at their prosperity, and rebel against our own crosses? It will be well for us if we do not go so far upon our rebellions course as to envy the success against which we demur. And are we not, over and over again, in seasons of darkness and distress, when help is long delayed, tempted by our own want of faith to think, that it is better with the sinner than with the righteous, and that it would save us from much present affliction, to kneel down with him, and worship Satan? At all such perilous times, great need have we to cry Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief. Well would it have been for Verulam's peace and faith, if he had done this, but he did not; and Archer, with his crafty, deep−seeing penetration, easily read the rebellious thoughts which were passing in his companion's mind, and, like an evil spirit, triumphed in them. Everything went so smoothly, that he tried to forget the startling words which had so nearly caused him to betray himself, and he began in his own pride to defy fate, which was his name for Providence.

Chapter 13.

A few days before the commencement of the vacation, Mr. de Vere, at the request of Doctor Ashton, wrote to Mrs. Towers, thanking her for receiving his son. He expressed himself much indebted for the kindness she had hitherto shewn to Harry, and requested that, as far as her leisure and inclination permitted, she would exercise the same supervision and control over him, as if he were her own child. You are doubtless aware, wrote this strange man, of the circumstances which have made my son dependant upon strangers for a home during his holidays; and, although I am not presumptuous enough to suppose that such kindness could be purchased, yet, placed as I am, I may, perhaps, be pardoned for saying, that to ensure him the protection, love, and guidance of such a mother as yourself, I should consider no pecuniary sacrifice too great.

A week after the receipt of this letter, Harry de Vere was domesticated at the cottage. For a short time the novelty of daily and hourly intercourse with a lady, made him feel awkward and uncomfortable, since, except when with Mrs. Ashton, he had never had any companions but those of his own sex, and his nervousness and inexperience caused him to say and do strange *gauche* things, but this soon wore off: Mrs. Towers' unvarying kindness,

Maude's gay banter, and Minnie's gentleness and consideration, speedily set him at perfect ease, and then all the beauty of his hidden character shone forth. No one entered into the *minutiae* of domestic comfort more warmly, or with more delicacy, than Harry; no one formed more economical plans, or was more self−denying, and persevering in carrying them out. Not even Lawrence worked harder in the garden, nor Minnie herself, was more attentive to the comforts and little wants of Mrs. Towers.

And thus, loving and beloved, tending and tendered, a new light broke upon Harry's life.

The days hitherto so long, unless occupied in study, now were too short for the happiness of which they were full. The hopes and fears about which, until now, no one had cared, had many anxious sympathizers at the cottage. Did he speak despondingly, or of the possibility of defeat, in the course he had marked out, Maude's proud voice was ever ready to bid him prosper for honour, and ambition's sake. If he were sad, contrasting his own loveless and deserted home with that of which he was now an inmate, Minnie's gentle ways and cheerful tones, invariably won him from his gloom, and made him happy again. Did he repine at the loss of that holiest affection of all, the mother's love, which can never be replaced, and envy Lawrence and Wyndham their brighter lot, Mrs. Towers would soothe and console him, bidding him hope and pray for the time when he might be restored to his father's heart, and prove himself worthy of his regard. At first, this was a difficult subject, and the boy repulsed it sternly, for he felt that he had been cruelly and unjustly dealt with, and he resented the treatment he received with all the anger of a warm undisciplined heart; but Mrs. Towers was not to be baffled in the holy work she had undertaken, and, day after day, by little and little, she returned to the attack.

For a time this perseverance made Harry very angry; he thought Mrs. Towers unjust to him, regardless of his feelings, and unmindful of his grief, and many were the hard thoughts which at such times rose against her.

Why do you act as you do, to your boys, if it is equally right for parents to neglect their children? he said, passionately.

I have not said that it is right, Harry, although circumstances often excuse conduct, they cannot wholly justify. But I have said, that no child can sit in judgement upon a parent's conduct, without incurring sin. God's plain commandment says, Honour thy father and thy mother. The words are very intelligible, and admit of but one construction; silence, reverence, and obedience.

Reverence! but there are thousands of things we cannot reverence, let them be done by whom they will. Because a false, bad thing is done by one's parent, one is not to reverence it surely? And obedience! why half the evil men in the world have children, must they obey and reverence them?

Yes in all lawful things yes.

Aye, there it is, lawful things? Who is to decide whether a thing is lawful or not?

GOD. In whatever is not opposed to His Law, however seemingly hard and unjust it may be, n child must obey, there is no appeal.

But what *are* lawful things? people may disagree.

They cannot, if they take the Bible for their guide. If a child for God, and conscience−sake disobeys his father, it must be because he knows either from his own reading, or the instruction he has received from others, that the command which has been laid upon him, is contrary to the higher Laws of God. Disobedience in such a case is a duty; but even then, disobedience must be reverently shown. Nothing can excuse an impertinent, defiant, or contemptuous manner, for nowhere are we told that even in pursuance of a righteous cause, we shall be exonerated from obedience to that great claim for honour and respect, which our Lord himself, so reverenced and

inculcated.

But this is very hard. Are our fathers and mothers lawless then, may they do just as they please? are they amenable to no laws, but just because they are parents, free to do as they like?

No, Harry, but their responsibilities are of a different character to yours; I do not say they are greater, or more solemn, but they are quite as great. They are to their children, God's earthly representatives, and to Him they are accountable for the faithful performance of their trust. No, indeed, parents are far from being the irresponsible beings you seem to fancy; their duties and anxieties are heavier, and more arduous, than any child can imagine.

Mine seem to bear them very easily, said Harry, bitterly.

Do not judge them, de Vere. If, in your belief, they do wrong, aid them in the only way you can, *pray for them*. But, under no circumstances, however strongly you may feel, let your hard thoughts have utterance, pray for your parents to God, and be silent to men.

I cannot! I cannot! exclaimed the boy, passionately, I'd rather be the son of the poorest working man, who labours for his daily bread, so that I had a home, and kind friends to love me, than be what I am, without a mother I can name, or a father I dare see. The veriest beggar in the streets, is better off than I am.

Your father is most liberal to you, replied Mrs. Towers, hesitatingly, for she feared and sorrowed over these violent outbreaks.

Yes, with money! answered Harry, scornfully, as if money could buy happiness! I'd give it all, all he has, all I have, for one such look and smile from him, as you give your boys, but I'm a fool, continued he, dashing away the tears which had risen to his eyes, I shall never learn sense I think; I've had eight years schooling in parental indifference, and I haven't got the lesson yet, but I shall soon, and there's one comfort, when I have, it will be for life, I shan't forget it again, and, with an attempt to laugh, he ran off to join Minnie.

Strange as it may seem, their natures being so opposite, the strongest sympathy and affection existed between de Vere and Minnie. There was something in her mild, sweet, even ways, which was inexpressibly attractive to Harry, something in the tone of her voice so loving, kind and cheerful something so truly amiable, that he was always happier in her society than in that of anyone else, except Lawrence.

She is so good, he said one day, in explanation of his partiality, not good and stupid, or good and conceited, but so earnest and simple−hearted, and innocent. Being with her, always seems to me like being in another atmosphere. She isn't like a child, and yet she is a thorough child; she puts me in mind of a lovely German etching I saw at Mr. Talbot's rooms; a Girl walking unconsciously over thorns and stones, with her hands grasping flowers, her eyes raised, and a trusting, happy smile on her face. It was called Looking upward. There was nothing in her attitude or occupation to tell one she was above the world better and holier than the rest of us, yet the conviction that she was so, grew upon one every moment, and so it is with Minnie.

A faultless mon laughed Lawrence, beginning to quote a well−known line.

No, No, said Harry, no such hateful thing, but

A creature not too bright and good,
For human nature's daily food,
A perfect woman.

At ten years old oh! the little horror, cried Wyndham, joining in Lawrence's merriment, but here she comes, let us see if her movements are as antient as her name. Dame Hubbard we greet you, he continued, springing forward to his sister as she passed, und making her waltz round and round the grass plot, until she was out of breath. What a nimble old lady you are, dame, said Wyn, when she stopped, and a very tidy timeist too; it should be a perfect waltzer, I think, eh, de Vere?

In common with Lawrence and Harry, Minnie and her mother shared the suspicion against Trelawney, but Maude mid Wyndham appealed to the weakness of the evidence against him, and took his part heartily. This was a great triumph to Archer; he had spared no pains to regain his influence over the fickle mind of Wyndham, and his success was complete. Over Maude's usually clear sight he contrived also to throw a veil, and quickly won her to his side by his apt well−chosen flattery, and artful appeals to her generosity and penetration. Still, although certain of a warm welcome from these two members of the family, and a courteous, although cool reception from the others, Trelawney's visits to the cottage became fewer and fewer. It was not pleasant to meet Verulam there so often, nor to find his steady eye so continually fixed upon his face. He did not like the sudden silence of Verulam whenever he spoke, he thought the listening boded no good, and, at any rate, showed plainly that whatever suspicions he had once entertained, he cherished still.

At first, Archer tried every open and covert means to beguile his enemy, but without success. As well might a Rattlesnake lavish his fascinations upon a rock. Verulam saw the attempt, and ridiculed it; not openly though, but with a certain, calm, quiet contempt, which, while it enraged and baffled Archer, yet compelled him to silence. Oh! how this wordless scorn chafed him, and how bitterly he hated the dauntless boy, who had thus penetrated his shallow disguise. How many frightful, impious thoughts, the parents of evil deeds filled the mind of this unhappy boy. How he longed that Verulam should die, or be publicly disgraced, or come to some great misfortune. And how very soon after this, he began to plot and scheme to achieve it. Night and day, this one horrible thought was before him *how to ruin Verulam* how to rid himself of that quiet eye which seemed to follow him everywhere. Miserable boy he quite forgot the sleepless Omnipresent watch of Him, whose eye he could never escape, and who read every thought and hope, and plot of his bad and guilty heart.

Chapter 14.

Meanwhile, although the under current of passions flowed so strongly in the minds of the heroes of our tale, the upper visible school life went on as usual.

Holidays were over; de Vere returned to his study, and Lawrence and Wyndham went back to their duties, daily as before, all things, except the boys' hearts, were the same.

During this half−year, nothing particularly worthy of notice, occurred in the school. Harry spent his long holiday at the cottage, as well as every afternoon for which he obtained leave. His love for his friends faintly grew stronger and stronger, and his happiness was proportionably increased. No one rejoiced in this bright change more cordially than Mr. Foley, who was now almost as constant a visitor to Mrs. Towers as de Vere. Indeed, the incident of the ball, which had at first threatened such disastrous consequences, seemed to have been the means of bringing the cottage family more nearly acquainted, and more highly valued by all the heads of the school. So true is it, that all things work together for good, to those who fear the Lord.

Mr. Foley's visits were a source of great benefit, as well as pleasure to Maude and Minnie Towers. They both showed a considerable talent for drawing, and Mr. Foley, who was a very clever artist, delighted to spend a portion of each visit in directing and superintending their work. This was a great advantage to the girls, especially as their kind instructor supplied them liberally with all the books, models, sketches, and implements, requisite to make his lessons available.

Thus aided and encouraged, our young heroines made rapid progress; and even Maude, delighted with her own success, and proud of Mr. Foley's approbation, for a time persevered so steadily, that in a few months the lessons which had been commenced solely from a generous wish to assist in educating two children who had so few advantages, were continued by the good clergyman from deep interest, and anxiety to cultivate the very unusual degree of talent shown by his pupils, and which he now began to think might be very valuable to them.

I wonder why Mr. Foley makes us copy these models? said Maude, one day, pausing in the outline of a beautiful Psyche, I like that painting so much better.

I know, at least I think I do, replied Minnie.

Because it is bolder, rounder, more like life I know that, be has said so fifty times.

I think he has another reason.

What? Why are you so mysterious, Minnie, there can be nothing to make a mystery of?

No, of course not; but I am not sure that I do know anything, it may only be fancy.

Very likely, but what is it?

Why, the other day when you were at Mrs. Ashton's, and Mr. Foley came here in the evening, he asked me, while he was pointing out the faults in my copy of that very Psyche, whether I should not like to design, and engrave wood, some such beautiful illustrations as those he brought for us to look at, the other day.

Well?

I answered yes; and then he said, that he thought if ladies were clever and original in their designs, and had a true eye and steady hand, they might engrave as well as men; he mentioned Angelica Kaufmann, and some other names which I forget, and from all he said, I believe that he thinks that we shall be able in time to draw and design well enough to earn our own living, and it is because we ought not to copy anybody's style, but have a free bold one of our own, that he makes us draw from models.

What a capital idea, what a great deal of money we shall get, Minnie; and, perhaps, we need not work very hard either we won't live in this nasty little cottage then, will we?

I don't know, that depends upon mamma.

Of course but if we get the money we can live where we like, I suppose I vote for London.

Well, if mamma wishes to move, and I have a vote in the matter, I shall vote to go to Cambridge, to be near Loll, when he's at College.

Ah, yes, perhaps that would do. Cambridge is not very far from London, and I dare say it is a lively place. I'll ask Mr. Foley to lend me that book about it, which he once lent to Loll.

No don't, pray don't, cried Minnie, in alarm, perhaps Mr. Foley meant nothing by what he said, and I would not for the world have him think I caught up every word he spoke.

Why? why not, there can be no harm in it?

No, but I would rather not, pray don't, dear Maude it seems to me there would be something pushing, encroaching about it, something not quite

What? asked Maude, laughing, as the timid but delicate−minded child came to a puzzled close.

Nothing I don't know only pray do not say anything to Mr. Foley about it, Maude; pray, pray don't, I should be so ashamed.

Very well, little goose, but I suppose if Mr. Foley chooses to talk to me on the subject, I may listen, and answer?

And, as it happened, the next day Mr. Foley did call, and speak to both the girls upon the subject.

He told them that he had long thought their talent for drawing had been given to them by GOD, to compensate for the loss of those worldly comforts they might have enjoyed, had their father lived, and to be the means of enabling them to restore some portion at least to their mother.

She has worked long and anxiously for you, he said, and when the appointed time comes, you must repay her. But to do this, to make your talents available, and produce money, you must work steadily, carefully, and regularly. The greatest genius is worthless without industry. With industry a person may do almost anything; without it, although blest with genius and talent beyond his fellows, he will do nothing. Genius suggests a thing, industry works it out. Now the one is at your own command, and a fair share of the other GOD has given you; it remains for you to say what you will do with it. I warn you that for a long period you must work hard, and your visible progress will be small and slow. What you do now, will be like the foundation workmen lay for a sea wall. For n weary time they work on and on, with nothing to show, nothing to encourage, the resultless work seems endless; but at last, and all at once, every stone, however long laid and forgotten, tells. They find that not one has been put down in vain, not one precaution, not one atom of care has been superfluous, or will now be without its reward. Now, as with the wall, so it is with you, you must be content to drudge, as Wyndham calls it, long and patiently, to copy, over and over again, those plaster models, of which Maude is already so weary, and to refrain from those prettinesses, of which you, Minnie, are so fond, and all this without hope of reward, for many, many months. Have you patience to do this?

Yes, sir oh, yes.

Then we will make a bargain. If you, on your part, promise to do this, I, on mine, will promise to give, or obtain for you, all the instruction you will require; and when you are capable of doing it, employment also.

Oh, thank you, thank you, cried the girls, eagerly, we will certainly keep our promise.

And for a long time much longer than could have been expected both did keep it equally. The excitement, the hope of earning a great deal of money, and the pride of knowing that her work was valuable, all contributed for a while to keep Maude steady to her promise. But in a few months, and just as her labour was beginning, as Mr. Foley said, to tell, she fell into her idle fickle ways again. In vain did Minnie plead and coax, in vain did Mr. Foley rebuke and set before her the sin of her conduct, in vain did her brothers laugh and banter, and her mother look sad and sorrowful; nothing seemed sufficiently powerful to make Maude Towers persevering and steady. Every now and then, stung by some joke of Wyndham's, or reproof from Mr. Foley, she would return to her work, and labour unceasingly for hours; but the impulse once satisfied, there was no principle to take its place, and keep her in the right, though toilsome way, and therefore weeks and months went on, in the same unprofitable manner.

Mr. Foley was grieved and disappointed, for he had hoped great things from Maude's talent, and had devoted much time and care, and money, to her improvement. But, although he was vexed and mortified, he would not

despair, trusting in GOD, that some good issue would in time come of his prayers, and so he went on in faith, striving and fighting against the evil spirit which influenced his pupil.

And many were her deep and bitter repentances, and hearty promises of amendment, and just as many were her relapses into idleness, but Mr. Foley did not weary, he received his recompense in watching Minnie's rapid progress to excellence, and was content to take patiently, the drawback of her sister's fickleness.

And to any one who would be so content, Minnie's improvement was a rich guerdon, steadily and regularly, without losing a single step, she had overtaken Maude. Her industry, and *cultivated taste*, were making up for the want of Maude's genius. Her love of prettinesses was gradually giving way to bolder and higher conceptions and execution, and her designs and copies often astonished her master.

Chapter 15.

In this way the time went on until about the middle of the half−year, when Mr. Foley began to suspect that some heavy weight rested upon Minnie's heart. For many days he tried in vain to discover what the cause of her grief could be, but at last her tearful gaze upon her brother's threadbare clothes betrayed the secret, and sent Mr. Foley home with a thoughtful brow. flow was he to repair this sorrow, without wounding Mrs. Towers's sensitive feelings, and bringing the blush of shame upon the boy's cheek?

Trifling, and, perhaps, ridiculous as this cause for sorrow may seem to rich people, yet Mr. Foley knew that to poor ones, it was of serious moment. Boys' clothes are expensive articles, soon destroyed, and, in the case of needy people, with difficulty replaced. And now, that his attention was drawn to the subject, he remembered how very, very shabby the worn, thin jackets and trowsers were, how short and faded the summer waistcoats, and his heart entered readily into Minnie's innocent mortification at seeing her brothers so meanly attired. But how to help her! all that evening he sat musing over the various little schemes which presented themselves to his mind, but not one pleased him, there was not one through which he did not fear that the penetration of Mrs. Towers would see at once, and he shrank from the very idea of aiding her in any way, which might cause her pain. Alas! how few there are who care to think of this, who know how to give gracefully.

At last, after a whole evening's cogitation, a plan occurred to him which he thought would do, and, as the morning's reflection continued to satisfy him, he sallied forth immediately after school the next day, and, having made some purchases at Mr. Leake's, turned his steps towards the cottage.

Minnie and Maude were drawing when he entered the little parlour, and both sprang up to greet him.

Now, lassies, said he, when he had inspected and praised their work, which of you will earn five pounds?

Oh, I! I! cried both, eagerly.

Well both of you may, certainly, for there are two commissions to execute. But remember, Maude, if you undertake the work you must finish it there must be no changing your mind.

Oh, no, I promise there shall not be; but what is it to do?

To make ten sketches of Wenlock Abbey, Buildwas, and Haughmond, in this book. And, as he spoke, he untied the parcel which he had laid down, and took out two handsome sketch books.

But we have never seen Wenlock or Buildwas!

That difficulty can be easily overcome, if you really mean to undertake the commission.

Mean to undertake it! oh, Mr. Foley, we shall be so thankful! cried Minnie; her eyes dancing with delight.

Very well then, you must begin at once, for I must have the books in one month from this day; and when I receive them, I shall pay you five pounds for each.

Oh! Minnie, and oh! Maude, said the girls, with a deep breath, looking at each other with most eloquent eyes.

For a few minutes Mr. Foley watched them in silence, then he said

Now, you mercenary young ladies, we must find your mamma, and make some arrangement for taking you to see these places where is she?

In the garden will you come pray come, replied Minnie, jumping up, and putting her hand in that of her visitor to lead him away.

When they reached the arbour where Mrs. Towers was sitting, they found her busily engaged in sewing. As soon, however, as she saw who was the companion of her children, she thrust her work, with a deep blush, into the basket which stood beside her, and rose to receive him. Quick as the action had been, Mr. Foley's quicker eye had discovered that the work upon which Mrs. Towers was employed, bore a very suspicious resemblance to Wyndham's best jacket, and he anticipated almost as eagerly as her children, the pleasure their tidings would give.

Oh! mamma, dear mamma, cried Minnie, running up to her, and speaking fast, what do you think? Maude and I are going to earn such a deal of money five pounds a−piece! only think how charming, isn't it? Oh, how glad I am, are not you?

I don't know, my love I do not understand you.

Let me explain, said Mr. Foley, I have brought these young ladies a commission to adorn each of these two sketch books with ten views of Wenlock, Buildwas, and Haughmond. They have undertaken to perform the contract in a month from this day, and to receive, upon its completion, the sum of five pounds each.

Are they capable of doing it? asked Mrs. Towers, looking anxiously at the eager faces of her children.

Oh, yes! perfectly. The only thing now to settle, is what half−holiday, you, and they, and the boys, will go with me to Wenlock you know we have long had an engagement to make an expedition to the Breidden, suppose we put that off at present, and go to Wenlock instead you will not be very much disappointed, will you we can go to the hills later in the season.

Oh, yes, at any time; do let us go to Wenlock now! exclaimed Maude.

I shall be delighted, replied Mrs. Towers.

Well then, the sooner the better. Will to−morrow suit you? we can start very early, as soon as morning school is over, and go straight to Wenlock dine among the ruins, and devote the rest of our time to sketching. There is a glorious moon you know, so we can return as late as we choose I should like the girls to see the Abbey by moonlight.

Oh! charming, charming, said Minnie, dancing about, but Buildwas?

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, replied Mr. Foley, let us finish one thing at a time, you'll have quite enough to do at Wenlock, for one day.

A long gay talk over the arrangements, now ensued. The girls were in boisterous spirits. Mrs. Towers, to whom they had whisperingly conveyed their wish to appropriate to their brothers, the riches they were about to earn, was more than usually cheerful; and Mr. Foley, seeing the happiness of which he was the cause, was as merry as the rest.

It was agreed that the cottage should contribute a couple of roast chickens, a gooseberry pie, a bowl of custard, a salad, some new bread, and the requisite crockery, to the next day's provision. Mr. Foley engaged to furnish the wine, n pigeon pie, some cheese−cakes, and knives and forks.

And if you, or I, ask anybody else, he said, in conclusion, he or she must bring the necessary additions.

Laughing and jesting, they all accompanied Mr. Foley to the gate, and watched him walk down the lane; then, as soon as he was out of sight, the two girls turned simultaneously to their mother, and seizing both arms, squeezed them with an affection that was quite painful.

My dear children, remonstrated Mrs. Towers.

Oh! dear, dear, darling owney, cried Minnie, hanging upon her, I am so very happy.

And I, I think I never was so happy in my life. What a joy to think Loll and Wyn won't have to wear those horrid shabby things at the examination. Let us order their new suits directly this very day.

No, no, not so soon, there will be plenty of time my darlings a week hence. Will you tell them what you have in store, or shall it be a surprise.

Oh, a surprise, a surprise, said Minnie.

No, tell them at once, and see how pleased they will be, said Maude.

Which do *you* think, mamma? asked Minnie.

I would rather not give an opinion, my dear, you ought to please yourselves.

But we should like to please you, owney.

So you will, if you agree together to do what you both think best.

Then, as Maude is eldest, she shall decide.

No, that's not fair, you have as great an interest as I have, Minnie, let us draw lots for it.

Yes, that is best and fairest, said their mother, we will go into the Arbour, and cut two pieces of paper; on one we will write tell, and on the other, not tell, then we will put them into my basket, and whichever is first taken out, shall be obeyed.

This was accordingly done, and when Mrs. Towers, who had been appointed by the children to draw, unfolded the paper which she held, she announced that Minnie had won her wish, since the words inscribed on the little scroll, were not tell.

Well, I am not sorry; it is better so, said Maude, cheerfully, I daresay it will be nicer for us all.'

At this moment the boys entered the garden, full of delight at the prospect of the next day's excursion, for they had met Mr. Foley at the top of the lane, and he had told them of the arrangement.

This was fortunate for the girls, since their brothers were now too much occupied with their own anticipations of pleasure, to notice the uneasy, conscious manner of their sisters, who, feeling that they had a great secret to keep, nearly betrayed it by their abrupt sentences, and unconnected phrases.

That was a busy, happy evening preparations for the morrow, eager whispered conferences between the girls, as some new idea respecting their intended presents suggested itself to them, and private little interviews with their mother, divided the time, until long passed the usual hour of going to rest, sleep, however, for Maude and Minnie that night, was out of the question. They occupied a small room adjoining Susan's, and no sooner were they alone, than the hoarded plans and imaginations, which had cost them so much to conceal during the evening, found utterance. They had so much to say, to hope, and to conjecture, that the hours passed unheeded, and at last daylight surprised them, before a thought of rest had time to enter their busy heads.

Oh! Maude, look! said Minnie, that must be morning, we have talked all night.

Then we had better get up, I am not a bit tired, and there is such a great deal to do.

No, not yet, let us wait a little longer, mamma would not like us to be up so very early, I think.

Very well, just a little longer then. But hark! there is the clock striking four, it's not so very early.

Of how small or large a fraction of time the children's' idea of a little longer consisted, I cannot tell, but with true human perversity, when the clock struck the next quarter, they were both fast asleep.

The sun was up, high and bright, when next they awoke, and, as they jumped up in bed rubbing their eyes, with puzzled doubt, they heard the bugle notes of the ten o'clock coach die away in the distance.

To exclaim in utter dismay, to spring out of bed and commence dressing, was the work of a minute, and in less time than any tidy little girls ever dressed before, Maude and Minnie were down stairs. There, however, they found the parlour and kitchen deserted, and upon a wider search, discovered their mother and Susan in the shady little dairy, looking at the delicacies they had placed there hours ago to cool.

Oh! mamma, how could you let us sleep so long? cried Maude, rather pettishly.

Because I heard your busy little tongues chattering nearly all the night, and I knew that if you had no rest this morning, you would be very unfit for the afternoon's hustle; now, as soon as you have had your breakfast, which is ready for you in the parlour, you may help Susan and me, by gathering the salad, and taking out the dishes and baskets, ready for us to pack.

This was a delightful proposal. Children always enjoy the idea of helping in all such things as do not usually fall to their lot, and Maude and Minnie were no exceptions to the rule. Breakfast was quickly hurried over, and the salad handed to Susan, while the active little maidens took possession of the long kitchen table to lay out, and dust all the requisite crockery. When this was done, the important duty of packing began, in which Maude took a very active part, while upon Minnie devolved the duty of calling over the things, one by one, to see, as she said, that all were in. In this way she discovered, to her great satisfaction, first that the salt, and next that the spoons, had been forgotten.

Now, you see, she observed, what the consequence would have been if I had not called over the list.

By the time that all was ready, and the cottage party attired for their excursion, Mr. Foley drove up to the gate with a large open carriage, in which he had brought down Harry de Vere, Lawrence, and Wyndham, and in a few minutes after their arrival, Mrs. Towers and the girls being comfortably seated, and the provision baskets carefully packed under the seats, the merry party set off.

The drive from Bury to Wenlock is far less attractive than many others in the neighbourhood, but on a bright day, such as the one of which I am writing, when the Wrekin looms upward toward heaven, bold and distinct, and the Welsh hills can be seen clearly in the distance, it is an interesting, if not a beautiful route.

To our party it was perfect all were happy, all were gay, and no tree an atom finer than its fellows, no hill higher or rounder than the rest, escaped its meed of praise.

How well the Breidden look to−day, said Wyndham, as he and Maude mounted upon one of the carriage seats, to take a long view of their favourite hills.

Aye, don't they! but by−the−bye, Maude, did you ever hear how they came there?

No, is it a legend? do tell me, Wyn, if it is, I love a legend.

Well, you must know then, that long ago that is the proper way to begin a story, some people prefer, once upon a time, but I like my way best, well, long ago, the people of Wellington grievously offended his Satanic Majesty I beg your pardon, mother, for mentioning such a personage in your presence, but, as you will see, it's absolutely necessary to the story.

Do go on, Wyn, said Maude, impatiently.

Don't be in a hurry, young lady, all things in good time. Well, these Wellingtonians having, as I said before, grievously offended the Potentate, whose peculiar title we will not repeat, and being deaf to all sorts of quiet remonstrances, such as apparitions, little earthquakes, and the like, His Majesty got out of patience, and determined to cover them quietly up, spiflicate them you know, so he took up a small County in Wales where the Bay of Swansea now lies, I believe and set off across the country, bent upon destruction. The best intentions, however, sometimes fail, and so they did in this instance, for when his Majesty reached the place where the Briedden stands at present, his apron−string broke, and down fell the three great lumps of earth which form that threefold hill. Well, instead of flying into a passion, as a less highly−educated spirit would have done, he went on his way bearing the remaining earth in spade, but what with disappointment at not being able to extinguish Wellington, and fatigue from his journey, he soon became tired of carrying such a trumpery burthen, so he threw it down in disgust. and the lump produced the Wrekin; while, to obliterate all trace of his profitless expedition, he scraped his shoes carefully on his spade, and casting the dirt scornfully away, formed with it the two little hills nearest to Wellington.

Chapter 16.

Now, Minnie, shut your eyes, shut your eyes, said Mr. Foley, as they drove into the little Town of Wenlock, and don't open them until I tell you. I wont keep you long in the dark, and you will have a splendid object to look upon when you look up next. That's right, cover them up, close, close. Are you sure you can't see through your fingers? Are you sure you arc not cheating me? Wait a minute longer. There, now, now you may look, is it not beautiful?

One general exclamation of delight answered this appeal, and in a few minutes all the party had alighted, and were exploring the treasures of the noble ruin; while cries of come here, is not this lovely! oh, what a window! do look at this wall! were soon heard from all sides.

For some time all Mr. Foley's attempts to induce the eager children to proceed systematically in their exploring were useless. They were so excited, so full of admiration, that anything so dull and commonplace as system, was, as Wyndham declared, utterly out of the question. In vain Mr. Foley represented, that unless they proceeded regularly, they could not see half the beauties of the place; every moment some new charm was discovered, some particularly beautiful peep, and off they all scampered. At last, however, an accidental rent in Wyndham's jacket, made by the ragged edge of a projecting stone in one of the old staircase walls, and his evident vexation about it, recalled Maude and Minnie to a recollection of the object of their visit, and immediately abandoning their rambling, they returned quietly to Mr. Foley, whom they found with their mother, busily employed in looking for a dining place.

Here! oh, here is a charming place! cried Maude, hastily, as soon as she learned the object of her mother's search. These stones are so nicely raised they will make a capital table, and we can lie all round like the Romans.

No, that will not do at all, Maude, replied Mr. Foley, do not you see that that raised mound is the basement of one of the old pillars which used to run down on each side of the nave of the Abbey. 'We are now standing where the tower used to be; North and South of us are the transepts, and just before us is the Chancel. All within the outer walls of the Abbey, the outlines of which you may easily trace, is ground consecrated to the worship of GOD; I think, therefore, that it would be unseemly and irreverent to choose it for the scene of our revel. Outside there, just beyond the site of the Ladye Chapelle, is a nice grassy mound, that tree which grows on the top will shade us from the sun, and altogether we shall make a very Watteau−like group.

After dinner, to which the stragglers were summoned by a shrill blast upon an old bugle belonging to a shepherd−boy who was tending sheep close by, and who favoured the party with several very original airs during their repast, Mr. Foley led them into the dormitories. Many of these interesting apartments are in excellent preservation, although some are used by the farmer, whose buildings mingle sadly with the sacred ruins, as pigeon and poultry houses. When these had been explored, the party were shewn into the Abbot's private chapel, which seems now to be converted into a kind of ante−room, or hall, to the farmer's house, one of his parlours, and the doors of various other places, opening into it. The High Altar is still perfect, but the children were much shocked to find several toys, not only lying upon it, but upon the credence table also.

Surely this is very wrong, whispered Minnie to de Vere, the Altar cannot be less holy because it is old; and what would people think if they were to see Katie Lawson's rattle and doll, lying on the Altar at St. Mary's?

After leaving the Chapel, they went into the Chapter House, the walls of which remain in a high state of preservation, and exhibit the most beautiful designs. Here the girls made their first sketches. The next object of interest was a shattered staircase, leading to the Triforium, which they climbed fearlessly, and looked down from its dangerous height over the space once occupied by the Church. From this commanding position another sketch was taken.

By the time this was finished, evening was drawing on, and, to Mr. Foley's great satisfaction, the clouds which had been gathering during the afternoon, rolled off, and the moon rose fair and cloudless into the deep blue heavens. He was very anxious that the girls should watch the gradual and almost magical effect of moonlight upon the ruins; and, as the broken pillars, and pointed arches, the crumbling walls, and sharp gables, softened and came out clear and distinct from the dark shadow, he was pleased to find their attention become fixed, and their voices hushed.

Presently, as they gazed, a deep, solemn silence crept over the scene. Far and near, there was no sound, and an inexpressible awe stole upon the children, as the stillness and moonlight deepened, and seemed to wrap them from the living world.

And truly it was an hour and scene well−calculated to impress upon even the youngest and most thoughtless person there, a conviction of the weakness and instability of all earthly things, and the omnipotence of GOD. While this feeling, of which everything around was so eloquent, once admitted, fancy and memory became busy with each: and their empire once established, how speedily they carried them back to past ages, when the ruined walls within which they now stood, had been the bulwarks of a vast and stately edifice, echoing with chaunt and hymn, and the very aisles, now covered with grass and weeds, the daily walk of hundreds of earnest hearts who had long since passed from earth for ever. Within that Chapter House, how many councils had been held how many Monkish plans devised, and how many fierce passions displayed and subdued. From that ruined Altar−place, how many sorrowful hearts had gone comforted and hopeful and from those outer−doors, how many thousands of Christ's poor had passed, pitied, succoured, and relieved, yet all was changed and silent now. The strong human heart, with its mighty passions and aims, was dust; the stupendous building, crumbled and fallen. Nothing was the same, except GOD's silent witnesses in the heavens, the Moon and her starry handmaids.

Bright and beautiful planet, thought Mr. Foley, gazing upon the radiant orb, upon how much sin and sorrow have thy pure rays fallen, even in this holy place, how many changes hast thou seen, and how many are yet to come, before the graves around are called upon to give up their dead.

Similar thoughts were in the minds of all, when suddenly the deep, long−drawn notes of a flute floated into the open space, and seemed to quiver upon the air. Immediately after, a chorus of children's voices, singing the Evening Hymn, followed the instrument, and in a few minutes, every echo was awake, and answering to the music.

The singers proved, upon enquiry, to be the pupils of the Sunday school, who had been holiday−making with a favourite teacher, and who, separating at her cottage home, had chosen this way to part.

The sound broke the spell which had enthralled our party, and when the last notes of the Gloria Patri died upon the air, they walked briskly to the carriage, which had long been waiting at the gate, and entering it, drove homeward.

Chapter 17.

Late and early, with every thought and energy bent to their task, the sisters prosecuted it day after day; and now, to her great delight, Minnie found the advantage of having obeyed Mr. Foley's rules, and persevered in her steady practice. All she had learned, all her weary copying, stood her in good stead now. For so young a student, her performance was really extraordinary; and, as her kind friend watched her innocent delight at the success she achieved, he was amply repaid for all his trouble and anxiety.

Maude's work was bold, clever, and spirited; but it wanted the fidelity and finish of her sister's. You felt, in looking upon her sketches, that they were executed by a person of quick, and just taste, and more than usual talent, but that both taste and talent required discipline and direction, and consequently, that one great charm was wanting.

Fortunately, for the preservation of the secret, Lawrence and Wyndham were so accustomed to see their sisters engaged in drawing, that they never suspected their present assiduity arose from any unusual cause, and therefore never commented upon it.

This indifference rather provoked Maude, who, although she would have been annoyed in the highest degree if her brothers had penetrated the mystery, still was not at all pleased to find that her occupations were of so little consequence to them, and that, do what she might, they never would suspect even a little bit. Poor Maude! it was a great trial to her she certainly would have enjoyed the importance of being known to have a secret, very much.

At last, when the Wenlock sketches were completed, and those of Haughmond also, Mr. Foley arranged a trip to Buildwas, and it was settled, that, as that place presented much fewer objects of interest than Wenlock, and could therefore be seen in much less time, that they would drive first to Wenlock, spend two or three hours there in comparing their finished sketches with the original, and then go round by Buildwas.

This was accordingly done, and, after a pleasant morning spent in visiting their favourite spots, they reached Buildwas about four o'clock. A very short time sufficed to take the only attractive view which those ruins presented, and having accomplished that, the girls relinquished their sketch books, and joined the rest of the party in wandering about. Minnie, however, was soon tired, and, declining to accompany Maude and their mother, in a ramble through the lanes, sat down to rest upon a great stone by the river side. The sun was setting, and she chose her seat where she could watch the glorious tints glow and fade upon the wooded hills behind the Abbey.

Buildwas owes nearly all its attraction to the exceeding beauty of its situation than which, nothing can be more picturesque. It stands upon a small plot of rich meadow land, bounded on one side by an amphitheatre of beautifully−timbered hills, and upon the other, by the Severn, which flows at the base of the fair pastures that used, in older times, to furnish the Abbey cattle with their luxuriant food; but, lovely as the neighbourhood is, to my fancy the ruins themselves awaken more decidedly painful feelings in the mind, than any others I ever visited. They are so fresh, so new−looking, with so little evidence of the gradual decay of time, that it is impossible to visit them without indignation. The whole ruin is so palpably the work of violence, that you shudder as you gaze, and the strongest feeling of which you are conscious, is that of anger against the sacrilegious hands, which could so wantonly destroy an edifice dedicated to GOD. True, the destruction of both Wenlock and Buildwas date in the same year, but how impossible it is to believe it, and how differently you feel looking upon each. The one seems the work of time, a grand old building, full of age and honour, sinking majestically; no irreverent hand has left its trace upon the walls, or, if it has, you see it not through the graceful arms which ivy and lichen have wound around it. It is so beautiful, picturesque, and reverend, that, its fall having been decreed, you could not wish it other than it is.

But Buildwas is of all this the very reverse sharp and abrupt, without one gentler attribute, its tall, clean, lichen−less pillars stand up boldly from the earth, with their shattered heads pointing to the skies, almost asking for vengeance upon their ruthless destroyers. No effort of fancy could ever lead the most imaginative person to believe that Buildwas was sinking under the weight of years, therefore there is just the difference in one's feelings between this place and Wenlock, that there is between the honoured gradual decay of an aged man, and the violent murdered end of a strong hale youth.

Something like this Harry was thinking, as he stood apart gazing on the walls, when he was startled by a shrill and frightful scream. At first bewildered by the suddenness of the sound he could not tell whence it came, until, in a few seconds, it rose again wild and terrible, seeming to pierce into the very skies.

Then Harry recognized it, and with an agonized cry of Minnie! it is Minnie's voice! he darted down the slope to the river. By the time he reached it, nothing was to be seen, but the rapid surging waters and, as he cast a hurried gaze up and down the stream, hoping to discover something that might guide him, he threw off as fast as possible all the clothes that might encumber his action, when, as he knew she would, Minnie rose again! At length, he caught sight of her, and, without a moment's hesitation, plunged in. The stream was running very fast, for there had been two days' heavy rain during the week, and the water had poured down from the mountain brooks, and swelled the stream almost to a torrent. Harry was an expert swimmer, but his skill and strength were as nothing against the mighty force with which the water rolled on, and, brave as he was, an irrepressible thrill of

terror, lest he should be powerless to rescue Minnie, curdled his heart, as he felt himself borne forward by the resistless current. At last, and in far less time than it has taken to describe it, de Vere reached the spot where Minnie had disappeared, just in time to seize upon her, as she rose again senseless to the surface; while, at the same moment, Mr. Foley, Lawrence, and Wyndham, attracted by the cries, rushed down the bank.

My sister! oh, Minnie! Minnie! cried Lawrence, in agony, struggling with Mr. Foley, who wisely resisted his frantic attempt to throw himself into the stream.

A rope! there is one by that old haystack! shouted Wyndham, as he ran off like lightning in the direction of the rick.

Meantime regardless of the screams and adjurations of the party on the bank, and only intent upon saving Minnie de Vere struggled desperately for land, but he soon found that his strength would be powerless to cross the stream, and that all he could do would be to float onward with it, nearing the shore as well as he could.

But Mr. Foley, who understood his plan instantly, feared also that the time necessary for it, might be dangerous to Minnie, and therefore was just about to plunge in to Harry's assistance, when he heard a quick, rushing sound behind him, and in a moment after, saw a huge Newfoundland dog leap into the river; then came a deep, quick bark, and in an incredibly short time, the gallant creature reached Harry, and seizing Minnie by her dress, turned towards the bank.

At first, de Vere hesitated to relinquish the child, but upon Mr. Foley calling to him Don't be afraid! he will save her, give her up! he yielded at once, and the dog having obtained the entire command of his prize, began at once to make his way steadily to shore.

The landing−place to which the sagacious animal was evidently making his way, was an abrupt slope, upon which, lying far into the river, a great tree had fallen, and thither Mr. Foley ran to receive Minnie, as her preserver brought her within reach.

Just as this had been accomplished, and the senseless child quickly wrapped in all the coats and jackets which could be collected, preparatory to carrying her across the meadows to the farm house adjoining the ruins, Mrs. Towers and Maude became aware of the accident. They had been searching in the carriage for something which Maude had lost there, and were walking leisurely to rejoin Minnie, when the crowd on the banks of the river attracted their attention; and, utterly unconscious how deeply they were interested in its cause, they did not even hurry forward until they saw it divide, and recognized Minnie in the arms of Mr. Foley and a stranger.

In a moment they were by her side; and Maude, gazing upon her sister's pale face, closed eyes, and dripping hair, screamed wildly, believing that she was dead. But her mother, who saw at once from the expression on Mr. Foley's countenance, that whatever might be the ultimate result of the accident, Minnie was certainly not dead, checked every sound of grief or fear, lest it might impede the bearers' rapid progress with the sufferer, and, exerting a powerful effort of sell−control, drew Maude away also.

On their way to the house, they were met by a gentleman, whom they joyfully recognized as a surgeon from Bury. he had been visiting a patient at the farm, and was just mounting his horse to return to town, when tidings of the accident reached him. A hasty examination, made while those who carried Minnie continued their hurried walk, assured him that life had not fled and, bidding them bring her on quickly, and steadily, he ran back to the farm to have all things as nearly ready to receive them as possible. But, to his great satisfaction, he found when he reached the house, that everything was in a state of preparation. The farmer's wife a thoughtful, sensible person as soon as she heard of the accident, knew that the poor child must be brought to the farm, and instantly set to work to provide those things which experience had taught her would be requisite. A large fire, heaped high with sear, dry wood, blazed up the wide, kitchen chimney, and a hot bed and blankets were speedily in readiness.

Happily this promptitude prevented the slightest delay from taking place in the application of the means necessary to restore Minnie, and to her mother's inexpressible thankfulness, and the joy of all, in less than half an hour from the arrival at the farm, she showed symptoms of recovery; these increased and matured, so that long before night closed in, she was out of all danger, as far as the ill effects of the water extended, only faint and low, and suffering much pain from the right arm, which was severely bruised and swollen.

The kind farmer and his wife, having consulted the Doctor, entreated Mrs. Towers to consider their house entirely at her service, and besought her not to attempt to remove Minnie until the next day, and not even then, if she were not quite recovered. They had plenty of room they said, for both Mrs. Towers and the patient, and were very glad to have the means of being useful in such a case.

The acceptance of this offer was strongly urged, both by Mr. Foley and the medical man, who said, that although Minnie was doing extremely well at present, yet that so long a journey as that to Bury, might, after such an accident, be attended with considerable danger, which it was neither necessary nor adviseable to incur. The other children could return with Mr. Foley to Susan, and the next day, if the invalid were as much better as the Doctor hoped, why he would take her and her mother home in his carriage.

To this wise plan there was but one dissentient voice, and that was Harry's. Minnie's danger, and the peril from which he had rescued her, seemed to have increased his affection tenfold, and he could scarcely be persuaded to leave her, even while she slept. To all the encomiums and thanks which were lavished upon him for his services, he turned a deaf ear; the life he had saved was so very dear to him, that it was irksome to be praised for his gallantry.

I would have done the same for any boy in the school, I did for Loll before I knew him, much more for such a precious darling as Minnie. Besides, there's no gallantry in swimming half a quarter of a mile I do it every day.

Yes, but not in such a current as is running now, de Vere, replied Mrs. Towers; indeed you must consent to be thanked; what would have become of Minnie of me, if you had not plunged in as you did? I owe the lives of two of my children to you, oh! Harry, how can I ever repay the debt?

You have repaid it over and over again, said the boy, almost rudely, every hours happiness that I have known since I can remember, I have received from you, and Loll, and Minnie I love her as well, aye, better than if she were my own sister, and it pains me to be thanked for saving her indeed, indeed it does. Pray, say no more about it; but if Mr. Foley will consent, let me stay here to−night.

But this was impossible for, besides that it was against the rules of the School that any of the boarders should remain absent all night, it would have been inconvenient to the family at the farm to accommodate more visitors than they had already offered to receive. After much entreaty, therefore, and many last looks at the sleeping child, Harry consented to return with Mr. Foley, Maude, and her brothers.

But how different to the gaiety of the morning were the feelings of the party now. Silence and gloom usurped the place of the mirth and lightheartedness which had then distinguished them, and their minds were full of apprehension and sorrow. Had Minnie been sufficiently well to accompany them, none of the sad fears which now distressed them would have been entertained; but the very circumstance of being obliged to leave her behind, negatived to their fancy the assurances of the Doctor that she was going on well, and they could anticipate nothing but disaster.

She *must* be worse than Mr. Sinclair chose to say, or Mamma would not let her stay from home all night, so fond of home as she is, said Maude.

Oh no, it is to prevent her being worse, replied Lawrence.

Well, don't talk about it, said Harry, impatiently; I can't bear it, and 1 can't think how you can. If anything happens to Minnie, we can never forgive ourselves for leaving her by that river alone, I'll never stay in the place, I shall hate it!

Chapter 18.

Happily the next morning proved the groundlessness of the children's fears, for just as the boys returned from school, Mr. Sinclair's little four−wheeled carriage drove up with their mother and Minnie. In a moment they were by their sister's side, asking eagerly how she felt, and why her arm was in a sling, why she looked so pale, and if she were in pain.

To all these anxious and hasty questions Minnie answered cheerfully, for, although she wm suffering much from her arm, yet she had the courage and self−control to suppress all complaints, lest she should grieve the loving hearts around her, and therefore she spoke lightly of the pain. In the afternoon, however, Harry de Vere, who had obtained leave from Dr. Ashton, came over with Mr. Foley to see her. She was lying on the little sofa when they entered the parlour, and after a very short time, Harry's quick eye detected the evidences of Minnie's suffering, in the suddenly compressed lip, and blanched cheek which followed every movement. In a low whisper he told her of his fears, and when, fancying that she was tired and would sleep, every one left the room, he crept softly back to entreat her to tell him the truth.

Don't deceive me, Minnie, he said, I know you are in great pain I am sure of it.

Oh, it is nothing, Harry, only a bruise; Mr. Sinclair says that I must have been carried by the stream against one of the sharp sunken rocks, which lie just below where I fell, but that if I take care it will soon be well again; there is no danger, only a little pinch now and then when I move, so don't fret.

But Mr. Sinclair was wrong instead of getting better, the arm grew worse and worse, until Mrs. Towers became uneasy dissatisfied with the Surgeon's treatment, and resolved to call in further advice. Accordingly Mr. Lorimer, the principal practitioner in the town, was sent for, and after a most painful examination, which Minnie bore heroically, he pronounced that the arm was dislocated at the elbow.

This was nearly a week after the accident, and the case now presented much greater difficulty than it would have done at first; while the treatment requisite for reducing the swelling, and replacing the joint, would now be attended with very great pain, and the pitying Surgeon almost shrank from his task. But Minnie's courage and fortitude did not forsake her, and only entreating that her mother and Harry would stay with her, and that Mr. Lorimer would not hurt her more than he could help, she prepared to undergo the operation.

It was quickly and skilfully performed, for although all the Surgeon's sympathies were enlisted in favour of the brave little sufferer, yet when once the operation had commenced, he proceeded with a steady unflinching hand, which, although it looked cruel to the bystanders, yet was in reality, the truest mercy.

God bless you, my dear, said the Doctor, kissing her pale, cold brow, when all was over, and lifting her tenderly into bed, all will go well now. You will soon be able to use this poor arm again as easily as the other, if you are careful not to hurt it. Now try to sleep, I will see you again in the evening; until then I must send every one out of the room but your mamma, for you must not talk.

It was late in the evening when Minnie awoke, for she had been so exhausted with pain and loss of rest, that the great relief she experienced after the operation, shewed itself in sleep.

I feel so much better, owney, almost quite well, she whispered, as her mother bent over, and silently kissed her.

Thank God, darling; but you must not talk, here is some arrowroot, which you must take, and then lie still again.

Fortunately the patience and obedience of the little sufferer the entire absence of all fretfulness or repining−the cheerful readiness with which she obeyed all the Surgeon's directions, and took all his prescriptions, prevented the fever which would have irrevocably followed a different behaviour.

Only one subject seemed to distress her. She never repined at spending the long bright summer days in bed, nor murmured at not being able to join the merry games which in the cool evenings sent up such echoes of gay laughter to her room, but she did grieve that she was unable to finish the sketches she had begun, and that Wyndham must therefore continue to wear his shabby clothes at the examination. Only once, however, she mentioned the subject to her mother, and that was in explanation of the tears which were discovered glittering on her eyelashes.

You must not cry, Minnie, my pet, remember it is God's will, and be patient; if you suffer your mind to dwell upon painful thoughts now, it will irritate your system, and retard your recovery. Be contented and patient, GOD does all things well.

And so the child strove to feel; but it was a hard trial for one so young, and if she failed now and then in her earnest endeavour to be faithful and patient, we must not judge her sternly.

Meanwhile, even Maude made very slow progress with her work; she used to say that so that it was finished by the time appointed, she need not slave herself to death, and one good hard day's labour at last, would be sufficient to make up for all her deficiencies now. She was always busy, she said, either with Minnie, whom she certainly nursed most tenderly, or in the garden, or with the boys, or somewhere.

So don't tease, Minnie, dear, about the drawings; they shall be done in time, and when they are, you shall see them; but don't torment yourself or me about them now.

But do let me see your view of Buildwas pray do, Maude, I should like it so much.

No, nonsense, dear, I haven't finished it.

Well, never mind that, do let me see it.

And after much persuasion, Maude consented.

Oh! Maude, how lovely! how very beautiful! cried Minnie, her eye lighting up with an artist's pleasure, as her sister held the drawing before her; what will Mr. Foley say. How perfect I never saw any thing so beautiful! Oh, Maude, how clever you are, and how you must have persevered; when have you done it?

At odd times, missy, replied Maude, well pleased with Minnie's eager praises: but now lie down again, and don't teaze any more you see my book will be finished, and therefore be at peace.

Yes, answered Minnie, with a deep sigh, but mine will not, and poor Wyndham will have no new clothes. Oh, Maude, I am so unhappy! and the tears trickled down her face.

Never mind, dear, Wyn will know that it is not your fault, and he will love you just as much for trying to make him the present, as if you succeeded. But now, if you cry, I'll never show you anything again; I was very silly to let you see this at all, although you did beg so hard. Hark! there is Mr. Lorimer's voice, how angry he will be if he finds you crying.

So Minnie dried the tears, and when the Surgeon came, the only trace her agitation had left, was found in the increased flush upon her face, and quickness of her pulse.

At last, the evening before the day when the sketch books were to be given up arrived, and Minnie, who was now allowed to sit up, was very sorrowful. She was rather lonely, too, for Maude was shut up in her room, reading a new book which Harry had lent her, and the boys were busy preparing for the examination, which was to begin the following week. Minnie was therefore alone with her mother, who tried to amuse and cheer her by repeating the old fairy tales of which she was so fond, and that beautiful legend of Coleridge's, The Ancient Mariner, in which the child usually took a strange delight, but all her efforts to interest her were useless, and at last, with a weary sigh, Minnie begged to go to bed

Since her accident she had slept upon a little bed in her mother's room, so that Mrs. Towers might be near at hand during the night, in case she required anything. But Minnie was so very patient, and gave so little trouble, that during all her illness she never disturbed her mother until this night, when her sighs and restlessness painfully indicated that she was unhappy even in sleep. Towards morning, however, her rest became sound and quiet, and Mrs. Towers greatly relieved by her deep, regular breathing, and relaxed features fell asleep also, and did not awake until the morning, when she was aroused by an exclamation of joy from Minnie.

She rose instantly, and found the child sitting up in bed, gazing with wonder and delight at the two finished sketch books which lay before her.

Oh! Mamma, Mamma! she cried in ecstasy, look here, see what Maude has done! Oh, how good she is how very, very good! How happy I am, happier than ever I was in my life. Oh, how pleased Mr. Foley will be with her, and how Wyn will love her and how oh, Mamma, where is she? do tell her to come!

And in a minute, Maude, who had been watching for Minnie's awaking, came in glowing with pleasure, and throwing her arms round her sister's neck, exclaimed

I am so glad you like them, Minnie, dear! now you will be able to give your present to Wyn!

No, no, Maude, it is your present, you have earned it; but when did you do it? How you must have worked.

Yes, Minnie, said their Mother, who had observed the scene with deep delight, she must, indeed, have worked hard, and warily too, for even I never suspected her."

No! replied Maude, laughing, I was afraid to trust you, Mamma, for I knew you would never keep the secret long, when you saw Minnie's sorrowful face; and as I was not quite sure that I could do it, I thought that it would be the wisest not to take you into my confidence, no, nobody was in the secret but Susan; she used to call me up every morning when George went to work, and last night when you thought I was reading that book of Harry's, I was putting in the last foreground.

Oh, do let me get up now, Mamma, I feel so well, and Mr. Lorimer may not be here until ever so late; I want to see these darling things properly, oh, Maude, what a dear, sweet sister you are! cried the excited girl.

Patience, for a little time, Minnie. Lie still until after breakfast, and if Mr. Lorimer is not here then, you shall get up.

Well, it will not be long, said Maude, consolingly, it has struck eight, and I will come and sit here while Susan gets breakfast; I told her I should not help to−day.

Happily for Minnie's patience, Mr. Lorimer called very early. He was going out of town, and stopped at the cottage on his way, when finding his patient so much improved, he gave her permission to rise at once.

She was up, therefore, and dressed by the time Mr. Foley came, and, with a beaming smile of happiness, she ran up to him, with the book in her hand, saying

See! Mr. Foley, what Maude has done for me, see how she has worked; and it is so beautiful so much better than I could have done it: see how regular and finished the work is how much more bold and spirited than mine!

It is, indeed, most admirably done; where is Maude, that I may thank her? Indeed, Minnie, we may all be proud of this work you and I, as well as Maude. I do not know when I have been so pleased not only with the work, clever as it is, but with the steady perseverance to which we owe it, where is Maude?

Blushing with pleasure, Maude now entered, and received Mr. Foley's commendations. They were almost the first she had ever enjoyed, unaccompanied by some drawback in the shape of warning, or implied reproof, and she appreciated them in a degree which none but people of her ardent temperament, can understand.

Presently Mr. Foley rose to take leave, saying, as he did so I will not take these books now, for I confess that, not in the least expecting they would be finished, I made an engagement to go with Major Inglis to Atcham, and I see that he has just ridden past the gate; but this evening I will call again, and then we will settle our accounts.

In the afternoon, however, instead of Mr. Foley for whom the girls had been anxiously watching his servant came, bringing two notes for them. One was to Minnie, enclosing a cheque for five pounds, and the other to Maude, containing, besides the cheque, a small gold watch. For since you have learned to value and improve your time, ran the letter, you deserve all the assistance which this little monitor will give you.

Minnie was almost wild with joy when she read the note, and saw the beautiful little ornament.

Oh! Maude, I am so glad! cried the unselfish child, you do deserve it so well dear, darling Mr. Foley, how good he is, I do love him so much; and how hard we will always work to please him, oh! Maude, how shall we ever keep the secret from the boys? I am almost out of my senses. And she danced and jumped about far more like her gay bouyant sister than herself; while Maude stood still, gazing at the note, with her eyes full of tears, and her heart of resolutions.

The next morning the tailor received orders from Mrs. Towers for two new suits of clothes for her sons, and readily engaged to send them home in three days; which promise, to the girls' infinite relief, he faithfully kept. And then came the most difficult part of their undertaking the keeping of the secret, when the clothes were actually in the house. Certainly, if the boys had not been so absorbed in their own anxieties and hopes respecting the examination, they must have discovered the mystery, for such bad custodians of a secret, as Maude and Minnie, never surely existed before.

At last the happy morning for the disclosure arrived, and before day−break, while their brothers were still sleeping, the girls stole into their room, and left upon the bedside chair of each, a small brown paper parcel, containing a note, and the objects of their anxious wishes. They then returned to bed but not to sleep and lay talking over their brothers' pleasure upon opening the parcels, until their patience was exhausted, and it was time to rise. They were scarcely dressed, however, when they heard the boys' bedroom door thrown open, and Wyndham's voice cry out Maude! Minnie! Where are you? Come here!

We're busy we can't come wait till you go down! replied the girls, mischievously.

We can't we won't! make haste and come directly! shouted their brothers.

It's out of the question, answered Maude, demurely; if you want us we are going into the garden, so you must make haste and follow us.

You dear, darling, tiresome girls! said Wyndham, rushing down stairs in his handsome new suit; come here and let me squeeze you to death, why what a brick you are, Maude; how you must have slaved to rig us out in this first−rate style. And you, too, you good little thing, he added, kissing Minnie vehemently.

Thank you, Maude, a thousand times, for your generous thought, said Lawrence, running down, too; although it's a shame to take such a handsome present from you, it's quite reversing the order of things; we ought to work for you, not you for us.

Yes, of course of course; but how cleverly you have managed it, you cunning little witches all the things fit to a T. And these waistcoats! why they're the spiciest things in the school; we shall be regular top−sawyers, Loll. And the jackets have got that new collar that Inglis has just sported, and that he says is all the go, in London; he won't like our coming out in it, will he? Oh, you dear girls, what jewels of sisters you are!

Of course we are we never doubted it! said Maude, laughing; but see what I've got, your jewels are nothing to mine. And as she spoke, she drew from her neck the little gold watch, and displayed it before the admiring eyes of her brothers.

Why, you lucky girl! you've found a fairy godmother, or an old treasure pot! cried Wyndham; how on earth have you done it all, this spicy new toggery for us, that duck of a watch for you, and what has Minnie got? I say, Minnie, what are you going to astonish us with?

Nothing, just at present; I don't know what I shall do presently I keep my splendours for a future occasion; but you haven't shewn yourselves to Susan yet; she is in the kitchen, let us go now. Come, Wyn, don't look so contemptuous; if I haven't a gold watch round my neck, you don't know what I may have in my pocket.

And that's thrue! mimicked Wyn, dancing off.

The examination passed most honourably to our heroes. Lawrence and Harry were promoted to the next form. Wyndham gained a certificate of the first class, and Verulam beat Trelawney in the struggle for removal to the highest place in their form.

Those who saw the look of Archer when this distinction was awarded to his enemy, said that it was a thing never to be forgotten; and it returned to their memory with sad significance afterwards.

The holidays passed quickly at the cottage. Minnie's arm had got quite well, and Harry petted her more than ever. The boys worked hard at their studies for three hours each day, and their sisters devoted the same time to their drawing. Mr. Foley was in Switzerland, and twice Harry and Minnie were delighted by receiving letters from him.

Chapter 19.

I must not linger long on this time happy though it was but pass to the sad catastrophe with which this book must close. The holidays, as I said, were over, the examination concluded, and Verulam established in the place, which Trelawney had thought himself certain to obtain.

All the boys who had been dissatisfied with Archer's conduct during the ball affair, and had never considered him exonerated from some guilty knowledge or part in the plot, triumphed in Verulam's success; and, although he was not a general favourite, yet, to mortify Archer, they cheered his rival, vociferously, upon his return to school, making use at the same time of some very insulting comparisons. This exasperated Archer terribly, and drawing his breath hard, and setting his teeth, he muttered a fearful resolution to be revenged. Few heard the words, and none saw the lightning look which rested for an instant upon Verulam, but all observed and laughed at the scowl with which the enraged boy hurried away.

A week after this incident, the whole school was disturbed by the information that a five−pound note received by Harry de Vere from his father, through Dr. Ashton, and indorsed by both, had been stolen.

De Vere seems determined to be a hero, said Camac, with a sneer; he'll lose his money sooner than not be talked about, well it's lucky he can afford to pay five pounds for a frolic.

How dare you insinuate such things, Camac! cried Lawrence Towers, who was with the boys when the matter was first mentioned, you ought to know that de Vere is the last fellow in the school to deceive, or tell a lie!

I know no such thing! returned Camac, insolently, fellows who are locked up for three weeks for something nobody ever gets to the bottom of, are not supposed to be over scrupulous.

Take care, Camac, said Lawrence his eyes flashing, de Vere is my friend, and those who speak against him to me, must take the consequences.

And what are they, Captain Grand? Don't think you've got one of the little ones to deal with now; I'm a match for a dozen such toadies as you; though I daresay de Vere pays you well for fighting his battles, and getting licked for him.

All the boys turned to Lawrence as these insulting words were spoken, curious to see how he would act; but at the very moment he was about to answer, Inglis rushed among them, exclaiming that Trelawney had accused Verulam, of stealing the missing note.

This astonishing news seemed for a moment to paralyse all the hearers, but the shock once over, they canvassed the matter eagerly and zealously all with the exception of Camac, and two other boys loudly proclaiming their want of confidence in Trelawney.

After a few minutes, they were all called into the lower hall by Mr. Wharncliffe, and while they remain there, we must go back a little, and explain how Trelawney made and supported his accusation, and the circumstances attending de Vere's loss.

By the morning post of the previous day, Dr. Ashton had received a letter from Mr. de Vere, enclosing a five−pound Bank of England note for his son. It was indorsed with his name, and under it Dr. Ashton had written his own, before giving it to Harry, which he did at afternoon school. De Vere always careless of money put it into his waistcoat pocket, and neglected to take it out until the next morning, when he was reminded of it by drawing it out with his knife and pencil; just as he did so, the school bell summoned him, and he threw the note and pencil upon the table, went out, and forgot them. Later in the morning Trelawney knowing that de Vere was occupied, went into his study for the last number of a periodical which Harry regularly took in, and which, although convinced that he might have it for asking, he preferred to borrow on the sly: the sight of the note attracted his attention, and while examining it, he heard de Vere's voice coming along the passage. Dismayed at the sound, and not knowing how to account for his presence in a room which he never visited, he followed the impulse of the moment, and hid himself behind a half−open door, trusting that de Vere would not remain long, and go away without discovering him. He had scarcely hidden himself, when de Vere and Verulam entered. They

had come for the very book which Archer held in his hand. After a few minutes' ineffectual search for the number among his papers, Harry fancied that he must have lent it to some of the boys, and turned to Verulam, who was looking at the bank note, and saying you are a lucky fellow, de Vere, to have tin in this way; I wish my governor would stump up so. But what a nuisance to have his name and the Doctor's stuck at the back like this, I should run a pen through them.

What for? replied Harry, It will go to Leake's for books. But come along, let's go and ask about this number.

I daresay I've lent it either to Towers, or Antrobus. I'll run down and catch Towers in the court, and you go to Antrobus and ask him.

So saying, they both left the room, and Trelawney came from his hiding place, intending to escape; but before he could do so, he again heard footsteps approaching, and had barely time to retreat behind the door, when Verulam ran in alone, looked about for something which he did not find, and then ran out again.

This circumstance, slight as it was, suggested to Archer the diabolical plot, which he determined to work out for Verulam's ruin.

As soon, therefore, as he was certain the passage was clear, he stole from his concealment, caught up the bank note which still lay open on the table, and went quickly into his own room in Mr. Foley's house, to mature the plan he had only sketched. He had not been there long, when he saw from the window, Verulam, de Vere, Antrobus, and several other boys, enter the ball−court, and begin to play. His resolution was instantly taken, and without pausing a moment to consider the guilt of his project, he went up to Verulam's room, and opening his box, took out an old pocket book, put the note between the leaves, and then pushed it under the mattress of the bed. While he was doing this, he was suddenly alarmed by hearing voices in the lower passage, so, pushing in the book as far, and as quickly as he could, he crept softly out of the chamber, down the stairs, and into his own study. He was only just in time, for at the very moment he reached his room, Verulam and Hankey came up, the former passing on without a word, and going up stairs to his own room, which, at Mr. Foley's, were open to their occupants all day, and the latter entering the study where Archer stood.

You're soon tired of fives, said Trelawney.

Yes, Verulam's not very well, he left us once before this morning, and now he's given up playing altogether.

Not very well! What's the matter?

Oh, nothing, only sick and giddy, he says, nothing else.

Well, some one should be with him, I think; we're not friends, but I'll go and offer to do what I can. He's in his study, I daresay.

I wouldn't trouble myself about him if I were you, he won't thank you for it.

Never mind, I should like to go will you come with me?

They went first to the study occupied by Verulam and his companions; but, as Archer very well knew, he was not there, and making great comment upon the unusual circumstance of his being in his bedroom during the day, Trelawney led Hankey thither. When they reached the room, the door was slightly ajar, and through it the boys observed Verulam leaning on the bed. A bright flush came upon Archer's face as he saw the unconscious boy give this singular confirmation of the charge which was so soon to be brought against him, and he drew back a little, while his companion went forward, saying

Why, old fellow, what's the matter, you must be very bad to be leaning on the bed in that way?

No, I'm not! replied Verulam, sharply, for he was angry at the impertinent intrusion of Trelawney, who now entered; and I don't like this prying, I can tell you!

Oh, very well, answered Hankey, then I'll go. I told you what thanks we should get, he continued, addressing Trelawney.

How very odd Verulam looked, said Archer, thoughtfully, as they descended the stairs, just as if he were doing something he did not like us to see. Once before to−day, I met him in the passage at the Doctor's, close by de Vere's room, and he had the same queer look then, I can't make it out!

Half an hour subsequent to this, Harry discovered that he had been robbed, and after a vain search and enquiry for the missing note, he reported the circumstance to Dr. Ashton. As soon as the fact was thoroughly known through the school, and conjectures were rife in every study and hall, Trelawney went to the head master, and in a hesitating manner, in which his reluctance to inform against a companion was so admirably feigned, as to deceive even the penetrating eye fixed upon him, he told him the following tale.

That having that morning had occasion to go to the study of a boy whose room was in the same passage with de Vere's, he had observed Verulam and de Vere go to the study of the latter, where they remained some little time, come out together, and go down stairs; but that after a few minutes he saw Verulam return alone, look cautiously round, then enter de Vere's room hurriedly, remain only a few seconds, and then run out, and down stairs. That some time afterwards, he was told by Hankey that Verulam was ill, and that upon going with him to Verulam's study, they had not found him there as usual, but in his bedroom; that their offers of service were rudely repulsed, and that, at the time they approached the door, they saw him leaning on the bed, as if in the act of concealing something.

And what do you wish me to infer from this? asked Dr. Ashton, sternly.

Whatever you think the circumstances I have related imply, sir.

In themselves they imply nothing, your manner and tone imply a great deal.

I wish to imply nothing more than I believe to be true, sir.

And what is that? Look you, Trelawney, I do not like these innuendoes this cowardly stabbing in the dark; if you have any fair, true charge to make, I will have it made openly, honestly, and supported by such straightforward evidence, as an honourable boy can offer, and I can receive. I do not forget that you and Verulam are enemies, and that he has just defeated you. This may, and ought to be, no ground for vindictiveness, but there is a whisper in the school that you are a dangerous boy to baffle, and I tell you candidly, therefore, that I will listen to no insinuations; what you believe, you shall say openly, and must prove satisfactorily. Now, after this warning, take care what you do. Do you persist in accusing Verulam, and of what?

I do accuse him, sir, of stealing de Vere's note!

Very well, then be prepared to prove it; you will remain here until I send for you.

Oh, how sick and faint the wretched boy felt, as the door closed upon his master, and he was left alone with his burdened conscience. How long and weary the time appeared, and how his heart sank, and seemed to stand still whenever he heard footsteps approaching. Over and over again he pondered upon all the steps he had taken, and as he did so, his courage returned. He could detect no flaw in his story, no link wanting in his plan, all was clear

and specious. Doctor Ashton might suspect his veracity for the present, which was certainly very disagreeable, but when the note was found, he could doubt no longer, and would feel bound to retract the insulting words he had spoken. He would be reinstated in the master's good opinion, and would see his enemy covered with shame and public disgrace. What then had he to fear? No one could connect him in any way with the removal or concealment of the note, no eye had seen, no ear had heard him, and he could defy fate. For awhile this thought nerved him, and he tried to amuse and occupy the time by looking at the pictures which covered the walls, but in vain, he could not fix his mind for a moment, nor divert it from the dread forebodings which, in spite of himself, were becoming so oppressive; the pictures seemed all the same, and he quickly turned from them in disgust. What could keep the Doctor so long had he discovered anything? And, as the terrible thought flashed across his mind, a burning glow as if he had been suddenly placed under a tropical sun broke out all over him; his knees knocked against each other, and he trembled so much, that he was glad to sit down. But as he did so by some strange chance his restless movements dislodged from a side−table a heap of papers which fell to the ground, and as he stooped to pick them up, he read on the top of a long closely−written sheet of remarks, the very text from which Doctor Ashton had addressed the boys some months before, Evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him.

At this moment, and while his fascinated eye was still rivetted on the words, he was summoned to attend the Doctor.

Action the presence and contact of danger, roused him instantly, and he rose and followed the messenger into the library, where, he found Doctor Ashton, Mr. Foley, Mr. Wharncliffe, and all the other masters assembled. The Doctor's steady eye was fixed upon him as he entered, but Mr. Foley's head was bent upon his hand, and his eyes cast down. He knew, as if by instinct, that the boy now summoned before them was guilty, and, while he abhorred the crime, he could not bear to look upon the sinner. Infatuated youth! who, in spite of warning and remonstrance, persisted in rushing headlong into guilt. An expression half indignation, half compassion sat upon Mr. Wharncliffe's countenance, as he watched Trelawney; and, after a few moments, he whispered something to Mr. Foley, which caused him to look up, and watch too.

Now, Trelawney, said Doctor Ashton, repeat before these gentlemen the charge you made to me against one of your schoolfellows a short time since, and then substantiate it with what evidence you have.

The boy obeyed. Clear and concise, without a single unnecessary statement, the smallest contradiction, or most trifling word, which could even once betray his hatred of the accused, he made his charge, and gave his reasons for it. As he went on, the masters looked at each other, as if to gather from the countenance of each, his opinion of the tale, but after a time the same expression was visible upon the faces of all. Against their will almost against their judgment they were compelled to believe the story.

After Trelawney had concluded, and Doctor Ashton had interrogated him upon every point which admitted of a question, without shaking his testimony in the least, Mr. Foley said It would be better, perhaps, to consult upon the next steps to be taken, in Trelawney's absence, Dr. Ashton.

Yes, he may return to the room he has just left, until we send for him. You will find a servant in the hall, Trelawney, who will attend you.

Chapter 20.

As soon as the door was closed, the Doctor continued The story is very clear it does not vary in a word from that which he told me before; I fear it is true.

I should say so at once if it were told by anybody but Trelawney, replied Mr. Wharncliffe; but clear as it seems, I will never believe it until either Verulam confesses, or we find the note concealed on, or about him.

It is so unlike Verulam, said Mr. Foley.

It is it is, answered the Doctor; and it is a fearful thing even to accuse a boy of such a crime without ample grounds; we must proceed very cautiously.

I think we ought to send for de Vere and Hankey, and hear how their statements corroborate Trelawney's, said Mr. Wharncliffe.

Yes, most certainly, I will send for them at once; and, in the meantime, Trelawney had better remain alone, we will examine the others separately.

In a quarter of an hour, Harry, who was the first found, was ushered into the presence of his masters, and, in reply to Doctor Ashton's questions, confirmed the story Trelawney had told, in every particular of which he had had cognisance.

He corroborated the statement of his going to his study with Verulam, looking about for a book which they did not find, leaving the room together, and parting on the stairs, Verulam returning to the study to bring something which he fancied that he had left there, and de Vere proceeding in search of Towers.

When did he rejoin you? asked Mr. Foley.

Not for some time; he came into the ball−court, and began a game, but he soon tired of it, saying that his head ached, and that he would go in.

When did you see him next?

I have not seen him since, sir.

Do you know whether he observed the note lying upon your table?

Yes! said de Vere quickly, for the first time recognizing and entering into his master's suspicion. The sudden change in his manner attracted the attention of Mr. Wharncliffe, who asked

How do you know it?

Because he took it up, looked at it, and made some remarks.

What were they?

That it was a nuisance having names written on the back of the note, and he advised me to strike them out.

Did you see him put the note down again?

Yes, he said, put it in your pocket.

But you did not?

No, sir, I left it on the table.

After a few more questions, de Vere was taken into a room and left alone, while Hankey was sent for, and interrogated also. He, too, confirmed his part of his story.

There can be no doubt, now, said Doctor Ashton, sorrowfully, the unhappy boy's guilt is too plain. He must be sent for, and confronted with Trelawney. I have seldom been more shocked and distressed.

When Trelawney next entered the room, it was to meet his schoolfellow face to face. Not a word had as yet been said to Verulam of the reason for which he had been summoned, and he looked round with a puzzled, though unclouded face. When Trelawney appeared, however, a strange shade passed over each boy's face. The accuser grew slightly pale, and his eyes dropped for an instant, though they were as instantly raised. The accused drew himself up, his lip curled, and, after a moment's steady gaze, he tuned his eyes contemptuously away.

At last, Doctor Ashton spoke, Verulam, he said, a charge has been made against you to−day, of so disgraceful and terrible a nature, that nothing but the clearest evidence from three distinct sources, could have induced me to listen to it. It has been, however, so thoroughly established, that unless you can exculpate yourself in some way that at present seems to me impossible, the consequences must be ruinous to your future prospects in life. Still, improbable as it appears, I will hope that for your own sake, and the honour of the school, you will be able to do so, and explain satisfactorily, circumstances which at present wear a most suspicious appearance. Trelawney, repeat again what you have before told us.

At first, when the Doctor first commenced speaking, Verulam looked simply astonished, but, towards the last, his eyes flashed, his nostrils expanded, and his breath came hard and quick.

He was about to speak, but Mr. Foley waved his hand and the boy was silent.

Once more, in just the same words and tone that he had twice used before, Trelawney repeated his story, finishing by charging Verulam with the theft of the note.

What have you to say? asked the Doctor.

The boy turned his kindling eye, and curling lip, upon his accuser, and replied, boldly That the tale has told is truer than anything I ever heard from his mouth before, but that the charge he makes out of it, is a base, false lie!

You admit the statement then; that you left de Vere's room with him, returned alone, absented yourself for some time from your companions, and, at an unusual hour, were found by Trelawney and Hankey kneeling, or leaning by your bed?

I do!

I am glad of this. It shows that you are not wholly hardened, and affords me a hope that you may yet be spared the lifelong disgrace of a public expulsion. You have hitherto borne a fair character in the school, Verulam; neither your masters nor I, have ever had cause to suspect your integrity, however we may have lamented your rash and hasty temper; and for the sake of that fair reputation, we are anxious to show you every mercy; confess to us the crime with which you are charged, and then, although you must leave the school, it shall be privately, there shall be no publicity attending it. Reflect seriously upon my offer, and do not indulge in the idle hope of being able to conceal your guilt by denial; for I assure you, that if you do, your hopes will be disappointed, since I shall exert every means to bring the case home to you, and eventually the truth must come out. Remember that 'Evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him.'

Then I am safe! answered the boy, whose eye had sunk when Doctor Ashton spoke of his good character, but who, at the concluding words, looked up again, fearless and calm.

Mr. Foley marked the change, and, mistaking its cause, shook his head reprovingly.

At this sight, the boy's impetuous feelings broke forth,. and he cried

Do not suspect me, sir! do not you turn from me; I am as innocent of taking this note as you are yourself. I do not even know if it has been stolen I would not believe it had, but that de Vere says so, and he would neither tell, nor aid a lie. The Doctor says I have always borne a good character here. I have done so everywhere. And the boy's eyes glistened with the tears which, in spite of himself, crept under the eyelids. Give me the benefit of it, do not place my word against *his*, and he glanced for a moment to his accuser; but ask all the school if I ever cheated, or told lies, ever used unfairly any advantage I might gain, and then ask if it is likely I should become a *thief* all of a sudden, and for such a paltry thing? Trelawney hates me, for he knows that I suspect him of more than one evil thing done in the school, and laid upon others, that I have said openly, over and over again, that the day would come when I should unmask him, and he hates me, because he fears me.

You make your case worse, Verulam, by these passionate recriminations. I feel for you with all my heart, I grieve for the temptation you have suffered to overcome you, and I council you to accept Doctor Ashton's offer, and confess that you are guilty.

Never, *never!* I will die first! I may be expelled, ruined as it may seem for life, but GOD will judge, and to him appeal!

A heavy silence followed these solemn words. At last Doctor Ashton said in a low voice We must proceed at once, what is to be done.

Give him one more chance, said Mr. Wharncliffe, let his bed be examined.

Oh! thank you thank you! exclaimed Verulam, eagerly, upon that let my guilt or innocence rest.

As Mr. Wharncliffe spoke, Mr. Foley observed a strange gleam of satisfaction cross Trelawney's face, but in less than a moment it died away, leaving his countenance as passionless as before.

Accompanied by Verulam and Trelawney, the masters went from Doctor Ashton's house to Mr. Foley's, and thence to the bedroom of the accused. The bed had evidently been disturbed, and as Doctor Ashton removed the clothes, shaking each article as he laid it by, Mr. Foley watched the countenances of the two boys, until he was called from his scrutiny, by a general exclamation, which caused him to turn round, and there, lying between the mattresses, he saw a pocket−book! For the first time Verulam's colour faded, and for a few moments he appeared fainting; but with a desperate effort he rallied again, and watched the opening of the book, from which the Doctor took the identical note which had been missed. A heavy groan burst from the heart of the tortured boy, as he saw the eyes of every one turned wonderingly upon him, and heard the Doctor say

Wretched boy! why have you done this, why have you brought this ruin on yourself?

A deep gasping sigh answered the words, and Verulam threw his arms upon the drawers near which he stood, and bent his head upon them.

Touched with his agony, no one spoke for some time, but at last Doctor Ashton said

You will be so good, Mr. Foley, as to take charge of Verulam until to−morrow: after chapel the usual form of expulsion must be gone through; but till then, let him remain alone in his study.

For an instant the culprit raised his head. The woe of his face was sad to see, but his voice was clear as ever when he said

The plot is deeply laid, and I am fairly condemned; but GOD can make crooked ways plain, and to Him I still appeal.

Shortly after this, Mr. Wharncliffe released the boys from their temporary imprisonment in the lower hail, and they knew from his mournful tones, and sorrowful face, that the shameful charge, of which Inglis had spoken, had been established against Verulam. Fortunately this sad day was a half−holiday, and neither the boys nor the masters had anything to do, except to attend the short lecture given by Doctor Ashton in the upper school room: when the sternest and most contemptuous words Mr. Foley was ever heard to speak, he addressed to Trelawney, in rebuke for his fussy and unnecessary readiness.

I'm glad he's caught it a fox! whispered Inglis to his neighbour; he must have a villainous heart to be merry over Verulam's disgrace, bad as it is.

The lecture was soon over: the boys went to their studies and play, and the masters to their homes; but a gloom was over all the conversation and thoughts of each being engaged by the event of the morning.

It was remembered and commented upon afterwards, that no one that evening seemed so gay and amiable as Trelawney, so full of fun and merriment; and even at the time, many of the boys observed it, and shunned him.

Meanwhile Verulam sat lonely and thoughtful in his room. The first horror of his situation was over, and he began to think, calmly and honestly. Some natures are improved by suffering, and his fortunately was one. He was not what is usually called a religious boy, but he had been well and carefully instructed by an excellent mother, who was only lately dead, and in his solitude her words and prayers seemed to come back to him with strange power, and distinctness. His heart was softened as he dwelt upon her memory, and by the light of her holy precepts, looked into his own heart. GOD lent him grace to do so honestly, and he saw much wilfulness, passion, and self−confidence, many evil thoughts and unhallowed wishes, many aspirations almost prayers for vengeance upon his foe; and, as the conviction of his unworthiness came upon him stronger and stronger, his anger against Trelawney was subdued, and he knelt down, and imploring pardon for his own manifold sins, humbly besought GOD to make his innocence plain. From this chastened prayer he rose calm and cheerful. He felt that whatever more GOD might see fit to vouchsafe, he had already bestowed peace, and in this frame of mind he waited patiently, until, as the dusk came on, and he was still alone wearied with the sorrow and excitement of the day he bent his head, and fell asleep.

Thus we must leave him, and adjourn to Doctor Ashton's dining room, where Mr. Foley and Mr. Wharncliffe were sitting; having, at the Doctor's request, come in to talk over the next day's melancholy duty.

The expelling of that boy is the most painful duty that ever fell to my lot, said the head master; the evidence is very clear, and there can be no reasonable doubt of his guilt; but I declare I should hail with the greatest delight any circumstance which would give me a chance of pardoning him. I cannot like that Trelawney!

Nor I; I detest him! a crafty, wily, young scamp! As I came past the door of the lower hall to−night, I heard his voice singing away as if he were keeping jubilee. It is a grievous necessity being obliged to expel a boy upon his evidence, said Mr. Wharncliffe.

It is; but what else is to be done? the case is so clear, and the crime so

At this moment there was a loud, hasty knock on the door, and immediately upon it Mrs. Ashton entered.

Pray excuse me! she said, hurriedly, as the gentlemen rose, but a most extraordinary and important circumstance has just occurred. Do any of you know this button? and she held out a plain gold sleeve−button.

I think I do, said Mr. Wharncliffe.

And I! and I! exclaimed the others; I believe it is Trelawney's, no one else in the school wears such things, and I have remarked them upon his wrist very often, continued Mr. Wharncliffe.

I thought so, said Mrs. Ashton, and see inside! there are his initials 'A. T.'

Where was it found? asked the Doctor.

Caught in the binding of the mattress upon Verulam's bed.

Impossible! When? By whom? cried all the gentlemen at once.

Now not five minutes since by one of Mr. Foley's housemaids. She ran here with it instantly, told the story to Benson, who came to me, and I have not lost a moment in bringing it to you.

The boy appealed to GOD, said Mr. Wharncliffe, solemnly, and the cry has been speedily answered.

Unconscious that into the pit he had digged for another, he was now about to fall himself, Doctor Ashton's summons to Trelawney, found him singing one of his best songs to his particular friends in the lower hall.

What a bore! he cried gaily, jumping up to follow the butler; I shan't be long, so don't go away.

Trelawney, said Doctor Ashton gravely, when he was ushered in, is this your sleeve−button?

Yes, sir, thank you; I did not know I had lost it I had it on this morning. Thank you.

Have you more than one pair, that you are so careless of them?

No, sir, my mother gave me these, two or three years ago they have my initials inside.

Yes, I have seen them. You do not ask where this button was found?

No, sir, I forgot that, where was it?

Caught in the binding of the mattress upon the bed of that poor boy, whom your wickedness had plotted to destroy, but who, by GOD'S merciful interposition, has been thus wonderfully exonerated.

Trelawney's ghastly countenance was terrible to behold as his master spoke, but at last he murmured

I am not quite sure, the button may not be mine, I daresay mine are in my box.

Without exchanging another word with him, Doctor Ashton rang the bell, and sent for the box. It was soon brought, but was locked.

Give me your keys, sir!

I won't have my box opened, said the boy, doggedly, no one has a right to do that.

Give me the key, or I will order the lock to be broken!

I have lost the key!

No matter, it can be picked. Go and bring a locksmith, Martin.

During the servant's absence, Trelawney's agitation was extreme, and when the man returned, bringing with him the artisan for whom he had been sent, the boy managed to slip out of the room unobserved.

The box was soon opened, and the Doctor took out the articles one by one. They consisted simply of ordinary wearing apparel, and, as they were placed upon the table a feeling of surprise at the owner's reluctance to have them examined, entered every mind. At last, at the very bottom, rolled tightly in handkerchiefs and stockings, was a small hard parcel, sealed up; from which, when it was opened, fell an old fives−ball, covered with quaint likenesses of Trelawney, in blue ink.

A general exclamation was uttered by the masters, as this much talked−of missile rolled upon the table; and then turning with it in his hand to confront Trelawney, Doctor Ashton for the first time missed him from the room.

Search was quickly made, but failed to discover him; and it then became evident that unable to bear the exposure of his wickedness the wretched boy had absconded!

Verulam was, as we have said, sleeping, and was awakened from a pleasant dream by a glare of light, when, starting to his feet, he saw Doctor Ashton standing before him.

You have spent your time well, said his visitor, pointing to the bible from which the boy had been reading before he fell asleep; and the reward is already come. You called upon GOD to make your innocence manifest, and He, whose ears are always open, has heard and answered you.

How, sir, what do you mean?

That by a train of the most extraordinary circumstances, your innocence has been established, and the guilt of another person discovered.

Who? but I know, I am sure it is Trelawney, said the boy quietly; I felt it from the first.

You are right, although it is no matter for triumph, Verulam rather for sorrow and warning that such rare gifts as his should be so perverted. But come with me, you must leave this room now.

With a thankful heart Verulam went that night to bed; and the effect of that day, with its bountiful experience of GOD's goodness, was seen in the boy's life thenceforward. He never forgot that when forsaken of all else, with the hand of his enemy triumphing against him, he had cast himself in his innocence upon GOD, and had been saved. And even that very night, the change was visible in the altered manner with which he received the congratulations of his masters. A few hours before, there would have been loud triumph, and unchristian boasting, scornful and taunting words, and cruel sarcasm, but now his words were few and modest full of fervent thankfulness for his own exculpation, and an evident distrust of himself in speaking of Trelawney. It was remarked also by his schoolfellows, that Verulam never voluntarily recurred to the subject, and never once, even to Camac, gloried in the fulfilment of his prophecy, that he should one day unmask his enemy. His great peril, and GOD's mercy, had humbled him effectually.

The next morning proclamation was made before all the boys in chapel, that Archer Trelawney was publicly expelled from being any longer a scholar of the school; and after lessons, Doctor Ashton addressed them upon the

subject.

A week afterwards, the head master received a letter from Mr. Trelawney, in reply to one that he had written informing him of Archer's expulsion and its cause, saying that his son had not returned home, but had written to him from on board a merchant vessel, just sailing for the West Indies, on the books of which he had entered himself as cabin−boy. Mr. Trelawney further said, that the shock of his son's conduct had so powerfully affected his mother's failing health, that he feared Archer's delinquencies would be the cause of her death. This foreboding was unhappily realized, for the London papers, a week after, announced Mrs. Trelawney's decease.

And now very little more remains to be told.

Only one other incident of great importance occurred during the school life of Harry de Vere, and this was, his father's return from Italy, and visit to Bury. After a short time the boy's friends rejoiced to find that Mr. de Vere's affection for the son whom he had so long neglected, and found so worthy, became as strong as his former dislike; and Mrs. Towers had the great satisfaction of seeing in Harry's respectful, and, ultimately, cordial manner to his father, ample evidence of the value of her teaching. To Mrs. Towers, Mr. de Vere's gratitude was unbounded, and was substantially shown in the handsome presents he made to her sons.

Notwithstanding his father's return, Harry still spent his vacations at the cottage; and working steadily together, he and Lawrence passed their last examination at school with distinguished success. Lawrence gaining one of the Foundation Exhibitions of £70 per annum; upon which, with £30 more presented to him by his sisters, from their earnings in the profession they had now adopted so successfully, he supported himself very creditably at St. John's, thus exemplifying the power of perseverance and industry, to reach the highest honours.

At college the friendship of de Vere and Towers continued unbroken; and when they left Cambridge, after taking their degrees, Lawrence accompanied a nephew of Mr. de Vere's abroad, as tutor, while Harry returned to his father's house; to which, after a time, he brought Minnie Towers as his wife.

Wyndham attracted by the gaiety of the life, and his passion for adventure entered the army, and has lately, to his extreme satisfaction, joined a regiment under orders for the East. Mrs. Towers and Maude have removed to a pretty cottage near Mrs. Harry de Vere, and spend the time between their own home and hers; their income being materially increased by Maude's industry, and talent for wood engraving and designing, and the presents of Lawrence, who is now working up his way as steadily at the bar, as he did at school and at college.