

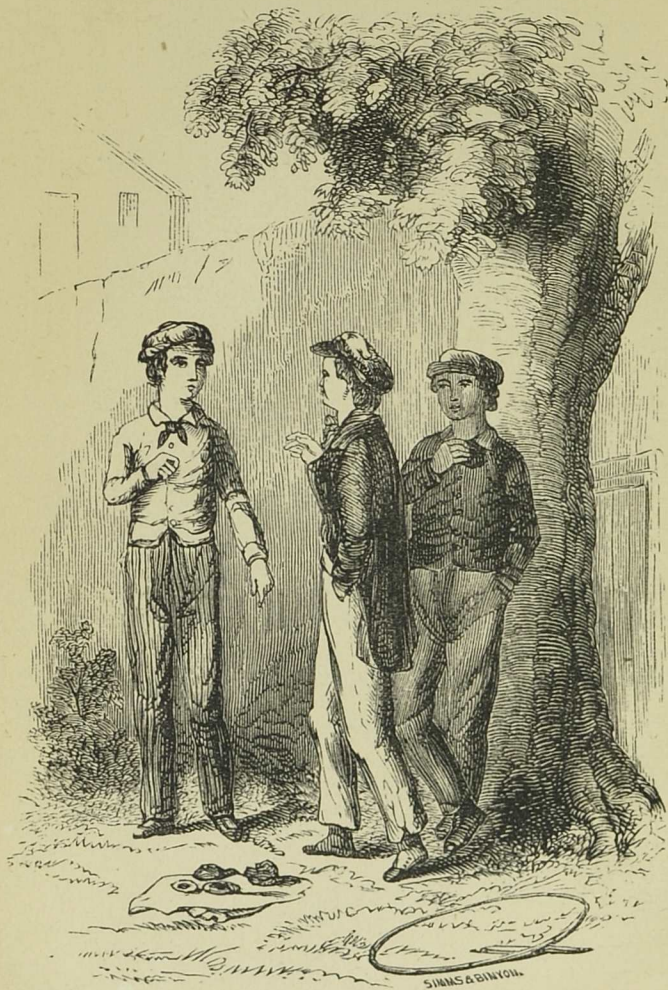
Influence

AS

It should be.

GALL & DYGDALE

LONDON & EDINBURGH



I call it neither more nor less than stealing.”—p. 26.

INFLUENCE

AS IT SHOULD BE:

OR,

Reuben Kent.



GALL & INGLIS.

Edinburgh:

20 BERNARD TERRACE.

London:

25 PATERNOSTER SQ.

“ I think I can, with a little skill and a little patience, Reuben,” replied the mother, carefully laying down the burden and surveying the scene.

“ This makes me realise that I am really going, mother ; and, after all, have I courage to go ? I feel it oozing out of my heart this very minute ;” and he pressed his hand against its pulsations, quickened at the thought of his approaching departure

“ Keep up a stout heart, Reuben. Of what use are good purposes, unless we have manly hearts to execute them ? I am sure we shall miss you,”—and the mother spoke sadly.

“ How I shall miss you, mother ! going away among strangers, who care nothing for me !”

“ It would seem very hard, if you were not in the way of duty, Reuben. You will soon love Mr Ashby, and, I daresay, will find very pleasant companions. Hand me those stockings, my child, that have rolled away under the chair.” Reuben sought the runaway stockings.

“ Mother, you do pack beautifully. Why, all my books are in ! I felt sure, before you came in, that I should need another trunk.”

“ Here is a book, Reuben, that I shall put in a very safe place ; let it become your chief study, my son, for without it all your other studies will avail nothing.” She drew forth a small volume from her pocket—“ it is one your father bought you to-day—he has written your name in it,

‘ A gift from your Parents. ’ ”

“ Please let me take it a moment, mother, before you put it in. What a beautiful little Bible is this !” and he turned over its leaves with evident satisfaction ; “ and what father has written is just like him.”

“Form your judgments, and conform your actions, according to its blessed and holy principles, my son, and you will be happy in time, and safe in eternity.”

“Oh, I hope I shall,” said Reuben, with great heartiness. “It seems to me, mother, that I do love this book.”

“I hope you do. When you were a very little boy you used to love the Bible stories best, because they were true stories. You have sat on my knee hours and hours, looking me earnestly in the face, while I related them to you:—‘more,’ ‘more, mother,’ you used to cry out, if I stopped.”

“Do not you almost wish I was a very little boy now? Then I should not go away,” asked Reuben, nestling up to his mother’s side.

“I enjoyed you then, very much; but, how much I enjoy you now, and how much I shall expect to enjoy you when you are grown up! Soon you will be a man, and now you are going away that you may prepare to be a man,”—and the mother spoke in hope and love.

“I wish I could be like father!” said Reuben, earnestly.

“Few boys have such a father,” added his mother.

“Or such a mother,” said Reuben, as he passed his arm round her waist. “Oh, mother, mother, how I shall miss you! I have no heart to go when I think of it!”—His voice quivered; he laid his head on her shoulder, and the tears filled his eyes.

The mother caught the spirit of the boy; but in a moment she said cheerfully, “How we will send our thoughts to and fro, from Montrose to Thetford—from Thetford to Montrose!—little roving spirits will they be, and weary withal—

quite joyful when you come back—I fancy my Reuben coming back! Reuben, only think what a jubilee it will be.”

Bright hopes chased away sad regrets, and he raised his head gleefully, exclaiming, “Oh, won’t it be a jubilee!”

“Yes, if our lives are spared, and Reuben does all that it is his duty and his privilege to do,” said a deep voice, towards the entry door.

“Why, father!” cried Reuben, jumping up, “we did not hear you—I guess you have on the slippers sister worked. Come and see how beautifully mother has packed my trunk.”

“Nicely packed, indeed,” replied Mr Kent, approaching the well-filled trunk with a letter in his hand; “it is an art your mother perfectly understands. Here, Reuben, is a letter to Mr Ashby—perhaps you had better deliver it as soon as you get there. Where will you put it? In your pocket? Perhaps your mother can find room enough in the trunk.”

“Yes, indeed, for forty dozen letters, she is such a packer,” exclaimed Reuben.

“Forty dozen is a great many,” replied the father. “I think all calculations should be within the bounds not only of possibility but probability.” Reuben laughed.

“Reuben,” said Mr Kent, laying his hand on the boy’s head, “do you realise that you are going from home? You must now think and act for yourself; do not act thoughtlessly; do not live *at all*,” said the father, with great energy, “without thought and without prayer. You are but a boy, it is true, but we hope you are a child of God, and we always want to see you habitually acting upon intelligent convictions of Christian duty. We want your principles to become early and clearly

settled. You will need firmness, great firmness. Your views of duty may often conflict with the common every-day morality around you, but never *flinch*. Reuben, be meek and lowly in heart, but be firm and straightforward in action."

"Father, you will never forget to pray for me, will you?" asked the boy, in a low tone, his eyes bent on the floor.

"Never, Reuben, never, while God gives us the privilege of prayer," replied his father, feelingly. As they stood there side by side, no one who knew the manly piety of the father could breathe a better wish for Reuben Kent, than that, as eye answered to eye, lip to lip, and brow to brow, in the outward features of father and son, so might there be a corresponding likeness in the lineaments of the inner man.

"And you must pray for us, Reuben," added the mother, rising from her humble posture.

Reuben took her thin hand in his, and pressed it with a loving grasp. Thus stood the three; hope and fear, solicitude and trust, parental tenderness and filial affection, binding heart fast to heart, with those golden links which alone survive the changes of time and the blight of the tomb.

"Well, my son, you must go to bed," said the father at length, moving towards the door.

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Reuben, suddenly clasping his father's neck, while a low sob, as from a bursting heart, accompanied the kiss of the child, and the blessing of the parent. Mr Kent hastened away, but could not restrain his tears.

"Mother, let me jump into bed, and then will you tuck me up, and kiss me, and take my lamp, just as you used to do when I was a little boy?—I will undress in a minute."

“ And I will return presently,” said the kind mother, as she left the chamber.

The presently was somewhat delayed by a conversation in the kitchen about Reuben's early breakfast. He nestled about in bed, wondering where she was ; “ Dear, dear, dearest mother,” cried Reuben, when she re-appeared. How earnestly did he watch her performing those kind and motherly offices ! How beautiful was the glance of her mild gray eye ! How sweet the tones of her low, gentle voice ! He desired to take her into his very heart. Then he saw her take the lamp, and he watched its retreating light until a distant door separated him from even the sound of her footsteps. He hastily pulled the sheet over his curly head, and plunging his face into the pillow, his feelings quite overcame him, and he wept aloud.

“ I wish there was no Mr Ashby's school,” he was just ready to say aloud.

He lay awake a long time, thoughtfully.

“ It is all for the best, and if I am away from home, the Lord Jesus will befriend me,” was the sober conclusion of Reuben's better thoughts. Peacefully he fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAY'S RIDE.

WE will imagine, but we will not describe the early breakfast, the arrival of the coach, the last words of brothers and sisters, the tearful

parting. Reuben strove to look manfully; he stoutly fought against a tear which now and then glimmered in his eye, and bade good-bye in a steadier voice than could be supposed. His father and Jemmy stood upon the steps until the rattling of the carriage wheels died away, while the mother went hastily and busily about her daily duties.

Thus went Reuben forth from his father's house, the eldest born of seven children, three of whom had found an early grave. Thetford was a quiet village, and Squire Kent was one of its leading men. His sound piety and excellent judgment exerted a most beneficial influence over the people. Many a dispute had been peaceably settled by a wise reference to his opinion, which might otherwise have eaten up the little property of both parties in the courts of law. Mr Kent was a judicious Christian parent. He fully believed that children could be trained for the Lord. The necessity and the beauty of holy living was not merely enforced by the lip, it was exhibited in the daily life of both parents. Such teaching had not been lost upon Reuben. From time to time his conscience had been powerfully affected. During the winter preceding his removal to school, he had become deeply concerned for his soul, and at length he trusted he had found peace and joy in believing. Mr Kent strove to impress upon him that nothing but daily devotion to his Master's service could be considered evidence of a renewed and divine life. The good pastor desired to number him among the people of God. Mr Kent dreaded a too hasty admission into the church. While he hoped Reuben had indeed chosen the "good part," he still feared his warm heart might not have clearly discriminated between loving what his parents loved, for

their sake, and that thorough relish for divine things which none but a child of God possesses.

The parents felt deeply this first departure of their son. Mr Ashby's school was at Montrose, and offered advantages for Reuben which his own village could not afford ; and no misguided tenderness could influence their decisions. They had done for him all they could do, in giving a wise and judicious training to his moral powers, and now they were to test their strength and try their value. Reuben went forth blest with the prayers and the training of godly parents.

He found many things to interest him in the country and villages through which they passed. The passengers, two men and a lady, quietly preferring their own thoughts, said little to each other. Now and then, the brief remarks, "This is a hilly country," "There is a fine field," or "What town is this?" broke the silence.

Towards the middle of the day, the coach drove into a little village, where they were to dine. He felt little appetite for the smoking dinner upon the table. Some dough-nuts which his mother slid into his pocket to eat by the way, he contrived to relish a little, as he sat alone on the long bench in front of the hotel. The coach was soon ready again, and Reuben was pleased to see two more added to the party, one of whom was a bright-looking boy of his own size. They cast inquiring glances at each other.

"See that hawk, uncle," exclaimed the boy, pointing skyward ; "I wish I had my gun !"

"Could you hit it?" asked one of the silent men.

"Hit it? I guess I could," was the answer.

"I guess you could not," said the traveller.

"I have killed thousands of flying hawks," said the bright-looking boy.

“Well, I never killed one,” thought Reuben, interested in the conversation; “how smart he is! I wish he was going to Mr Ashby’s school.” Reuben felt disposed to enter into conversation, and was anticipated by the boy’s asking him if he was a gunner.

“No,” replied Reuben; “father never wanted us to kill anything, unless there was some good reason for it, and I never could find one for killing birds.”

“Reason!” said the boy, scornfully, “why, it is first-rate fun.”

Reuben did not quite relish the boy’s tone, and there was a pause.

“Have you been riding all day?” asked the boy again.

“Yes, I got in at Thetford, that is my home, and I am going to Montrose to attend Mr Ashby’s school.”

“Good! so am I.—We shall have first-rate times there.”

“Have you been there before?” asked Reuben.

“Yes, and I know how to get round the old man,” whispered the boy, slyly.

“I did not know Mr Ashby was old,” said Reuben; “he was father’s class-mate.”

“Old! why, not so very old; he is very strict, but I do not care. There never was a fellow got out of scrapes with such a good grace as I can;” and he chuckled merrily.

“I should think it was the better way never to get into any,” remarked Reuben. The boy looked surprised, but said nothing.

“Harris, where is your bundle?” called out his uncle in a sharp tone. He drew it up from the straw in the bottom of the coach. “Keep a good look out, and do not lose it.”

“His name is Harris,” thought Reuben. “I am glad I know.”

They made various remarks upon all that they saw ; and altogether it was quite a pleasant afternoon’s ride to each of them.

“We are almost there,” said Harris, looking out of the window. “I believe I see the Academy—it is on a hill.” Reuben’s heart beat.

“I am not going to Mr Ashby’s for two days yet. I shall stop with my uncle,” said Harris.

“Oh, I am sorry, I shall be so lonely.” He had interested Reuben. “What a smart fellow Harris is !” was the last impression made on his mind.

“Here we are in the village !” exclaimed Harris. “Do not tell Mr Ashby you came down with me. He will not like it, that I do not go directly to school ; and I will not go.”

The sun had just set, when the coach drove into the beautiful town of Montrose. Harris and his uncle alighted at the hotel. “Good-bye, we will be better friends by and by,” said Harris, pleasantly. The coach bore Reuben away towards a gentle rising in the western part of the village, on the top of which stood the large white buildings of Mr Ashby. Reuben wished he was safe back at home a dozen times. At length the coach stopped. Every object around made an agreeable impression upon his mind, in spite of himself. On one side of the house lay a large green square, surrounded by a white fence, and enclosing clusters of beautiful trees. Groups of boys were seen through the opening. Some were playing ; others seemed luxuriating on the fresh grass quite at their ease.

A tall man, with a keen eye and shaggy eyebrows, appeared at the door.

“Here is another boy for you, sir,” exclaimed the driver.

“A good one, I hope, Martin,” answered the gentleman, good-humouredly, approaching the carriage.

“I am Reuben Kent, sir, of Thetford,” said Reuben, blushing.

“Ah, Reuben Kent, I am glad to see you,” and Mr Ashby shook him warmly by the hand. “But where is your father? I expected to see him. Let me look at you, my boy.—All father. Well, Reuben, I hope you possess your father’s moral features too.”

The wish found a hearty response in the boy’s heart, although he said nothing; while he watched the driver as he took off his baggage, and then followed Mr Ashby into the house. Once he turned wistfully around towards the departing coach, and sighed to think how long it must be before it would be bearing him homeward.

“You must have some supper,” said Mr Ashby, inviting him to a seat upon the sofa. “I suppose you are thoroughly tired, so I will not talk about school matters to-night. Tell me something about your good father, and how many brothers and sisters you have:” and the teacher spoke as if he felt a real interest in the answer.

Home was a subject dear to Reuben, and he found himself talking to Mr Ashby with an ease and freedom that astonished himself.

“I am sure I shall like him,” thought Reuben, as he ventured to study the face of his future teacher, while reading the letter he had just handed him.

It was not long before they were called out into a long room, through which ran a table, large enough to hold conveniently some twenty seats.

“This is our dining-room,” remarked Mr Ashby; “at evening, it is our study. I assemble my boys about an hour every evening for study, at this

season; about two hours in the winter. It is some time after our tea hour, and now the boys are in the playground."

Reuben noticed, while he was eating, two or three boys peeped in at the door, while the sound of glad voices echoed and re-echoed from the yard.

After supper, Mr Ashby introduced him to a few of his future schoolmates. As evening drew on, a feeling of loneliness came over him. He longed to retire, and thankfully accepted Mr Ashby's offer to conduct him to his room.

"I have no chum for you yet, Reuben. You may be alone a day or two. Perhaps you will not dislike that."

Reuben was glad to be alone.

"Here I am, at last," he said aloud, after Mr Ashby bade him good-night, and as he stood surveying the room. "And here I must stay four or five months."

It was a nice-looking room, with two beds, white curtains to the windows, and a large, deep closet.

Reuben unpacked his trunk, until he placed his hand upon his Bible. He drew it forth, and turning to the leaf containing his father's writing, he looked at it tenderly. "Now I have no father to go to, I shall more than ever make this book the 'man of my counsel,'" thought Reuben. He read that chapter where Jesus prayed for his disciples, and he felt comforted by the gracious assurance, that Jesus would come and take up his abode in the heart of him who sincerely craves his presence. "And that is my Saviour," thought Reuben, while he knelt in prayer.

"Perhaps father is now praying for me," thought he: and then, in the sweet consciousness of having committed himself and his dear friends into the

watchful care of that Great Father, who never slumbers nor sleeps, he laid himself down to rest.

How many other boys spend their first night from home as Reuben Kent did ?

CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOL.

MR ASHBY'S academy had a high and deserved reputation. Boys would study there, when they would study nowhere else. His moral discipline produced most happy results. Boys supposed to be incorrigible were often placed under his training, whose parents themselves had almost relinquished hope, and as often had they been returned to the parental roof, steady, industrious, well-behaved boys. He strove to make his pupils feel that their interests were his interests. It too often happens that, instead of working harmoniously together, teachers and scholars stand more in the attitude of belligerent parties, arrayed against each other. Mr Ashby endeavoured to break up that code of school morals too prevalent in academies and colleges, by which every species of trickery and cunning are allowable to hoodwink and deceive the instructors ; and nothing pained him more, than to hear fathers boast of the "scrapes" and "jokes" of college days, concealing lying and dishonesty under the name of harmless pleasantries, or a little sport. Mr Ashby found his task difficult, but he loved his profession and was faithful to its duties.

By the close of the week, Reuben had arranged

all his studies and had commenced them with great zest. A chum had been added to his room (Frank Skinner), and by Saturday night, Harris Jones had not only entered the school, but had become the occupant of a little cross-bedstead in Reuben's chamber. Mr Ashby's new chambers were built to accommodate but one bed, for two boys ; but there were two or three chambers in his house large enough for two beds, and in these Mr Ashby occasionally, but very reluctantly, placed three boys.

Harris came into the school in the afternoon, and was met with a boisterous welcome from his old companions.

"Kent, it is a capital thing that I have got this room. It is all the merrier to have three together," exclaimed Harris, as he entered the chamber about half-past nine.

"I think we cannot help enjoying ourselves," said Reuben. "Mr Ashby has made everything so pleasant for us here."

"I like Mr Ashby better than any other teacher I ever had," remarked Frank.

"If I had said that, it would not be saying much, for I hate all teachers," said Harris ; upon which followed a conversation upon hating teachers. It was at length suddenly interrupted by a bell, which sounded long and loud in the hall.

"Oh!" exclaimed Reuben, sorrowfully.

"Too bad!" cried Harris, angrily.

"What shall I do? I am not half undressed," said Frank, laughing.

It was the candle-bell, rung at ten o'clock ; and was the signal to extinguish every light in the chamber of the boys, and no one afterwards was permitted to speak aloud.

Reuben felt very sorry. It was Saturday night.

and he hoped to have time to look over a lesson for the Bible class, which he determined to join, and which was under the charge of the minister of the village. After it became quite still, he opened the door of the closet, entered in, and carefully closed it after him. There did he retire for his evening devotions; there did he review the events of the day and the week, and carefully examined his own heart. This habit was early taught him by his mother; with her, he used to review the day, and whatever were his faults she never excused them, but strove to show him their true nature and their sure results.

“Was he not afraid the boys would laugh at him?” asked a child to whom the story was told.

Laugh at him! No. Reuben was far more afraid of the displeasure of God than of the laugh of wicked companions.

When the rising-bell rung, the next morning, at half-past five, Reuben was already up and dressed, and studying his Bible lesson.

“Have you been up all night?” said Harris.

“To be sure not, and I have had as good a sleep as you had,” replied Reuben.

“What in the world did you go into that closet for last night, and how long did you stay?” said Harris, coarsely, half-nestling down into bed again.

“I went in to be alone when I prayed,” replied Reuben, slightly blushing. He well knew he must sometimes expect such questions, for there were scoffers in his own village, but he determined to meet them fairly and firmly, and never be ashamed to confess his religion, even among those who did not regard it. He remembered the words of Jesus, “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven.” Reuben had laid up his Saviour’s words in his

heart, and that Saviour gave them power over his conduct.

"Do you pray, Kent? Why, you do not expect to die soon, do you?" asked Harris, sneeringly.

"Not that I know of," answered Kent, mildly "but I pray in order that I may live right;" and he resumed his lesson.

"Come, Harris, the bell has been rung nearly five minutes; get up! or you will break the rules, and have to suffer the consequences," exclaimed Frank, seizing hold of the quilt which covered the lazy boy.

"Away!" shouted Harris, angrily, "I shall sleep as long as I choose—no, I am up," and he jumped out upon the floor; "see, boys! I am up, regularly up." They looked around, then he betook himself to his bed again, and getting the clothes around him, prepared for a second nap.

"Do you call that getting up?" asked Frank.

"To be sure I do; did I not get up?"

"And if Mr Ashby should ask you if you arose at the rising-bell, should you say yes?" continued Frank.

"Why, yes, certainly, I *did* get up.—Nothing is said in the rules about lying down again," said Harris.

"Well, that is one way, and not so very bad either," said Frank. "It is keeping the rule, and yet not keeping it. I think I should follow your example, if I were not almost dressed."

"In reality, it is breaking the rule, a downright breaking it," interposed Reuben, who had hitherto been silent.

"It does seem so, and yet he certainly did get up," said Frank, whose notions of right and wrong could be easily cleared or obscured, by the kind of companions among whom he happened to fall.

"He obeys the letter, perhaps, but he breaks its spirit," said Reuben, earnestly "The rule is made

for us to arise and dress ourselves when the bell rings, because Mr Ashby wants us to get the habit of early rising, and because morning is such a good time to study."

"Nonsense!" cried Harris, vexed at the serious manner in which Reuben regarded it; "who can be so particular as all that? Frank, do not be afraid of his preaching."

"No," said Reuben, firmly, "there is *nothing* to be afraid of, but doing wrong. I am not preaching, Harris; I am only telling what I think is right."

Harris indulged his nap, until he was alarmed and aroused by the breakfast-bell. His utmost efforts to dress himself in season did not succeed, and a late appearance at breakfast he excused by saying, "He had a very bad headache;" thus adding lying to disobedience; so true is it that one sin always opens the door for another.

CHAPTER IV.

LETTER HOME.

MONTROSE, *May 13.*

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I am sure you will be very glad to hear that I am a great deal happier than I expected to be, at school here. My time is so well filled up, that I have not much to spare in any useless thoughts or regrets. I like Mr Ashby. He is to a very dot like you, father, only he is more queer; he has a funny way of laughing the boys out of any silly or uncouth habits which they may have; but he is very serious when they do absolutely wrong. The boys almost all like him, except

a few who hate restraint or study. He has a way of making us study with real relish. I get along with my French very fast. Algebra I seem to understand much better ; but sometimes, when I am in the midst of a very hard plus or minus, home comes right into my mind, perhaps some of Jemmy's pranks, or Alice's funny sayings, and I really forget what I am doing. Trigonometry is very hard.

In all my studies, I always find time to read in my Bible, every night and morning ; and sometimes in school, when I do not happen to have anything very particular to do, I often read a chapter. It seems to do me good. Many of the boys do not think as I do, but, after all, it is not so difficult to do right, if we only love to do right ; it is hard to do what one does not love to. Oh, father, I find a use for a great many of your sayings, and I find the advice you used to give me, and to give us all at home, comes to my mind very often, and really determines me how to act sometimes, when I should not know exactly what to do. I have a great storehouse in my mind, where I have laid it all snugly up. Do you not think I am rich ?

I wonder if the garden is all made ? Are Alice and Mary going to have the same garden they had last year ? I hope they will not plant beet seeds for flower seeds again. How we did laugh at them ! A bouquet of beets was quite a new thing.

Our Sabbath-school here is very interesting. It is much larger than the one at Thetford. I do want to hear the sound of Mr Emery's voice again, talking to the scholars. I do not believe I shall ever love any master as I love Mr Emery.

Tell mother I tore my gray trowsers the other day, climbing over a fence, but Mrs Moody mended them. I felt very much obliged to her ; yet I do not think they were mended quite so beautifully as

mother mends. Give a great deal of love to everybody who asks about me. Father, do send me a good large bundle of letters, by next week. I hope all at home will write me. I have not much more to say, as I described all about the school in my last letter.

My dear parents, do not forget to pray for your son Reuben. I feel very sorry, when I think that I have not been half grateful enough to you for all you have done for me. Forgive me, my dear parents, for every time I have done wrong. I do long to see you, and if I live with you again, I am sure I shall be a better boy.

Your very affectionate son,
R. KENT.

CHAPTER V.

MIDNIGHT MOVEMENTS.

ONE night, Reuben was awakened by the sound of steps near his bed.

“Who goes there?”

“Whist!”

“Harris, is that you?” repeated Reuben.

“Hush!”

The door was gently opened, and the person went out. Reuben felt over, and found Frank quietly sleeping by his side.

“It is Harris,” thought Reuben, and he filled his mind with conjectures, regarding the whys and wherefores of Harris’s departure, but conjectures were soon swallowed up in a dream of home.

The next morning the incident of the night came dimly over his memory.

"Was I dreaming or not, Harris?" said Reuben; "did you leave our room on tiptoe in the night?"

"What are you talking about, Kent? I go out! What should I go out for?" answered Harris, roughly.

"That is just what I could not conceive. I thought of getting up and following you, but, somehow or other, I went to sleep again."

"I would be certain next time," said Harris, in one of his sneering tones.

"Oh, how hard this Algebra is!" exclaimed Frank, looking up from his book, with a discouraged air.

"Algebra! I would not study it, Frank. What is the use of it?" said Harris, yawning over his bed.

"Oh, but I must."

"Tell Ashby, that your father, your mother, or your uncle does not wish you to study Algebra; there are more ways than one to get rid of a hard study," was his sage advice to his young companion.

"I have a great mind to do it, it will be such a perpetual plague to me," said Frank; and he looked anxious, as lesson after lesson rose up before his fancy.

"Let me see your lesson, Frank," and Reuben kindly approached him; "perhaps I can help you out of your difficulty."

Frank thankfully pointed out the example.

"That is knotty, Frank. I remember how I puzzled over it; but patience and perseverance will make it clear as sunlight," said Reuben, encouragingly.

"Did you do it yourself?" asked Frank, with great interest.

"After a while."

"Oh, I am sure I never could!" and Frank resumed his discouraged tone.

"Come, Frank, let us have a game of ball before breakfast," said Harris, opening the door; "you will feel all the better for it."

"But I recite my lesson the first thing," pleaded Frank.

"Make up some excuse. I am sure I would not puzzle myself over Algebra all this bright morning. Come! come!" he cried, impatiently.

"I have a great mind to go with you. What is the use? I cannot do the example." Frank hesitatingly arose.

"But you have not fairly tried," said Reuben, kindly. "Oh, I would not follow him. Sit down and let us try together—better spend the morning in study;" and he took Frank's hand to detain him. Harris's retreating steps were heard on the stairs.

"I want to go and I want to stay," exclaimed Frank, looking wistfully out of the window.

"Oh, stay and conquer your difficulties like a man. Come, I will help you. Besides it is your duty. Be sure, if you want to be satisfied with yourself, do your duty first and play afterwards."

Kent's kind and earnest manner arrested the undecided boy. He reluctantly resumed his seat, took up his slate and pencil, and, with Reuben to explain here and there, he was soon deeply interested in his example.

"I have got the answer—twenty-four," at last exclaimed Frank.

"Right," said Reuben. "That is it."

"Right!" echoed Frank, joyfully; "I am sure

"Why, how we got these nuts, to be sure," answered Harris.

"How did you get them?" asked Reuben, with surprise.

"Ask George, he can tell best."

George blushed deeply.

"It was so funny!" exclaimed another of the group.

Amid much laughing, many exclamations, and some excuses, they told how slyly they wound their way into the upper cellar; how they contrived to secret their lantern; how they planned to carry off their plunder from the kitchen, in the shape of pies and gingerbread; what delicate circumspection was necessary. Especially did they expatiate on the dangers and escapes of the past night, and what skill was requisite to evade the keen scrutiny of Mr Ashby.

"He is so lynx-eyed!" said George, petulantly.

Reuben heard all this without speaking. The bright smile that had played about his face faded gradually away as the story proceeded, and at last he stood perfectly sober, while the merriment of his companions became more boisterous, as it grew less hearty.

"I call it neither more nor less than stealing," said Reuben, gravely, "and stealing, too, from the best and kindest friend you have in town."

"Mr Ashby our 'best friend!'" said George, sharply.

"Stealing, is it?" cried another.

"Stealing or not stealing, you are one of us," exclaimed Harris, with a mischievous pleasure, "upon the principle that the receiver is as bad as the thief."

"No, Harris," said Reuben, earnestly and decidedly, looking him full in the face, "I should rather

have cut off my right hand than to have done it. I should have felt so mean to be skulking about in premises where I had no right to go, and when everybody was asleep too; and then I should have felt so guilty the next morning, if Mr Ashby had looked at me. I am sure I should have been afraid to bid him good-morning."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Harris, scornfully, "I am afraid of nothing."

At this speech the boys seemed to regard him somewhat in the light of a hero.

"I am afraid to do wrong, and I glory in the fear," said Reuben, bravely.

The boys then turned towards the last speaker with a mixture of surprise and admiration in their faces.

"Do you think it was really stealing? Why, it was only a joke," said Rufus Towne, with a sorry air.

"I do not know how you dare to call stealing a joke," continued Reuben, firmly; "God does not see it so, and it is God who will judge us."

Harris tried to call forth a laugh, but the boys were completely sobered by this unexpected view which Reuben Kent took of the matter.

"The Rev. Reuben Kent!" said Harris, slowly bowing with mock respect, while the other boys came very near, bowing with real respect.

"I am sure I did not know Mr Ashby was our best friend," remarked George.

"What better friend have you here, George? He is doing all he can for our good. How patient when we are stupid! How pleased with our improvement! How he encourages us! How he loves to see us enjoy ourselves! I am sure he always gives us plenty to eat. He is just like a father to us. We ought to love our teachers."

George was at heart a generous and grateful boy;

Reuben's words touched his better nature. Besides, he remembered some reasons why he should love this kind instructor, of which none present knew but himself.

"Why, it was only in sport," he said, trying to excuse himself.

"If we steal and deceive in sport, George," continued Reuben, "we shall by and by steal and deceive in good earnest. Father says, if we sin in sport, we shall soon sport in sin."

There was a deep pause. Rufus leaned against the tree, with one hand in his pocket. George kicked the ground with his foot. Harris looked down upon the handkerchief full of half-eaten sweetmeats.

"Shall you tell of us?" asked George, fearfully.

"If he has no more honour than that, I would shoot him!" cried Harris, fiercely.

"Why you would not be *afraid* to have me tell, would you?" said Reuben, archly.

"No, but I want to see honour," exclaimed Harris.

"Yes, indeed," added George; "informing is so dishonourable."

"I did not think of it," replied Kent, mildly, "but I am sure I should not do as Sam Preston did the other day. When Mr Ashby asked him if he knew anything about that powder-train, he said, 'No, he knew nothing about it,' when he really did know all about it."

"He did right not to betray his companions," said Harris.

"He told a bold, downright lie, to screen some mischievous boys that richly deserved to be punished," said Reuben. "If he would so deliberately break God's law, I do not know who could safely trust him."

“What would *you* do?” asked George.

“What could I do, but tell the truth?” replied Reuben, steadily. “I would not lie to save myself, and I would not lie for others.”

“But would not the boys call you a tell-tale?”

“That would be bad,” answered Reuben, who had the fear of God before him; “but not half so bad as to have my conscience keep telling me I was a liar.”

“If everybody was only like you, nobody would need to tell lies,” remarked the smallest boy, respectfully.

“But he would tell tales, though,” said Harris, vexed at the impression which Reuben Kent’s sound and wholesome remarks had evidently made. The recess-bell rung.

“Kent, the betrayer! Kent, the informer! Beware of Reuben Kent!” shouted Harris, angrily, speeding his way among groups of other boys who were leaving the playground. Indignant feeling flashed in Reuben’s face, and swelled up in his throat, and, even some time after he had taken his seat in the schoolroom, he leaned his head upon his hand, striving to recover that mild and forgiving spirit, without which he feared he could not treat that misguided companion as one who loved the Lord Jesus should do.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO DAYS AFTER.

It must not be denied that Reuben Kent felt uncomfortable during several succeeding days. He

regretted that he had known about a course of wrong-doing which Mr Ashby did not know. He felt that he bore the burden of a guilty secret about which Mr Ashby might soon make inquiry. While there was, at times, a slight shrinking to disclose what he knew of the affair, he felt that, whatever were the consequences, he should never flinch from speaking the truth.

He fancied the boys regarded him with a suspicious eye, and there was a less friendly manner in their greetings. But Reuben Kent had conscious integrity, and no outward circumstances could greatly distract the perfect peace that grew up within his bosom.

After tea, on the third day, as Reuben was slowly crossing the playground alone, going towards the academy, he heard quick footsteps behind him, and presently George clapped his hand on his shoulder, "Come, let us walk in the garden, Kent, if you have no business on hand."

Reuben had no business, and was quite willing to be led whithersoever his companion desired. By and by, they found themselves under an old apple-tree, in the furthest part of the garden.

"Let us sit on this grass, I feel tired," said George. They flung themselves on the green bank, while the sweet garden scents hovered around them on the still air.

"This makes me think of home. I wish I could take a peep there; but I think I should not be satisfied with a peep," remarked Reuben.

"My home is not what it used to be," said George, sadly; "since father died, strangers live in the old place."

"Do you always spend your vacations here?" asked Reuben.

"Yes, I have lately, now mother and John have gone to Ohio."

"Is it pleasant here in vacation?" inquired Reuben.

"It was last vacation. Mr Ashby took me with him on a journey. I had a beautiful time."

"How kind! I do believe Mr Ashby loves us like children."

"He has been like a father to me since my father died," said George. "I do not think I feel half grateful enough; do you think I do, Reuben?"

"I do not know how you feel, George," replied his companion, with great sincerity; "I do not really think you always act as if you were grateful."

"And that is just what I want to talk with you about," said George, drawing towards his friend; "I have not been happy since you talked to us so, nor was I quite happy before. There is a sort of weight upon my mind, and I cannot get rid of it."

"George," said Reuben, with impressive earnestness, "I am afraid you do not pray."

George said not a word. His eyes were fixed on an opposite bush, while memory went rapidly back to his bright and happy childhood. He remembered how he used to kneel by his mother's side; how he used to sit on his father's knee and listen to the story of his Saviour's dying love; how his heart was opened, and he wished to be like Jesus. Then did the last words of his dying parent come vividly before him; his last prayer, craving the blessing and the grace of God upon his son. He thought of his mourning mother, and his own homeless condition. There are seasons in life when the memories of childhood come, and mournfully beckon us back to the peace and purity of

tenderer years, when we are suddenly arrested in the hurried walk of life and almost compelled to think. Thus it was with George Anderson at this time.

“Reuben,” said he, with a quivering voice, “I am not what I ought to be, or what I want to be. I am not what my mother prayed I might be, or what Mr Ashby supposes I am. I am disappointing them both. Oh! I am so easily led away!” and he hastily passed his hand across his eyes as penitent and bitter tears overflowed them.

“Dearest George,” said Reuben, taking his hand, which an outgrown jacket left long and bare, as he thought of the yearnings of his own mother, “begin now, this very evening, to live right. Your heart is not hard. Oh! no, I am sure it is not;” and the warm tears which stole down the cheeks of the fatherless boy bore witness to an erring but still yielding heart.

“I am always meaning to do better, but I do not,” and George struggled to be calm; and yet he felt no shame in thus exposing his better desires, as some boys do, before their depraved companions. Reuben Kent’s firm and exalted principles had inspired him with confidence and with respect.

“I used to feel so,” replied Reuben, feelingly, “but we must put our trust in the Lord Jesus. It is because our hearts are sinful, we find it so hard to do right. Jesus Christ will wash our hearts with his blood, and then he puts his Spirit in us, and his Spirit gives us strength to do right; ‘he works in us,’ the Bible says, ‘to will and to do of his good pleasure.’”

“Just as my father and mother used to talk,” said George, weeping.

There was a short pause, when George added, “I want to be different from what I now am, I am

sure. It was so mean and wicked to go and steal in Mr Ashby's cellar. He would consider it so, certainly, and he would feel so to find out that it was I."

"Every upright person would think so. Now, George," said Reuben, with some hesitation, "I do know but of one way to get rid of that weight on your heart. You feel that you have wronged Mr Ashby, and abused his confidence. Go to him and confess your faults. Tell him how sorry you are. Then kneel down and ask God to forgive you."

"Tell Mr Ashby!" exclaimed George, in a tone of astonishment, as if he did not quite comprehend his real meaning; "tell him! Why, could I?"

The evening shadows were fast gathering around the two lads, as they long sat and talked beneath the old apple-tree. When the study-bell rung, they walked towards the house, with their arms about each other. Traces of emotion were visible on George's face, but they were unnoticed in the hurry and bustle of getting books and places at the study-table.

An hour passed by. The great entry clock struck the hour of nine. Chairs were pushed back, books were flung aside, and many voices broke the stillness of the hitherto quiet study-room. Mr Ashby left the room. He stood at the entry-door, looking abroad upon the calm and placid features of the night. Faint footsteps approached him; a small, rough hand was placed in his.

"Mr Ashby, shall I see you a few moments in your room, sir?"

"Certainly; is it you, Master George?"

Together they went into a private apartment, called Mr Ashby's study.

It is not exactly known what passed between

them, but certain it is, from that time George Anderson began to be a different boy. An influence then sprung up, which, at no distant day, resulted in his conversion to God. It was a turning-point in his life, in reference to which, in the fulness of his heart he declares, "It was all owing to the friendly and honest advice of Reuben Kent ; God bless him !"

Yes, it was owing to the fearless and faithful efforts of a boy who was not afraid to live up to his principles. This was sowing seed by the way-side, and it is what every boy may do, who loves his Saviour, by living under and acting out the holy influences of his religion.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE INCIDENT.

THE last hour and a half of Wednesday forenoon was devoted, by the second composition class, to copying their themes. This was done in the library, a large room in the west end of the academy, which was fitted up as a writing-room during the summer. A regular writing-master was employed for this department. It was strictly required that all writing materials (pen, ink, and paper) should be ready ; so that after the class went into the room, there should be no coming and going for forgotten implements. This was done to secure careful and prompt business habits among the boys, and any careless delinquency was severely reprimanded. On one Tuesday evening, Reuben had carefully

carried two quills, a penknife, and paper to his seat in the library.

"Now I am sure you are there," said Reuben, to himself, as he put them down, "all ready for writing to-morrow."

To-morrow came. At the close of recess, the class went up to the room, and took their accustomed seats. Reuben laid down his slate well filled with writing, all ready to be copied upon paper, and proceeded to draw forth his writing materials. But behold, neither quills nor knife were there. The door was locked on the preceding evening after he went out; so what could have become of them?

Poor Reuben was sadly perplexed and disappointed. It was not lawful to borrow, and to leave the room for procuring more could not be allowed. Were it allowed once, it must be allowed again, and thus the necessity of punctuality would become less imperative upon the minds of the boys.

"Have you made your pens, Master Kent?" asked the writing-master, as he came round.

"No, sir," replied Reuben, "I cannot find my quills or knife."

"Cannot find! cannot find!" said the writing-master, rather ill-naturedly; "the common excuse of careless boys."

"I am sure I brought them here last night," said Reuben, respectfully.

"Then they would have been here now, sir," answered the writing-master, angrily.

Reuben held his peace; one of the boys slyly slid one of his pens into his hand, when the master's eye was elsewhere directed, but Reuben shook his head. He chose rather to suffer present consequences, than to relieve himself by breaking a known regulation of the school.

The hour and a half never seemed so long to an unoccupied boy. He had nothing to do, but to sit still and see his companions busily engaged in their writing. Some scholars are known, under such circumstances, to become rather troublesome. They strive to annoy their neighbours, or to make other disagreeable disturbances to relieve the weariness of their punishment. Reuben did no such thing. He quietly submitted to a painful necessity, conscious at the same time of having done all he could do to comply with established rules.

At length the class finished the exercise, and folding up their compositions, returned to Mr Ashby's room. The names of the boys were then called over and their themes received.

"Reuben Kent," called Mr Ashby.

"Not copied, sir," answered Reuben, rising.

He took up the writing-master's note, and read against the name of Reuben Kent :

"Delinquent in knife and quills—no sufficient excuse."

"I am very sorry, Master Kent," said Mr Ashby, somewhat sternly ; "a failure like this is a double evil ; you have been unfaithful to yourself, and you have set a bad example to your fellows."

Reuben felt this keenly. The excuse he had to offer was no more than what several idle boys had offered before, and he felt that it would be regarded as of no more value. He knew he did not deserve the reproof, but he bore it with that meek submission of heart with which a Christian must learn to bear the ills and accidents of life.

"Well, Reuben Kent is not perfect after all !" exclaimed Harris, scornfully, to George Anderson, as they came out of school.

"I am not at all sure he is to be blamed for

what has happened," said George, eyeing his companion with a keen glance.

Harris whistled and walked off.

Through all that bright Wednesday afternoon, while groups of boys formed excursions for the wood, the water, or the village, Reuben remained alone in his chamber, diligently writing.

"It is too bad," said Frank, as he went out; "I declare I would tell Mr Ashby that I was not to blame, and that I would not, and could not stay at home, this beautiful afternoon."

"It is never too bad to perform our duties," answered Reuben, gently.

"I never saw such a fellow," Frank mentally ejaculated. "Does reading the Bible make people so different?" and he went away, thoughtfully.

Has it been said Reuben was alone? No, he was not alone. George gladly forsook the merry-makings of his fellows, and, with book in hand, sat by Reuben's window, rejoicing to sympathise in the trials of one whose heart so readily sympathised in the sins and sorrows of others.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

"THEN we may go, sir, may we?" This was uttered by the leader of a group of boys who had gathered around Mr Ashby as he stood in the yard. They had asked his permission for that Saturday afternoon, to visit Pine Mountain, a high elevation about three miles distant.

"Yes," answered their teacher, smiling, as he surveyed their bright, eager, and intelligent faces that were turned towards him ; "remember the condition,—no guns, no powder, no balls."

"We have none," answered one ; and "none ! none !" was re-echoed among them.

It was a fine September afternoon, and no little pleasure had been anticipated by the boys. They called it an "Exploring Expedition," and set forth in high glee, ready for hair-breadth escapes and remarkable adventures.

Harris, with two or three others, was in advance.

They had proceeded some distance down a green lane, when Harris gave a short, quick whistle three times. It was answered in a like manner from the neighbouring wood.

"A signal!" exclaimed George, who with Reuben was somewhere in the rear, cutting stout walking-sticks.

"It certainly sounded like one," said Reuben.

Harris halted at the base of a high rock, from behind which appeared an ill-looking fellow, with a gun and powder-flask.

"Well, Dan, so here you are," said Harris, taking the gun.

"All ready," replied Dan, putting the strap of the flask around Harris's neck.

"Be here when I come back at seven, to take them. I will see about the pay some time ;" and Harris shouldered the gun.

George and Reuben did not fail, quickly and decidedly, to remonstrate with Harris upon this direct disobedience to Mr Ashby's express injunction.

The whole party halted.

There followed a loud and warm discussion. Harris declared he would not give up his gun, and

in this decision he was sustained by a few of his boon companions.

"I did not say that I would not take a gun," proclaimed Harris.

"There is no good reason why we should not have one."

"Just as if we cannot manage one gun!"

"Twice as much sport with a gun!"

"Mr Ashby will never know it!" Such were the arguments angrily urged by the disobeying party.

"Mr Ashby has forbidden it," was the strong and only reason sought for or advanced by those who respected the authority of their teacher.

Harris became highly provoked; he vowed, now there was such a fuss about it, that he would have the gun at any rate, and with an oath, "he hoped the rest of the boys were not such fools as to give up going, for what amounted to just nothing at all."

"Come on, boys!" he shouted, advancing.

Not a step further would either George or Reuben proceed. Frank and another boy joined them. Several others, for a few minutes leaning this way and that way, at last concluded it was just as well to go on, as they had nothing to do with the gun.

"We *all* have something to do with it," said Reuben, as they turned from their companions. "Mr Ashby only let us go upon condition that we would carry no fire-arms; if that condition is broken by any one of us, the rest cannot honourably proceed.

"They will creep along by and by," said Harris, when he beheld the separation; "there is no danger but they will be glad enough to go yet." So little idea had this boy of the power of making a sacrifice for the sake of principle.

But the selfish and unprincipled youth was altogether mistaken. However much the retreating party might have regretted this sudden termination of their enterprise, they had no wish to prosecute it, unless they could do so with peaceful consciences and honest hearts. Turning their footsteps towards the village, they passed the afternoon at the book-store where Mr Ashby usually purchased his books, and aided the bookseller in unpacking and placing away a large supply of new works, which he happened to have just then received.

CHAPTER X.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE.

ABOUT seven o'clock, the Pine Mountain party sauntered into the yard. The rest of the boys had already assembled in the supper-room, quite hungry and impatient for tea. Mr Ashby had not returned from a drive, whither he had gone with a gentleman, who had come to pass the day with him. The supper-bell was never obeyed with more alacrity.

"We got home safe enough, with all your whimpering," whispered Harris into Reuben's ear, as he passed him on his way to the table.

"Well, young gentlemen, did you have a fine time?" asked Mrs Moody, the matron of the establishment, who sat at table and poured out tea.

"First rate," said one.

"Splendid!" added another.

"It was beautiful in the woods," echoed a third.

"But we were so tired," concluded a fourth.

In spite of some of these answers, it was easy to see how little zest there seemed to be in talking the affair over. A few remarks were made here and there, which ended in a general silence. In fact the mountain party felt that all was not well with them. The consciousness of having violated the confidence which Mr Ashby had reposed in them, hung like a weight upon their spirits; and the dread of its reaching his ears, now that the actual pleasure had passed, seemed quite insupportable.

"If we only had not gone, we should not so much dread Mr Ashby's asking us about it," said one stealthily to his companion.

This was the *sting* of sin. Be the pleasure of disobedience ever so great at the time, and let us try to think it a light and quite unimportant matter which will soon pass away, yet we may be sure our sin will find us out, and fill us with the torments of a guilty conscience, from which we can never flee.

After supper the boys dispersed in different directions. Some went to their chambers; some collected on the door-steps; some stood talking beneath the moonbeams in the yard. Everywhere a calm overspread the house.

Hark! the report of a gun! a cry of pain!

"Help! help!" shouted one in agony.

"Where! when! who is killed?"

"I will bet it is Harris's gun—he would not leave it at the rock, because Dan was not there. Oh, my!"

"Reuben is killed! Where is Mrs Moody? Run for Mr Ashby," cried Frank, rushing down stairs.

“ Reuben killed ! ” What terror and dismay sat on all faces ! Some ran one way and some another. A few only ventured towards the scene of the disaster.

They entered the chamber. There lay Reuben upon the bed, pale and motionless. The quilt was bespotted with blood, and blood streamed along the floor. Frank had gone for the physician. Mrs Moody was seeking to restore the fainting boy. Harris was wringing his hands in an agony of fear crying out, “ Oh ! do not tell my uncle ! Do not tell Mr Ashby ! Tell him anything but that it was me ! ” Several boys were weeping around the door.

“ I do not think it is very serious,” said Mrs Moody, who, with great self-possession, had been examining the wound, at the same time striving to quiet the terrible apprehensions of the family.

“ Dear Reuben ! poor Reuben ! ” cried his play-mates.

When Reuben at last opened his eyes, Mr Ashby and George were bending over him. Dr Howe was examining his wound.

“ Dear Reuben ! ” exclaimed George, with a convulsive sob of joy, as his friend aroused again to consciousness, “ Oh, live, live ! ”

“ He will not die, I think, George,” said Mr Ashby, with a quivering lip.

“ Oh ! sir, forgive him—do forgive him, he did not mean to ! ” faintly uttered the wounded boy, feebly extending his hand towards Mr Ashby ; “ you will not punish him, will you ? ” But he heard no reply, for he quickly relapsed into a fainting fit.

“ I have nothing to forgive, and I hope he is already sufficiently punished,” said Mr Ashby, with calm serenity. There had Harris continued to sit, in the corner of the chamber, pale with fear. He

spoke not, nor had he moved since his first violent exclamation of terror.

Reuben's generous petition touched his heart. The proud and desperate boy burst into a flood of tears.

"A ball has broken the bone," said Dr Howe, "and it is a very bad flesh wound; it has bled profusely; but it can be set with no permanent ill consequences. Indeed, it is wonderful it did not prove more severe than I now think it to be."

"How did it happen?" eagerly asked one boy, and another, and another, as they crowded about Frank in the hall.

"Why, you know, Dan did not come for the gun; so, as it was borrowed, Harris was afraid to leave it at the rock. He did not like to leave it anywhere about here, because he did not want Mr Ashby to find it; so he smuggled it up-stairs to hide it in his closet. He seemed to have forgot that it was loaded, and while he was doing something to it, it went off."

"How dreadfully Harris must feel!" said one.

"Suppose he had killed Reuben Kent, then he would have been a murderer," said another.

"He has been angry enough to kill him a good many times, but he never expected it would come to this. Then, after all, he did not want Mr Ashby to know it, did he?"

"I wonder who he did want the blame to come on," cried a third, with indignant energy.

"If he had died, Reuben would have gone to heaven."

"Yes, indeed! what a good boy he is!"

"How everybody loves him!"

"How Harris must feel!"

"Yes, and it is the *consequence of disobedience.*"

This is a lesson he cannot soon forget," said George.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SICK-CHAMBER.

IT was a wound in the leg. The bone was injured in two or three places, but Dr Howe managed it with great skill and care. Two splinters, or long strips of wood, were placed opposite to each other on the leg, and these were bound around with many bandages. This was done to keep the leg straight and steady, that the bones might grow in a natural position. Then he was laid upon a couch, where he must remain until the bones should unite together. For many weeks did Reuben lie upon his back, a patient and uncomplaining sufferer. His mother came to watch around his bedside, while every member of the household vied with each other for the privilege of doing something for one so tenderly loved.

So sudden a change, to one in full strength, wore sadly upon his general health. His appetite failed, and sleep refused to perform her kind and restoring offices.

"Mother, it is a long night, but do not get up yet," said Reuben, as she looked forth to watch the dawning day.

"If you could only sleep, Reuben," said his mother.

"Oh, mother, I have happy thoughts. I have been thinking of a beautiful text where Christ is called '*the Sun of Righteousness*' and it says, 'He

shall arise with healing in his wings.' I seem to feel that now—as I have lain here so long watching the day dawn. At first comes a faint light, hardly seen—it grows bright and brighter; then the whole east is full of glory. Just so, when the love of Jesus dawns upon the soul. At first, we only know that he is near, and then he comes and fills us with his beams—fills us with healing—and I am sure I understand now what healing means."

What did George Anderson love better than to sit by Reuben's bedside!

"Oh, do let me stay here, this afternoon," pleaded George, holding the sick boy's thin hand in his.

"It is so pleasant, and it is Wednesday; I am sure you ought to be out enjoying yourself," replied Reuben, looking up into his face, with an affectionate and grateful smile.

"I have never enjoyed myself so much in all my life as I do with you, Reuben."

George pressed Reuben's hand, and they felt that they loved each other.

Where was Harris Jones during the long sad days of Reuben's confinement? And yet they were not sad days, though days of languishing and pain, for there is one who can make a suffering and even a dying bed

"As soft as downy pillows are!"

The anger of his uncle, the conscious disapprobation of Mr Ashby, the indignant and oftentimes coarse remarks of the boys; the increasing coldness of one playmate and another, now that the tide had turned against him;—all these, he could bear with that reckless and wanton spirit which, for years, he had nurtured within his bosom. But there were influences he could not so easily

resist, and they were influences which could reach his inmost heart. The patient and forgiving spirit of the injured boy, as he lay there suffering, but uncomplaining—suffering, but still thankful and rejoicing—touched a chord in Harris's bosom, which everything else had failed to touch. There was a deep stillness among the malignant and sinful passions that had raged within him. Hatred, envy, anger, lost their fierceness. He looked upon Reuben's unmerited suffering; suffering, the consequences of another's wilful disobedience; suffering, with no reproach, no upbraiding upon his lip. How wonderful and affecting did it appear to him!

It was not long before he was irresistibly drawn to his bedside, there to make confession of the wrath which Reuben's integrity and piety had aroused.

"With you, I always felt how wicked I was; how far *below* you I was. I could not bear it. I tried to be revenged. I stole your knife and quills. I hid your books,—I—I—oh! Kent, Kent, can you, will you, forgive me? I know well enough that I do not deserve to be forgiven;" and the hitherto hardened boy betrayed the deepest emotion. "I know it all, and I am wretched, miserable."

How did Reuben's heart yearn over the penitent and unhappy offender, and how did Mr Ashby rejoice in these tokens of better things!

Amid all his wretchedness, Harris felt there was something sweet in the sympathies of the good. His heart melted; a heart, that the companionship of the wicked had corrupted and hardened; rays of light pierced its cold darkness; and sympathy and prayer and truth were finding a place there.

How much was there for Christian friends to do, and how generously and unweariedly did they work! The spectacle of human suffering on his account, of which Harris was a daily eye-witness, did it not prepare his heart and open his eye for that spectacle of *Divine* suffering on his account, which passed before him as he read the story of the cross?

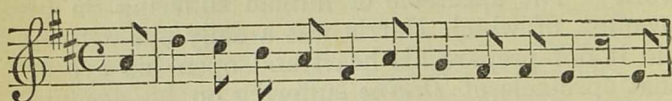
The almost hardened orphan, who had been thrown upon the care of a rich and profligate uncle, reared amid influences fitted to confound good and evil, was now introduced into a new moral world.

“Oh! Reuben, God put us together in that stage-coach,” interrupted Harris in a low subdued voice, as Reuben talked to him of truth and duty. Harris sat upon a low chair, his head leaning upon the same pillow with that of his companion, listening with an inquiring mind and a docile spirit.

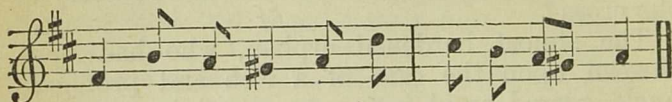
Reuben Kent recovered, and maintained in after-life the Christian character displayed in this narrative, and made his light so shine, that many were led to glorify his Heavenly Father. And Harris, now repentant, and better informed of the true sources of happiness, left the dangerous path he had been so long following, and cast in his lot with the followers of the Saviour.

Young reader, can you estimate too highly the value of a Christian example? *Fight the good fight,* and Jesus will not forget you, or your reward.

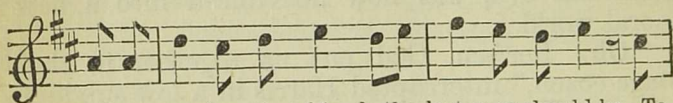
Love one another.



Be kind to each other, and strive, day by day, To



ren - der some kind - ness to soft - en life's way;



And re-mem-ber, that friends the last ones should be, To

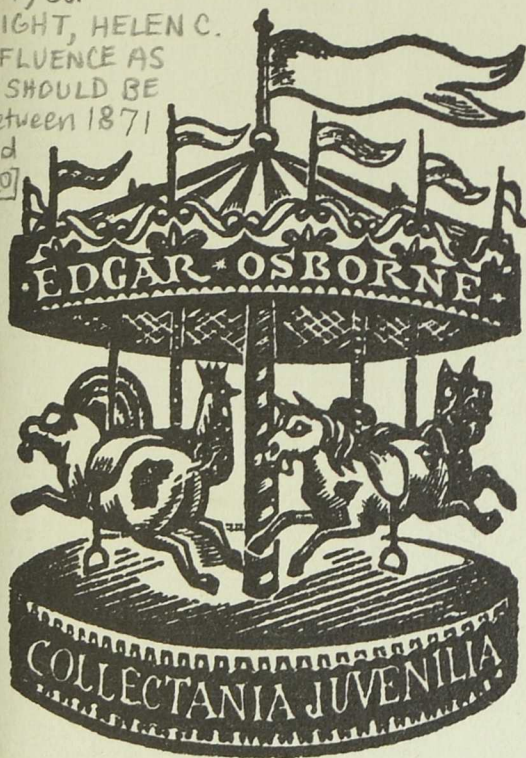


sneer at the faults which in others they see.

Be kind to each other, for short is life's span;
 We must crowd in its compass what good acts we can.
 Each hour should recall, as it passes away,
 Some being made happy by love's kindly sway.

THE END.

(SA) dr
KNIGHT, HELEN C.
INFLUENCE AS
IT SHOULD BE
between 1871
and
1880]



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