PROFESSOR JOHNNY

Title: Professor Johnny

Author: JĀK (Annie Bowles Williams)

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[image]

"How far off you can see at these front windows!" said Sue.—Page 44.

PROFESSOR JOHNNY

BY JAK

AUTHOR OF "BIRCHWOOD," "FITCH CLUB," "RIVERSIDE MUSEUM"

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CHAPTER

PROFESSOR JOHNNY.

CHAPTER I.

AN ACCIDENTAL EXPERIMENT.

Johnny had been named The Professor by some of his young friends, because he wore spectacles, was fond of studying natural philosophy and chemistry, and of performing experiments. He had become so used to the name that he did not mind it much, even when some of the rude boys in the street called him Professor or Prof. His merry little sister Sue, also, was quite as apt to call him Prof. as Johnny.

One evening in June, Johnny and Sue were at home alone. Their father and mother were making calls; and Kate, the girl, had gone out marketing. It was not very uncommon for them to be in the house alone; for although Sue was rather wild and thoughtless, Johnny was very quiet and thoughtful, and Sue had been taught to mind him when her parents were away.

Johnny had been reading, and Sue amusing herself by undressing her doll and putting it to bed; but after the doll was in bed, and supposedly sound asleep, she could not think of any thing else to do by herself, and so began to tease Johnny to put up his book and play with her. Johnny was so much interested in his book that he paid but little attention to her at first, merely replying that he would play by and by. But finally Sue took hold of his book playfully, saying,—

"I mean to take away your book, for you have read long enough: mamma would say so herself if she were here."

Johnny laughed.

"That's a very handy excuse for you: whenever you want me to play, you have a sudden anxiety about my eyes."

"But you know it's just what papa and mamma say, that you read too much, and they ask you to stop reading a good deal oftener than I do. I'm sure, if they had been here, you would have had to put up that book half an hour ago."

"I shouldn't wonder if you were right about that. Well, what shall we do? Shall we play checkers?"

"Oh, no! don't let's play any thing still: let's romp a little."

"Romp!" exclaimed Johnny, making up a comical face. "You know I hate romping. Let us play a game of chess."

"No: you always beat me at those games, and so it isn't any fun; but I can beat you at romping, and so I like it. Besides, papa and mamma say it is better for you to exercise more, and they like to have you romp with me."

"I should think you were setting up for a doctress, if I didn't know you better. You are the greatest girl to get up excuses for whatever you want to do. But I suppose there'll be no peace until I romp."

Johnny put down his book with a sigh and a smile. Sue said, "Come, let's play tag. Catch me if you can!" and ran off into the dining-room. As the gas was only lighted in the front hall and in the sitting-room, it was pretty dark in the dining-room; but this suited Sue all the better: she ran around the table, with Johnny after her; and, as she hit now and then against the table, the dishes rattled ominously. She was laughing uproariously all the time, and evidently thought of nothing but the sport of dodging Johnny, at all risks.

"This won't do," said Johnny, coming to a stand-still, as Sue, in trying to escape him as he turned suddenly in the direction in which she was running, knocked over a pitcher near the end of the table: "we shall be sure to break something before long, at this rate."

"Let's go into the kitchen, then," replied Sue: "there isn't any fire in the stove, and we can't hurt any thing there. It'll be real nice and dark too: I'll bet I can hide where you can't find me."

"All right," said Johnny; and Sue danced into the kitchen, and hid behind

the door. Johnny cornered her at once, however; for it happened to be lighter there than in the dining-room.

"Why, this is real queer!" exclaimed Sue, in a half vexed tone, as Johnny pulled her from her hiding-place: "it isn't dark here a single mite!"

"So it isn't," replied Johnny. "I wonder what makes it so light! The light comes in at the window. There must be a lamp in the shed, or out on the platform."

Johnny opened the door and went out. Sue followed him. The "platform" extended some little distance from the back-door, and was covered by a roof: it might have been called a piazza or a porch but for its width. At the side of the "platform" was what Johnny called the "shed:" it had been intended only for storage of wood and coal, but was so large that a small summer kitchen had been partitioned off next to the kitchen, with a door into the kitchen, and another opening upon the platform. This kitchen was used in warm weather for baking, washing, and ironing, in order to keep the heat out of the house. Kate had been ironing that afternoon, and the fire in the stove had not gone out.

As soon as they were outside the door, Sue set up a cry of alarm.

"Fire! Fire!" she cried. "The house is on fire! O Johnny, let's run off! we shall get burned up!"

Johnny stood quite still, and said nothing.

"O Johnny! come! come! what makes you stand there? It's going to explode! It'll reach over here, and set the house on fire! Let's run out into the street, and call some one to come! What makes you stand there, and not call out? You'll let the house burn up! But I shan't go and let you be burned up: you've got to come too!"

She took hold of his jacket, and pulled with all her might; for she thought Johnny was too frightened to stir.

"Keep still, Sue: I'm thinking," he replied, looking calmly and fixedly at the alarming light in the shed-window. "I can't get at it through this door very well: I guess I'll go around through the kitchen-door."

"You ain't going near it?" cried Sue, in astonishment and alarm.

"Of course I am: I can't put it out without going near it."

"You sha'n't do it! There! It's getting worse than ever! O Johnny, come in!—It's going to explode this minute!"

Johnny came in, but it was not on account of Sue's direction: he had just thought what to do.

The danger proceeded from a kerosene-lamp which stood in the summer kitchen, on a table, near the window facing the platform. It was streaming up very high, and blazing in a very remarkable and peculiar manner, as if on the point of instant explosion: the flashing and flickering were what had lighted up the kitchen so strangely.

On entering the kitchen, Johnny seized a piece of carpet which was in front of the sink, and ran with it toward the inner door of the shed.

"You sha'n't go in there, Johnny!" cried Sue. "You're going to kill yourself, and me, too, 'cause I sha'n't run away and leave you;" and she began to cry bitterly. But Johnny hurried on into the shed, and Sue dared not follow him: she was only just brave enough not to run out of the house, and leave him there to die or be horribly burned alone.

Just then Kate returned. As she stepped upon the platform, and saw the alarming spectacle, she screamed wildly, "Fire! help! help!" Just at that moment, too, a boy in the neighborhood, who had heard Sue's cries, came rushing into the yard. Hearing Kate's outcry, and seeing the blaze in the shed, he rushed into the street, shouting "Fire!" at the top of his voice, and telling everybody he met that the back part of Mr. Le Bras' house was all in a blaze. The first man who heard the news gave the signal at the alarm-box at the corner.

But before Kate or Sue could scream again, Johnny had darted through the inner door, and thrown the rug over the lamp.

"O Johnny! Johnny! run! run! it'll explode now, sure!" cried Kate wildly, thinking the carpet would send the blaze down into the lamp instantly. But all was in darkness.

"Johnny! Oh! where is he?" screamed Sue, almost fancying he must have died with the blaze somehow.

"Sure, and there ain't any fire now at all!" said Kate, in wonderment. "Where are you, Johnny?"

"Here I am," said a calm voice at her elbow. "Didn't that go out quickly? I knew it would as soon as the rug was over it, but I was a little afraid it might explode before I could get it covered: I didn't really believe it would, though; for father says he is always very careful to get the best of kerosene."

"What a brave boy!" said Kate admiringly. "But you oughtn't to have risked your life so, Johnny. And what could have ailed that lamp? I'll light a candle, and go and see what the matter was; for I don't dare touch another kerosene-lamp. I left that one all right when I went off, about an hour and a half ago."

After lighting the gas in the kitchen, Kate lighted a candle, and entered the shed, preceded by Johnny. Sue still feared it was unsafe, and stood on the platform, telling them they had better not go in.

Kate took up the end of the rug, and peered cautiously underneath, prepared to run and pull Johnny after her if there was a spark of fire left; but, as all was dark, she assisted Johnny to remove the rug. The lamp appeared to be all right. Johnny put his hand upon the glass portion.

"Why, see how hot it is, Katie!" he said: "it must have got heated standing in this little warm room so near the stove, and that made the kerosene swell, I

guess, and go up in the wick, and run over at the top; and so the kerosene was on fire on the outside,—that was all."

"That was all!" exclaimed Sue, who had now ventured to follow them. "Well, I should think that was enough. I never was so scared in all my life.—But there's a fire somewhere, for there's the bell ringing."

"Sure enough," said Johnny; "and it's our box too!"

At that moment, a number of men and boys came running into the yard.

"Where's the fire?" said the foremost man, as he stepped hurriedly upon the platform.

"There isn't any fire here," replied Johnny: "a kerosene-lamp was blazing, that's all; but we've put it out."

Then the men went off laughing, and the boys hooting. Kate let the fire down in the grate, saying she was going to have every spark of fire out in that stove before she went to bed; and the children went back into the sitting-room.

"Well, Sue," said Johnny, "I hope you've had all the romping you want for this evening."

Just then a key turned hurriedly in the door, and Mr. Le Bras entered, followed by Mrs. Le Bras. Mr. Le Bras glanced at Sue and Johnny without saying a word; and Mrs. Le Bras sank into a chair, looking very pale and helpless. Mr. Le Bras went to the dining-room and got some water, without saying a word to the children, who stood by in great alarm.

"What is the matter with mamma?" asked Sue, in a hushed voice.

Mr. Le Bras offered his wife the water, but she shook her head. "I shall feel better presently," she said, in a faint voice. "Can the house be on fire, and they not know it, Frank?"

"No, indeed," replied Mr. Le Bras; "and I told you the engine would not have gone back into the engine-house unless it were a false alarm, or the fire was put out." Then he said, turning to Johnny, "The fire has been put out, hasn't it, my son?"

"Yes," said Johnny: "it wasn't any thing but a kerosene-lamp blazing up in the summer kitchen."

"And 'twas Johnny who put it out," said Sue.

"Sue and Katie screamed, and made the alarm," said Johnny.—"So they got the engine started, did they?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Le Bras: "it was just going back into the engine-house when we came by there. As we turned the corner, we heard a man saying our house was on fire; and I thought your mother would die before I got her home, although I called her attention to the fact that the engine was going back."

"I feel better now," said Mrs. Le Bras. "So there hasn't been a fire at all! I never had such a fright before in all my life!"

But Mrs. Le Bras was still so nervous that her husband would not allow the children to talk about the accident any more, after they and Katie had fully explained the occurrence. The conversation regarding it was ended for the evening by Johnny's saying to his father, "That was a pretty good experiment to illustrate how soon a fire will stop if the supply of oxygen is cut off: only it was an accidental experiment."

"It could not properly be called an experiment," replied his father: "an experiment is something done purposely; but it answered the same purpose."

"I don't understand why the fire went out when Johnny threw the rug over it," said Sue.

"That's what I can't understand," added Kate.

"I'll explain it to you to-morrow," said Johnny. "Alec Miner is coming over to-morrow after school to see me perform some experiments: and while I am performing some of them, I will explain how a fire is caused by the uniting of oxygen with carbon and hydrogen; for it is nothing but a chemical union, like ever so many that can be made; only it is so common that folks don't think any thing about it."

"So common that folks don't think about it?" said Sue.

"Johnny has stated it very well," said Mr. Le Bras, smiling. "If you saw a fire for the first time, Sue, you would be very anxious to know what produced the heat and the bright light; but because you have seen the phenomenon so often, ever since you can remember, you never think to ask the cause of it."

CHAPTER II.

THE "ILLUSTRATED LECTURE."

Something happened the next day to disturb Johnny's naturally good spirits. When he got home from school at noon, Sue met him at the door with,—

"Something has happened to make you feel awful bad, Johnny. It came this morning in a letter; and mamma said I might prepare your mind for it, but I mustn't tell you right out in the first place."

Mr. Le Bras, who was in the sitting-room when Sue made this announcement, began to laugh heartily.

"Well, well, Sue!" he said: "if your mother heard how well you tell bad news, I am afraid she would not trust you to do it again. Why, you have given

Johnny a regular bomb-shell to begin with!"

"I guess it isn't any thing so bad as you pretend, Sue, since father is laughing at it," replied Johnny cheerfully, although his face had fallen considerably before his father began to laugh.

"I'll bet you," said Sue, looking quite disturbed at her father's interference in her news-telling, "that he's only laughing so as not to let you think it's so bad as it is: but now he's begun, he can tell it to you his own self; though mother said I might."

Sue went off into the dining-room, where Kate was, with tears in her eyes, and something very like a pout about her mouth.

"I think papa was too bad!" she said.

"What is it, father?" asked Johnny, after Sue had disappeared.

"I think I'll let Sue tell, when she gets over her pet," replied Mr. Le Bras. "The heavens are not going to fall, Johnny. I think you are enough of a philosopher to rise above the calamity, although I really suppose you will feel pretty badly in the first place."

"This is funny enough," said Johnny, not knowing whether to laugh or feel anxious: although, of course, he saw it must be only an individual annoyance pertaining to himself, and not a household misfortune, since his father was inclined to laugh so heartily over it.

Just then Mrs. Le Bras entered the room.

"Mother," asked Johnny, "what dreadful thing has happened to me?"

"Hasn't Sue told you?" replied his mother.

"No," said Johnny, and he related what had occurred. Mrs. Le Bras smiled. "Very well. Sue has prepared your mind for it, then, and your father has shown that it is something that can be lived through: I think that will do until Sue gets ready to tell you the rest; for, although she is inclined to be sulky, I think I will not break my promise of letting her tell you, unless she gets to be very naughty indeed."

Kate then announced that dinner was ready; and they all went into the dining-room, and sat down at the table. Sue was there in her place by Johnny's side; but she said nothing more about the bad news, and looked quite dignified as well as very sober.

"Come, Sue," said Johnny coaxingly, "tell me what has happened."

"No: papa can tell you, since he couldn't let me do it my own self."

"I don't see what bad news could possibly come to me in a letter."

"But there has, and that's all I'm going to say about it: papa can tell you," replied Sue resolutely.

"Don't tease Sue to tell you," said his mother. "If it were good news, you would naturally be anxious to hear it; but since Sue assures you that it is bad

news, the longer you are ignorant of it the better."

"Only it rather keeps me in suspense," said Johnny, smiling.—"Come, Sue, tell me, please."

"No, I sha'n't," said Sue, shaking her head resolutely.

Mr. Le Bras gave Johnny a look which meant, "Don't ask her to tell;" and nothing more was said about the bad news that noon. Johnny went off to school in quite good spirits: and when he got home, and found Alec there, and his sister Belle with him, he was wholly forgetful of the calamitous news in store for him; so that he had quite a little respite between the first hint of the coming misfortune and the bitter realization of it which arrived shortly afterwards.

After talking upon ordinary topics with his visitors for a little while, Johnny said, "Since you wanted to see some little experiments, if you will go up in my laboratory I will perform a few. As I haven't any but the very simplest apparatus, and besides don't know much about chemistry and philosophy, I can't show you much; but I'll do the best I can."

"You know a good deal more than I do," replied Alec. "I expect to study chemistry and philosophy at the high school next year; but I don't know any thing about them now, and, of course, Belle don't; she just came over with me out of curiosity, when I told her you had promised to show me how to do a few experiments if I would come over to-day."

"Is there any particular subject you would like to have illustrated?" asked Johnny politely.

"No," replied Alec: "one thing will do just as well as another."

"Then, perhaps you would like to see how two chemicals will combine to make a third entirely different from either of the two."

"Yes," replied Belle, "I should like that very much."

"So should I," said Alec.

"I think I'll call Sue to go into the laboratory with us, as I promised to show her some experiments when you were here;—if you will please excuse me a moment."

Presently Johnny came back with Sue.

As soon as Sue got into the room, she said, "Johnny's going to tell us all about fire, and how the rug came to put the lamp out."

Of course, then Johnny had to explain what Sue meant; and that led to a full account of the accident of the evening before, and how Sue and Kate got out the fire-engine, which interested and amused the visitors very much.

The laboratory was a small room at the end of the upper hall. As there were plenty of rooms up-stairs, there had never been a bed in it; and after Johnny began to have so many chemicals, and to experiment so much, Mrs. Le Bras had taken up the carpet, and allowed him to use the room for a laboratory. Mr. Le Bras

had hired a carpenter to put some shelves in the front part of the closet; and here were arranged the various bottles, jars, saucers, tumblers, pipes, tubes, and other appliances which Johnny had collected.

There was a table in the centre of the room, with a chair beside it.

"I will get some chairs," said Johnny, disappearing as soon as the guests were ushered in; while Sue politely offered the chair to Belle.

"Johnny don't have company in the laboratory very often," she explained.

Johnny came back immediately, bringing two chairs; but Alec said he did not care to sit down at present. As for Johnny, he was very busy taking things from the closet-shelf, and arranging them on the table, talking all the time.

"I suppose you know what chemical union is?" said Johnny to Alec.

"No, I don't think I do," replied Alec hesitatingly. "That is, although I know what union means, and what chemical means, I am not sure what they mean together."

"You know how sugar and salt dissolve in water, the particles of sugar and salt lying between the particles of water, just as a whole lot of different kinds of little seeds might be all mixed together without uniting at all?"

"I never thought about that before," replied Alec. "I didn't suppose fluid could be compared to seeds; and I had an idea that the salt and sugar became fluid somehow when they were dissolved, and so mixed in with the water."

"The particles of the water are very small; and the sugar and salt, when they come into contact with water, separate into very tiny particles, which fill in the places between the particles of water until there is no room left, and then all the sugar or salt you put in afterwards settles to the bottom by itself. But there is no union at all between the salt or sugar and the water; that is, they do not unite to form any different substance."

While Johnny was saying this, he was pouring some grayish powder into a cup. Then he put an old spoon in the powder, and took a vial of yellow liquid from the shelf.

"This is whiting," said Johnny. "If I put some water on it, and stir them together, I shall have nothing but whiting and water. Perhaps I'd better prove that first."

Here he took out a spoonful of the whiting, and put it into a little saucer, and poured some water upon it, and stirred it.

"There you have a mixture similar to sugar and water, or salt and water; the ingredients are very closely mixed, but they are not united to form any different substance; if it should stand a while, the water would evaporate, and leave the same amount of real whiting.—But now I will pour some vinegar on the whiting in the cup, and you will see a difference."

Johnny poured some vinegar from the vial into the cup, and stirred the

mixture with the spoon.

"You see all those bubbles? Those are bubbles of a kind of gas; as fast as they break, the gas that has been formed by the chemical union of the vinegar and whiting will pass into the air, and what is left in the cup will not be vinegar and whiting; there will be no real vinegar and no real whiting left; parts of each have united to make the gas; so each has lost something peculiar to itself, and cannot be the very same article that it was before."

"Some of the bubbles are real big, and you can't break them easily with the spoon," said Sue, who was stirring the mixture curiously. "I wish my soap-bubbles would be as tough."

"Now," continued Johnny, "mixing the whiting and the vinegar caused a real chemical union: two substances united to make a third substance entirely different from the two original ingredients."

"I think I understand what a chemical union is now," said Alec.

"And so do I," said Belle.

"This would be a beautiful experiment to illustrate a chemical union, if it were not so very common," continued Johnny.

As he spoke, he took a match from a match-safe he had placed on the table, struck it against the edge of the table, and held it out, smiling playfully.

"Fire is one of the most beautiful chemical unions known; and the burning of a match is an excellent illustration of the different temperatures which different substances require, in order that they may unite with the oxygen in the air, or be on fire as we call it."

As the match was pretty well burned by this time, Johnny applied the flame to a spirit-lamp upon the table, which was the principal purpose for which he had lighted the match.

"A very moderate amount of heat will cause phosphorus, which is the substance on the end of the match, to form a chemical union with the oxygen in the air: brimstone requires a little higher temperature than phosphorus, but not so high as wood requires. The heat produced by a little friction is enough to light the phosphorus, the heat produced by the burning phosphorus is enough to cause the brimstone to take fire, and that produced by the burning brimstone is enough to cause the wood to burn; that is, to form a chemical union with oxygen. And, although the burning phosphorus or brimstone would not have produced sufficient heat for lighting the lamp, the burning wood furnished the necessary temperature; so that the alcohol in the wick began the union at once, when the blaze of the wood came in contact with it."

"I see now how it is that we kindle a coal-fire," replied Alec. "First we put some paper in the grate, and then some pine-kindlings, and then some charcoal, and then the hard coal: then we set the paper on fire with a match, and presently

the coal is burning."

"And we separate the kindlings so that the oxygen can get to them more easily," said Johnny.

"How queer we never understood exactly why a fire was kindled in that way, until now," said Belle. "And I should never have thought of fire being a chemical union."

"You can carry on the same principle a good deal farther," said Johnny. "From having a fire of coals, you might have a house on fire, and this would produce heat sufficient to set the neighboring houses on fire; and the uniting of such a quantity of carbon and hydrogen with oxygen, to make carbonic-acid gas, would create such a vacuum by the rising of the heated air and gas, that so much oxygen would rush in about the fire, in the form of a high wind, as to make the fire hotter and hotter, until, if it surrounded an iron building, it would burn it up just as easily as wood houses are burned in an ordinary fire; as was the case at the great Chicago fire, where so many fire-proof blocks were totally destroyed."

"But the iron buildings did not actually burn: they only melted down in the great heat," said Alec.

"Oh, no! they burned," said Johnny: "there is no trouble about burning iron up, if you get the right degree of heat."

"I should think there was a good deal of trouble about it, if great buildings they didn't mean to have burned, if there was a fire, did go and burn up right before their eyes," said Sue.

"Do you mean that the iron really burned as wood does?" said Belle.

"Why, certainly," replied Johnny: "iron will burn up more completely than wood; for when wood is burned, the earthy part remains in the form of ashes: but pure iron, which has no earthy matter in it, will burn up completely; it will all combine with the oxygen in the air to form gas. When iron is in a mass, it takes a very intense heat to produce this chemical union with oxygen; but when it is separated into very small particles, it will burn in an ordinary fire."

"If iron will burn up, I wonder we never see it burning so," said Alec. "I've been in blacksmiths' shops and foundries, and I never saw any iron burning up, although I've seen it at a white-heat."

"The fires in blacksmiths' shops and foundries are not hot enough to burn iron in the mass," replied Johnny; "or, if they are, they can't get enough oxygen near enough to combine with it. At the great Chicago fire, the intense heat caused such a high wind,—that is, such a flow of oxygen toward the fire,—that the fire became so intensely hot there was no difficulty in the iron blazing and burning more completely than the wood."

Here Johnny looked rather disconcerted at Alec's apparent incredulity.

"But, Alec," said he, "if little particles of iron, such as you would file off of a

bar of iron, will burn up, of course the whole bar could be burned if it was all filed up; and if the filings could be burned in an ordinary lamp like this, why couldn't the whole bar be burned in a fire that was hot enough?"

"Yes," said Belle, who was troubled at Alec's being so impolite as to seem to doubt Johnny's word: "it's just like the difference between a log of wood and the sawdust produced by sawing the log in two; you couldn't burn the log without building a hot fire under it, while you could set the sawdust on fire with a match."

"That is a very good illustration," said Johnny. "Now, I lit this lamp to show you how nicely iron will burn."

Johnny took a large-mouthed bottle from the shelf, which was about half full of rather bright particles.

"These are steel-filings I got at a machine-shop; but, if you prefer, I will get a nail and file, and let you make some iron-filings yourself, which will answer just as well. I keep the steel-filings because they are so handy. I just ask the men for them, and they give me a whole lot that last ever so long."

Johnny then opened his knife, and, taking out some of the filings on the end of the blade, dropped them, or rather shook them, slowly into the flame.

"Oh, how pretty!" exclaimed Belle: "they burn something like gunpowder."

"So they actually burn up, and don't just get red-hot and fall down and cool?" said Alec.

"Oh, yes!" replied Johnny: "they burn up just like so much sawdust, only more so; for there would be some ashes left of sawdust, even though they might be invisible."

"So the filings have combined with the oxygen in the air, and gone off in gas?" said Belle.

"Yes," replied Johnny.

"I wish you would file some iron," said Sue, "because that experiment makes such pretty fireworks."

"Very well, I will, if you will go down and bring me a piece of iron from papa's tool-box."

Sue ran off, and Johnny continued,—

"I think I'll show you now how I make gas on a small scale."

"What kind of gas?" inquired Alec.

"Oh! such gas as we burn in stores and houses. I've got my pipe already prepared: if I hadn't, I couldn't show you that experiment very well to-day. I got the pipe ready to show to a boy who was coming to see me last week; but he was sick and didn't come, so I didn't use the pipe."

Johnny took a common clay pipe from his closet, and showed Alec and Belle that the top of the ball of the pipe was closed with plaster of Paris.

"I pounded a little piece of bituminous coal, such as they use at the gas-

works," said Johnny, "and nearly filled the bowl of the pipe with it; then I wet a little plaster of Paris, and closed the end of the bowl to make it air-tight,—that is, to keep out the oxygen. There are carbon and hydrogen in the coal, and they will both combine with oxygen very quickly at the right degree of heat: the hydrogen will form a flame, and the carbon will look bright as you see it in a piece of burning wood or coal. But you see the pipe is fixed so that the oxygen can't get at the coal at that end."

"Is the flame of a fire or a lamp caused by the burning of hydrogen?" inquired Belle.

"Yes: the flame is the hydrogen combining with oxygen, and the glowing coal or wick is the carbon uniting with oxygen. The gas from the gas-works is the hydrogen of the coal separated from the carbon. When we heat it with a match to set it to uniting with oxygen, we have nothing but a flame. You know the coal is heated in air-tight retorts; it is heated hot enough to burn, but it can't burn because there is no oxygen for it to unite with; but the heat causes the hydrogen to separate from the carbon, and then it finds its way out through the opening in the retort into the pipes, and when it reaches the air at the end of a pipe, you can heat it a little with a match, and it will begin to unite with the oxygen."

"And the coal that is left in the retort is called coke. I have seen it very often," said Alec: "the reason it looks different from coal, and burns differently, then, is because it has lost its hydrogen?"

"Yes," replied Johnny: "almost all ordinary combustibles are composed of carbon and hydrogen,—wood, coal, oil, etc.; and there are a great many other things that oxygen has a great affinity for, and will combine with at the right temperature: the things that it won't combine with are such as have all the oxygen in them that they will contain, like dirt and stones and ashes."

"And how about the pipe?" asked Alec.

"Why, after Sue gets back with the piece of iron, we will go down and set the ball of the pipe in Katie's fire. When it gets hot, we shall see a smoke coming out of the pipe, which will be composed chiefly of hydrogen gas: we will touch a match to it, and there will be a flame at the end of the pipe until all the hydrogen which was in the coal in the ball of the pipe has united with oxygen. That is one way to make gas on a very small scale."

"And then, if we break the plaster of Paris, and take out what is left of the coal, we shall have some coke," said Alec.

"Yes," replied Johnny.

Sue now appeared, bringing a small cold chisel. Johnny took a file from the closet, and, placing the chisel over the flame of the lamp, began to file it briskly: beautiful little points of light at once commenced to play about the file and chisel at the point of contact.

"Why don't the filings fall down into the flame?" inquired Alec.

"I suppose the current in the flame blows them up, they are so small," replied Johnny, "or perhaps the motion of the file does."

Alec, Belle, and Sue then took turns at making the "fireworks," as Sue called them.

"I think I understand now about fire being a chemical union between oxygen and other substances," said Alec; "but I don't understand about the heat. What makes heat? or why does a chemical union of that kind produce heat?"

"Why, friction makes heat," replied Johnny; "particles of matter coming against each other violently. You know the Indians used to get the oxygen to combining with the carbon and hydrogen in two pieces of dry wood, by rubbing them together briskly; and before matches were invented, they kindled a fire by striking flint and steel over tinder; and a steel peg in your shoe-heel sometimes strikes fire on the pavement by the heat produced by friction; and I think I have seen it stated, that, when oxygen is uniting with other substances, it is the very quick motion of the little particles of matter among themselves that produces the heat."

"I shouldn't think such little invisible particles as those of oxygen and hydrogen could make friction enough by their motion as to produce heat," said Alec.

"Why, Alec," replied Belle, "don't you remember what terrible force the air has in hurricanes, and even in a common gale?"

"But that is in an immense volume," replied Alec.

"Oxygen is in a comparatively mild and harmless state when it is by itself," said Johnny; "but when it gets to combining with any thing it has a great affinity for, it is in a sort of rage. I think myself that there must be some pretty rapid motion going on in a fire, even if we can't see it."

Johnny had handed the chisel to Sue, telling her to put it right back where she found it.

"Well, I will," replied Sue; "but I guess things won't be put back in their right places much after Felix gets here."

Sue had no sooner said this, than she clapped her hand over her mouth. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "if I haven't gone and told!"

Johnny's face had grown very long in an instant.

"Is that your bad news?" he said. "When is Felix coming?"

"I don't know," replied Sue: "you'll have to ask mamma, for she was to decide."

Sue then went back with the chisel, and Alec said,—

"So your cousin Felix is coming again, is he?"

"I suppose so," replied Johnny briefly, as if it was not a very pleasant topic.

"What a funny boy he is!" said Belle. "I never saw him but once, and only

for a few minutes; but he seemed to be ready for any kind of mischief."

"Yes," replied Johnny: "he's as fond of noise and mischief as oxygen is of carbon and hydrogen; but I guess he won't stay very long."

This latter reflection seemed to console Johnny, for he began to look tolerably cheerful again.

"Shall we go and make hydrogen gas now?" said he.

But at that moment, Sue came running back, exclaiming,—

"Some folks in a carriage are having an accident right out by our front-door!"

"What kind of an accident?" inquired Johnny.

"Is it a runaway?" inquired Belle.

"No, it isn't a runaway, for they can't get the wagon to move: at any rate, I heard a man say the wheel wouldn't turn around."

"Let's go and see," said Alec.

So they all went out at the front-door to see what was the matter.

They found a carryall and a span of horses standing near the sidewalk. A lady and a little girl were in the carryall. Two gentlemen were examining one of the wheels, and several boys stood near looking on.

"I don't know what ails it," said one of the men; "but the wheel won't turn around, that's sure. I think we'll have to go and ask a blacksmith to come and see to it."

Johnny and Alec went out on the sidewalk, while Belle and Sue stood on the doorstep.

"I guess it's a hot wheel," said Johnny to Alec.

"What did you say?" asked one of the gentlemen, turning around quickly.

"I said perhaps it is a hot wheel," replied Johnny.

"Oh, no!" said the gentleman, looking rather perplexed: "the wheel is not hot at all."

"No," said Johnny, "it isn't hot now; but perhaps it has been hot, and that caused the wheel to get welded to the axle so that it wouldn't turn; and after it wouldn't turn, there was no friction, and so the wheel cooled."

"I shouldn't wonder if he is right," said the other gentleman: "that often happens to car-wheels on a fast train, and we have been driving pretty fast, you know."

"Well, young man," said the other gentleman, "since you know so much about wheels, can you tell me why this wheel should act so, while the others are all right?"

"I presume it wasn't greased so well as the others," replied Johnny.

Just then a man who was passing by stopped to see what was the matter: he was a mechanic coming home from the rifle-factory, which closed at five o'clock.

He asked a few questions, looked at the wheel, and said, "Oh! that's a hot wheel: you'll have to prop the carriage up, and pound it off from the axle. You've been doing a little blacksmithing as you came along. I presume the wheel and the axle are pretty neatly welded together, but yet not so much so but that a little artificial blacksmithing will set it all right again."

Then there was considerable stirring about: the carriage was propped up under the directions of the mechanic, and, after a good deal of hammering, the wheel was pronounced all right. Johnny brought out an oil-can; and, after the wheel was well oiled, the gentleman thanked everybody around, and offered to pay all who had helped, including Johnny. But every one refused to take any pay, except two or three boys who had hindered more than they had helped.

"That was a pretty good illustration of the effect of friction," said Alec.

"Yes," replied Johnny. "Now let us go in and make the gas."

"I sha'n't be able to stop any longer now, thank you," said Alec, "as my father told me to be home by half-past five. But I'll get a pipe and fix it myself, if I can find a piece of the right kind of coal, and that will save your pipe until another time."

"Sawdust, or almost any thing that will burn well, will answer to fill it with," said Johnny.

"I am ever so much obliged for your illustrated lecture," said Alec. "I've learned a good deal, and I wish you would come over to our house some day before long. I can't perform many experiments yet, but we'll have a good time somehow. I mean to begin to perform experiments, and study up about these things. I am two years older than you are, but I don't know half as much as you do."

"You know ever so much more than I do about history," said Johnny, "and Dick knows more about carpentry, and Fred about printing."

"And that's the way it is with grown-up folks," said Belle: "one takes to one thing, and another to another; and so, between them all, the different kinds of work in the world get done."

"As for me," said Sue, "I like to have a good time most any way."

After their visitors were gone, Johnny went in to ask his mother about Felix.

"Why, my dear," replied Mrs. Le Bras, "your aunt Mary is in very poor health, and is going to Europe on a three months' trip with your uncle Louis. Your uncle thinks she will be much better if she does not have the care of Felix; and yet she is unwilling to leave him behind, unless we will let him come here. Of course, we could not refuse; although it will be a great care for me, and a worry to you; but we are well, and aunt Mary is ill."

Johnny tried not to cry, but the tears rolled down his cheeks in spite of all his efforts to restrain them.

”There won’t be any peace and quiet and comfort in the house after Felix comes,” he said; ”and to stay a whole three months’—But then, if aunt Mary is sick”—

”Perhaps he has improved since we saw him,” replied Mrs. Le Bras: ”if not, your father says he shall be made to mind and behave himself. Since his father and mother will not be here, he will be obliged to obey your father and me, and we shall be decided with him.”

”When will he come?”

”In about two weeks.”

”I shall try to enjoy myself as well as I can before he comes, because I know it won’t be very pleasant after he gets here.”

Mrs. Le Bras said nothing, because she was afraid Johnny was about right. As Johnny went up to the laboratory to put up his pipe and the other articles, he looked very sober and thoughtful: he was already planning how he could escape from Felix’s racket and nonsense.

When Johnny came down again, Sue said,—

”You didn’t explain, after all, how the rug put out the lamp last night.”

”Put out the light, you mean. Why, don’t you see? The rug prevented the air from reaching the fire, and, as there was no more oxygen to combine with the hydrogen and carbon, there could be no fire.”

CHAPTER III.

THE SKY-ROOM.

Johnny felt so badly about the coming of Felix, and begged so hard to be allowed some place of refuge during the stay of this wild guest, that his father said he might have the large back-room in the French roof, if his mother was willing. Mrs. Le Bras said she had no objection, if Johnny did not mind having all the things about that were stored in that room, since there was no other place to put them in. Johnny said all he wanted was somewhere to go when Felix got too rude, where he could be sure Felix would not follow him: he said, too, that he should like to keep the chemicals be was using in the same place; because, if they were not out of the way, Felix would be meddling with them.

”I will have a lock put on the door of the room, and give you the key,” said his father; ”and then if you let in any one you don’t want, it will be your own

fault. You can carry the things from your laboratory into this private domicile, and whatever else you wish."

"I will carry most of my books, then," said Johnny; "for I haven't a single book that Felix will want to read."

"But you must not put your mother or me to any trouble about fixing up the room," added his father; "you must be contented with the bare floor; and if you want the things which are stored there put up out of the way, you must rearrange them yourself, and be sure they are as neatly and safely placed as they were before."

"I am perfectly willing to agree to that," returned Johnny, looking brighter than he had before since the announcement that Felix was to spend the summer with them. "Can I begin to get the room ready to-day?"

"Yes," replied his mother. "I have no objection, since I am not to do any thing about it, and can trust you not to put any thing out of order in moving the articles about."

Johnny went up into "the attic," as it was called, immediately, followed by Sue. There was only one finished room in the French roof: this was in front, and was occupied by Kate. The remaining space was not plastered, and had great beams overhead: it was called "the storeroom," and was separated from Kate's room by a narrow hall formed by the placing of a light board partition about four feet distant from the finished room in front. A thin plank door, without lock and key, was in the end of the partition, near the head of the stairs. There were four large windows in the room,—one at each side, and two in front.

"It's a real pleasant room, isn't it?" said Johnny, looking about with interest for the first time; for he had never entered the room before except for the purpose of storing something there, or getting something which had been put away in some of the trunks or boxes. These trunks and boxes, some old furniture, and a large cedar chest in which his mother kept furs and other expensive articles liable to be disturbed by moths, were scattered about rather promiscuously, without regard to any particular order.

"I'll tell you what I've a mind to do," said Johnny. "I think I will put all the things that are stored here at the back part of the room, and then I'll take the old clothes-line, and draw it across in front of them, and hang some of mother's old drapery curtains on it: I don't believe but that she has enough to go clear across the room; only I shall leave an opening in front of the door to get through."

"Mamma's got a set of old cretonne, real pretty, too, with bright red flowers on them; and I know she'll let you have them," said Sue.

"And she's got another set, of cheese-cloth, that she won't use again," said Johnny. "There's four more: I'll alternate them,—that will be prettiest. I guess they'll go clear across, and be a little full too. And then see what a monstrous

room we shall have left all to ourselves!"

"But you won't let me come in, will you? I thought you wanted it all to yourself."

"Oh! I shall let you come in sometimes, when you don't want to romp; and perhaps I will let Felix in once in a great while, when I am sure he won't stay long: but, as I shall have a lock and key, I can keep folks out when I am reading or busy.

"How far off you can see at these front windows!" said Sue. "I can see way up the river, and all those blue hills, and over hundreds and hundreds of houses, and lots of sky!"

Johnny came and stood by her side, and looked out at the landscape.

"It is beautiful, isn't it?" said he. "Why, I do believe it's the very handsomest view I ever saw! It is queer I never noticed before how fine it was. I wonder if father and mother know we've got such an observatory!"

"Wouldn't it be a pretty picture?" said Sue. "I wish it was a picture instead of real; for then I could carry it down in my room, and hang it up."

"Oh, no! it wouldn't be half as nice as it is now it is real. Just think how many changes we can see on all that great sweep of sky, how many clouds altering their shapes and colors every minute, and what glorious sunsets! We must come up here after supper to-night, and see the sunset. Let's surprise father and mother, Sue. If we can get the curtains, I'll have them up by that time, if you'll help me."

"Won't that be nice!" exclaimed Sue, dancing about. "And just see, Johnny! here's furniture enough to furnish your room right off: there's that red plush chair that isn't faded very badly; and that great, comfortable old wicker rocker that we used to like so much, because it would hold both of us easy,—and all that ails it is that it looks kind of old; and there's mamma's old toilet-table and a big ottoman;—and, O Johnny! there's our lounge in the corner that I've missed so much, because the new sofa isn't half so big."

"Yes, that's an idea!" replied Johnny. "There is quite a lot of furniture here; and that sofa looks like an old friend, if there is a hole in the cover that you kicked through. I guess mamma can find me a piece of cretonne that I can spread all over the bottom to hide the holes. And then, don't you remember, Sue, what a lot of old pictures there are in that big trunk, which were put up here when father bought so many new pictures at that sale? and some of those old ones are real pretty too, especially the engravings."

"And don't you remember the chromo with the winter in it, Johnny?"

"Oh, yes! that winter scene was pretty good: it represented the poet Whittier when he was a little boy, going to a country school."

"Oh, yes! I remember now," replied Sue; "and Mr. Whittier was in the

picture, when he was a little boy, and his little girl that loved him was there with a blue apron on. Let's get 'em right out, and look 'em over, and see which you will hang up."

"No," replied Johnny: "we'll go down and tell mamma our plans first, and ask her if we may have the curtains, and hang up the pictures."

Mrs. Le Bras was very much pleased when Johnny came down looking so animated and happy: she had begun to feel as if his pleasure was to be spoiled for the summer by the advent upon the scene of such a thoughtless and rude boy as Felix. She assented very willingly to all his plans, and said he could take any of the discarded things in the attic to furnish his room, and might select and arrange them without her superintendence; only stipulating that Sue was not to be allowed to touch any thing without his orders or permission. She said all the old curtains were in the lower drawer of the bureau in the attic, and Johnny could select which he pleased. As for a covering for the lounge, she would give him a piece of very pretty new cretonne which had been left over of some she got for curtains to Kate's room.

As it was Saturday morning, there was plenty of time for Johnny to get his room in order before the time for the sunset exhibition. Having charged Sue, again and again, not to ask his mother to come up until all was in readiness, and to give him warning if there was any danger of her making her appearance, he went to work with a will, allowing Sue to help him all she could, for the sake of her company, and because he saw that this kind of business pleased her greatly. By four in the afternoon, the room was finished; and a very attractive place it was. Johnny had opened all the windows, and thrown back the blinds, so that the great space was flooded with light, and as pleasant as out of doors. The breeze was so strong, however, since there was nothing to intercept it at that height, that Johnny was obliged to close all but the front windows.

"I know it will be cool here on the warmest day in summer," said Johnny, "because it is ever so much cooler here to-day than it is in any other part of the house. That isn't generally the way with attics: but then, this is different from an attic; it is larger, and has more windows, and the roof is different."

"If there is a very, very warm day, you can go out at the scuttle," remarked Sue.

"Oh! I'll tell you what the scuttle will be good for," replied Johnny: "we can go up there evenings, and see the stars splendidly. I shall call that my observatory. We will try it this evening."

The scuttle was in the little hall between the storeroom and Kate's room, and was reached by a kind of stair-ladder: there were several large panes of glass in it, which afforded sufficient light for the little hall-way.

"Now we will go down and get all the books I shall need," said Johnny.

Johnny's books were in one corner of Mr. Le Bras' large bookcase, which nearly filled one side of the sitting-room. When they reached the sitting-room, they found their father had returned from his office.

"I'm going to carry some of my books into my sky-room," said Johnny, "but I don't know what to keep them in: my table isn't large enough to hold any thing but my inkstand, pens, and pencils, and some paper for writing and drawing."

"Are there not some empty packing-boxes in the storeroom which we used when we moved here?" remarked his father.

"Yes."

"Take several of those which are of about the same size, and place them one above the other. If they are not quite firm enough, drive in a few nails. That will give you shelves for books and other things. Put some white paper on the bottom of the shelves, and a little light fancy paint in front, and on the top and sides, if you like."

"I wonder I did not think of that," replied Johnny; "for I have seen a very pretty bookcase which Dick Scott made out of boxes."

Johnny then began to take down some books from the shelves. First he took down four volumes of Jacob Abbott's "Science for the Young."

"I thought you had got through with those books long ago," remarked his father.

"No. I forget something in them sometimes, and then I want to look it up again; besides, I like to read parts of them over once in a while; and when I don't want to study, they are more interesting than my chemistries and philosophies, because there is a little story mixed in. I wish I could get some more just such books telling of things I haven't learned about."

"It is a pity there is no Mr. Abbott here now to write more books," said his father. "I'll tell you what you must do, Johnny: when you get old enough, you must write some similar books for young folks yourself, to cover the subjects Mr. Abbott left."

"But I sha'n't be a boy to be interested in such books then."

"Never mind," said his mother: "there will be ever so many more Johnnys to be interested, and it is pleasanter to give than to receive, you remember."

Johnny looked rather doubtful about that, but he said nothing. He took down his books upon chemistry, and philosophy, which were such as are used in high schools and academies, and a number of books upon other solid subjects, also a few story-books and a dictionary.

"What do you want of a dictionary in vacation?" asked his mother.

"When I am reading, I often come across a word which I do not understand: and then, I shall write considerably this vacation, and the dictionary will help my spelling; I intend to write a good many compositions, some of which I shall use

in school next year, which will save my time."

"But I don't think you ought to do schoolwork in vacation: you ought simply to enjoy yourself, or do manual labor, which will not tax your mind," said Mrs. Le Bras.

"But writing compositions don't tax my mind, unless I am in a hurry about something else: I shall just write the compositions in vacation for the fun of it, and then, in school-time, I can let them take the place of real work."

"That is a good idea," said Mr. Le Bras. "A little providence like that saves a good deal of the friction of working-time."

"Yes," said Johnny, "and friction is apt to produce fire."

His mother laughed.

"You mean by that," she said, "it is likely to make folks lose their patience and temper."

"Come, Sue, I guess I've got enough now," said Johnny: "if I haven't, I shall think of the others by degrees."

Sue held out her apron: Johnny put as many books in it as he thought she could carry easily, and piled up the remainder, and took them in his arms, with some assistance from his father in getting them well balanced.

"I think I will go up with you to see how your 'sky-room' looks," remarked Mr. Le Bras.

"Oh, no! don't!" said Johnny. "We're not ready to have you and mother come up yet. I'll tell you when we are ready."

"You mustn't come up till after supper," added Sue,—"not till sundown."

"You look out, Sue," said Johnny warningly, "or you'll let it all out before you know it!"

Sue looked back and laughed, as she walked off with her bulged-out apron.

The boxes were speedily arranged, the bottom of the shelves covered with white paper, and the books deposited upon them.

"When I get time, I will fasten and stain the boxes; but this will do at present," said Johnny, standing back to observe the effect.—"That looks quite like a bookcase, don't it?"

"It's just splendid," replied Sue. "And what shall we do now?"

"We will arrange the lounge and table and chairs, here near the front windows, in a space about as large as our sitting-room: we can have that for the in-doors, and then we can make believe that all outside of that square is out of doors, and have it to exercise in. I think I will call that the promenade."

"Then, let's get some chalk, and mark off the room, so that we can tell exactly where the room ends, and the promenade begins."

"Very well," replied Johnny, laughing: "that wouldn't be a bad plan. If you will run down and get one of my crayons, I will mark it off now. You can get the

yardstick too. While you are gone, I will be moving the furniture into the front part of the room."

The bookcase stood between the two front windows. Johnny moved the table up near the bookcase, and placed the sofa a little to the left of the left-hand window, with one end toward the front wall of the room. He then arranged the chairs and ottoman.

When Sue came back, she said a lounge ought to be against the wall, instead of extending out into the room.

"It is against the wall," replied Johnny: "it is against the crayon-wall we are to make for this side of our room."

"Why, that's so!" replied Sue, half laughingly and half wonderingly. "I forgot that three of the walls of the room were to be crayon-marks."

The room was soon chalked off very distinctly.

"That seems a good deal more like a room and a promenade than it did, don't it?" said Johnny.

"Yes," replied Sue: "I think I like walls that you can see right through, very well. I wish some of the walls down-stairs were like that, so we could see out into the back-yard."

"Let us go down in the yard now, and stay till supper-time," said Johnny: "we have been working hard all the afternoon, and I think I will romp with you now a while, if you want to; since you have been so good-natured about helping me, and keeping me company, in getting the room ready."

"Come, then! let's go right off!" exclaimed Sue, with delight.—"I'll be down in the yard before you!" and she ran off as fast as she could go, while Johnny followed more leisurely, meditating upon the pleasant respites he could take from Felix's society in his beautiful and commodious sky-room.

There chanced to be an unusually beautiful sunset that evening; and, when it was in its glory, Johnny invited his father and mother to come up and see the new apartment.

"There's going to be a free show for you," said Sue.

"Yes," said Johnny; "and it didn't cost any thing to get it up, either."

"No," added Sue: "it got itself up, and it'll do it almost every day this summer, without even being asked."

"O Sue!" whispered Johnny in her ear, "you'll let it out before we get up there, if you're not more careful."

When they entered the transformed attic, a beautiful scene was presented. The four large dormer windows were all open, and a flood of soft sunset-light filled the apartment. But best of all was the beautiful sky on all sides; for the room faced the west, and the sky all around was full of variously colored clouds, of various shades and degrees of brightness, from brilliant red and gold to delicate

shades of pearl, yellow, and violet, with the blue sky for a background.

"Well! this is glorious!" exclaimed Mr. Le Bras. "I did not know we had such a room in the house! Why! it is like discovering a gold-mine!"

"Don't you remember," replied Mrs. Le Bras, "that I said, when we first came here, and were putting away some things in the attic, that there was a beautiful view up here, and it was a great pity it could not be down-stairs?"

"I don't remember it," replied Mr. Le Bras. "I think, whenever I have been here, the blinds have been closed; and as I have always been to get something, or put something away, I never have thought of looking out of the windows."

"I have opened one of the blinds sometimes," replied Mrs. Le Bras, sitting down in the rocking-chair by one of the front windows, "and noticed how far the prospect extended; but I have never been here before at sunset-time. How very, very beautiful!"

"Why, yes! this is perfect fairyland!" said Mr. Le Bras, sitting down by the other front window, in the arm-chair, and looking out at the brilliant scene produced by the green landscape, with its blue river and purple hills and flaming sky.

Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras, upon looking around the interior, praised Johnny and his assistant very much for the neat and tasteful arrangement of the curtains, furniture, etc., and were greatly amused at the chalk-line dividing the room from the promenade. They remained until the stars began to come out, declaring it was too pleasant a place to leave, as long as any of the scenery was visible.

"You see, this house is on a hill, and above the houses about here, which are only two stories," said Mr. Le Bras, "and also above the trees in the park. You are a lucky boy, Johnny, to own a room like this for the summer, which you can have all to yourself: so I think we will say it is a pretty good offset for all the annoyance you are likely to experience from Felix."

"And I suppose you will let me in here once in a while, if I get too tired of Felix's nonsense?" remarked Mrs. Le Bras.

"Oh, yes! I will let any one in except Felix himself; and I will let him in for a little while, sometimes, if he will promise not to touch any of my things, or race about."

"You had better not give him much encouragement to come here," said Mr. Le Bras, "or he may tease you too often to let him in. I would not have him know any thing about the room, until he finds it out in some way himself."

"Yes, that will be the best plan," added Mrs. Le Bras: "it will save consider-

able questioning and wonderment, to say the least."

CHAPTER IV.
THE UNWELCOME GUEST.

Felix was the son of Mr. Le Bras' brother, who was a wholesale merchant in New York, and very rich. It was doubtful if Felix had ever been denied any thing which he wished; that is, if it could be bought. Among the rest of his possessions were a pony, a bicycle, and a boat; for Mr. Louis Le Bras had a summer residence on the shore.

Felix arrived with his father Wednesday afternoon. They drove up in a carriage, with quite a large trunk behind, which contained Felix's summer outfit. A bicycle also was strapped on over the trunk; and, when the visitors alighted, a large Newfoundland dog bounded out of the carriage. Felix was a handsome boy, with large brown eyes, and dark, curling hair. The dog was very black and glossy.

"So we have a third visitor?" said Mr. Frank Le Bras, after he and Mrs. Le Bras and the children had shaken hands with his brother and Felix.

"Oh, yes!" replied Mr. Louis Le Bras: "Felix will not go anywhere without Clyde."

"How long have you had Clyde?" inquired Johnny of Felix.

"About two weeks. Isn't he a fine old fellow? He cost thirty dollars."

"Do you like riding a bicycle pretty well?" asked Johnny, as the hackman took that article down.

"Well, I guess so! I don't walk hardly at all now, when I get where there are dirt-roads. You won't see much of me till I've explored all the country round here."

"Didn't you want to go to Europe?" inquired Sue.

"No, not with mother, 'cause she's so awful nervous, and scares at every thing; and then, father gave me a new gold watch for staying at home,—though I don't care much about it, now I've got it."

Felix took out the watch carelessly, and showed it to Johnny and Sue.

"That's ever so nice," said Sue. "Aren't you a lucky boy, Felix?"

"I don't know," replied Felix: "all I know is, I mean to have a good time wherever I am. Father, I guess I'll try this road on my bicycle before I go in."

"No," replied his father: "come in and visit a while first."

"No," returned Felix, vaulting upon the bicycle: "I'm just going round the park square. That's just a mile, isn't it, Johnny?"

"Yes," replied Johnny: "it's a quarter of a mile on each side."

"But supper is nearly ready," objected Mrs. Le Bras.

"Never mind: you needn't wait for me; I'll have my supper when I come back," returned Felix, shooting off up the road, followed by Clyde.

Felix's father was talking quite busily with his brother, without paying any further attention to Felix. But just as the young man was vanishing around the corner, he turned, and observed him.

"Why! I thought I told that boy he couldn't go," he said.

"Yes, you did," replied Mrs. Le Bras.

"There's no keeping track of him," said his father, with an air of resignation. "Well, I suppose boys must be boys! I shouldn't wonder if we used to bother our folks a good deal when we were boys, Frank."

"If we did, we got bothered in turn by our father and mother, if I recollect rightly," replied Mr. Le Bras. "I did not venture to disobey my father very often, and I had reason to remember it when I did. I had an idea your experience was about the same."

"Parents were more strict in those days; I don't know but I think they were too strict; I am certain I used to think so when I was a boy."

"I doubt if it would have been any better for us if our parents had been more indulgent," returned Mr. Le Bras, "and I am certain that it would have been very much worse for them. Having unruly children about is rather a doubtful blessing. By the way, Louis, you remember my stipulation, that, if Felix stays here, I shall insist upon strict obedience? I cannot possibly promise care and safe-keeping without that proviso. I suppose you have given him to understand what I expect?"

"Oh, yes! he understands, and that is all right. I hope you can teach him to mind. It will be a great favor to us if you will: his mother is in too poor health, and too fond of him, to cross him much; and I am not at home a great deal. To tell the truth, I would give any one a thousand dollars to teach that boy to behave himself: in fact, I would give more."

Mr. Frank Le Bras laughed at this remark, as if it were a very good joke. "I don't know of any way of teaching a boy to do well right along, Louis, without the proper kind of government continues right along until the boy is grown up,—unless, indeed, the boy were so remarkable that he might be taught to govern himself by his own reason and conscience; and such boys are very rare: in fact, I don't know as I ever saw such a boy. But I shall do the best I can by Felix, not only for his sake and yours, but for my own comfort and that of my household.

We shall not attempt to govern him while you are here, however."

"I shall be off on the eight o'clock train; so your authority will begin very soon. I can't tell you all how thankful I am that you have agreed to take charge of the young rogue. Of course we love him dearly, but even his mother is beginning to see that he is getting to be too much for us: I fancy her nervous disease is greatly aggravated by her worry over Felix."

They were sitting in the house by this time, and now Kate rang the supper-bell. Felix did not appear during supper-time, nor until past seven o'clock: then he came in with a very red face, accompanied by Clyde, who was panting, with his tongue out of his mouth.

"Where have you been?" inquired his father.

"Oh! I met a boy over by the park, and we went racing. We went up to the trotting-park, and tried the course. I guess I've got up an appetite for supper."

"You will find something on the table," said his aunt; "but, of course, you won't expect to have any thing hot, an hour after supper-time."

"I do at home," replied Felix, looking slightly disconcerted.

"But you must remember you are not at home," replied his father: "there is but one servant here, and you make an extra person in the family, at the best."

Felix sat down at the table, appearing rather out of sorts. Kate did not look very pleasant either, as she waited upon him: ordinarily, she would have had the table cleared and all the dishes washed before that time.

"Are we to have this kind of doings all the time?" she asked of Mrs. Le Bras, as the latter came into the kitchen of an errand.

"No, indeed!" replied Mrs. Le Bras: "this is the very last time, Katie; after this, if Felix is not here at meal-time, the table will be cleared, and nothing will be brought out for him but bread and butter. We shall give him to understand how it will be, and then it will be his own fault if he gets served that way."

When Mr. Louis Le Bras took his leave, he gave much good advice to Felix, and charged him to make as little trouble as possible.

"I sha'n't be any trouble," replied Felix: "I sha'n't be in the house but precious little, anyway. Clyde and I won't see much of the inside of the house till we've scoured all the region round, to begin with."

"But if you are scouring the country, how can your aunt and uncle take care of you?" replied his father. "You may get into all sorts of scrapes and dangers."

"I guess I'm old enough to take care of myself! I ain't a baby," replied Felix indignantly.

As the hack had just driven up to the door, and there was no time to spare, Mr. Le Bras shook hands all around, kissed Mrs. Le Bras and the children, said he wished he was a German so that he could kiss his brother too, as the gentlemen kissed each other in Germany, added at the last, "Now, you make that boy mind,

at all costs," sprang into the carriage, told the driver to hurry, and rode off, while Felix shouted after him,—

"Don't you forget, father, that I can take care of myself!"

Johnny and Sue then took Felix up to see his room, for he had not visited them since they had moved into their new house. It was a very pretty room, fourteen feet square, in the L over the kitchen, and had a charming view of the yard and the park beyond. It was Sue's room, but she was to sleep on a cot-bed in her mother's room while Felix staid; and she rather liked the change, because her mother's room looked out on the street, where she could see the passers-by.

Johnny's room was over the dining-room, and so next to Felix's, but only opened into the hall. The spare chamber was over the sitting-room.

"This will pass," said Felix, when Johnny and Sue called his attention to the various good points about the room. "It is about half as large as my room at home; but I don't care for that, nor that there isn't any bath-room or dressing-room out of it, 'cause I sha'n't be in my room but precious little, and I mean to go down to the river and bathe every day,—swim, I mean. I can swim like a fish,—since we've had our cottage down by the shore: I learned last season. By the way, father says we can all go down to the cottage if we want to: it's furnished, you know, and empty."

"Oh, I wish we could!" said Sue. "I'll go and ask mamma if we are going."

Sue ran off, while Felix opened his trunk and showed Johnny his new summer clothes, which were very fine; also his jointed fishing-rod and various other boyish possessions, which were recent acquisitions of which he had not yet tired, since they were all fresh from the stores, most of them being presents his mother had given him to reconcile him for being deprived of a voyage to Europe.

Presently Sue came back, saying it was not decided about the offer of the cottage being accepted: it depended upon whether her father could get away for a long vacation, for her mother said she should not go unless he was able to go too.

"But I shouldn't wonder if we did go," added Sue hopefully; "for mamma looked as though she rather thought father would be able to get away, and she said he could tell better in a few weeks."

"Now, what am I to do all this evening?" said Felix. "What's going on in this place, Johnny?"

"Not very much, that I know of," replied Johnny; "and as I make up all my amusements, or almost all of them, I shouldn't know as well what is going on as Harrison Brown would."

"Who is Harrison Brown?" inquired Felix with interest.

"He's a boy who lives on State Street, opposite the north side of the park," replied Johnny.

"Has he got a bicycle? and does he wear a blue suit with a little plaid in it?" inquired Felix.

"Yes," said Sue: "that's his new suit, and I think it's real pretty."

"Why, he's the boy that I raced with," continued Felix: "I guess I'll go right over and see him, and ask him what is going on. Can't you come along, Johnny?"

"I'll ask mother," replied Johnny doubtfully.

"Can't I go too?" asked Sue.

"You?" replied Felix. "What does a girl want to go round with boys for? and what do boys want girls going around with them for?"

"But I go 'most everywhere with Johnny," replied Sue, looking rather hurt.

"But Johnny is different from other boys," said Felix.

As Johnny had gone to ask his mother about going with Felix, he did not hear this remark. "But Belle Miner goes with her brother Alec, and Terry Scott goes with her brother Dick, and we all go together; and ever so many boys and girls I know of, that are not brothers and sisters, play together, and have real good times. I like to play with boys very much, when they are not too rough and hateful; and I can run as fast, and play as well, as any of them, at most things."

Felix laughed loud and long.

"But you can't go fishing," said he, "nor ride a bicycle."

"I could ride a tricycle," said Sue, "if I had one; and if I had one to ride, I could go fishing."

Johnny came back, saying his mother would like to see Felix in the sitting-room. So they all went down to hear what she had to say.

"We are not in the habit of allowing our children to go out in the evening, unless by especial invitation, or with us, or by our advice or consent: and of course, Felix, since we are to do by you just as we do by our own children, we cannot allow you any more liberty than they have; it would not be right."

"But I don't see what harm there could be in my just going a little way, to ask a boy a question."

"We shall not expect you to see the reasons for all our rules, any more than we expect Johnny and Sue to see them, and we cannot take time and pains to explain them to you; for very likely you would not understand them any better then, since many of them can only be understood by grown persons," replied Mrs. Le Bras mildly, continuing her sewing, and not seeming to pay very much attention to Felix, who was looking decidedly cross.

"I wish I hadn't agreed to come here," he said: "I don't think much of such strict rules. My father and mother are not so notional."

Mrs. Le Bras made no reply: she seemed to be very much absorbed in her sewing. Felix got into a rocking-chair on his knees, and began rocking it violently back and forth. Johnny wished he could get up to his sky-room. Sue spread a

newspaper on the floor, and, sitting down before it, began to cut a fine lady out of a colored fashion-plate, for a doll. Johnny took one of his books down, and turned over the pages mechanically; it was not the book he wanted, as that was in the sky-room; and he was afraid, too, that it would not be polite to read while Felix was unoccupied. But if Felix had not been there, he would have sat down with a book, and been happy, or amused himself in some other way.

"This is awful stupid!" said Felix.

"Here's an interesting story: don't you want to read it?" suggested Johnny. "It's about a family of children who lived up in Iceland."

"No! I hate books!" replied Felix: "they're awful stupid things. I never read if I can help it. I have more than all the reading I want at school; and I don't go to school when I don't want to, either."

Mrs. Le Bras smiled to herself.

"How often do you go to school, Felix?" she inquired.

"Two or three times a week. I go when I can't think of any thing else to do."

"Then, as you can't think of any thing else to do this evening, why not read a little while? that will help to pass away the time."

"No! I don't want to read! what do I care about folks in Iceland? It's summer now, and I want to know what folks are doing in summer."

"I've got a book that tells how some boys had a garden in summer, and sold vegetables enough to buy all the sleds and skates and caps and mittens they needed for the next winter," said Johnny.

"Oh, ho! I can have all such things without having a garden."

"But they couldn't, and it's real interesting to read how they managed their little farm."

"Farm? I thought you said it was a garden."

"It was such a large garden that they called it their farm: it was an acre of ground."

"How much is an acre?"

"You know how many acres there are in the park?"

"How should I know?"

"You know it is a quarter of a mile on each side, don't you?"

"What of that?"

"That makes a quarter of a mile square, don't it?"

"I don't know."

"And it makes a quarter of a square mile."

"Well, what of that?"

"You know how many acres there are in a square mile, don't you?"

"Of course I don't! Why should I?"

"Haven't you learned square measure at school?"

"Oh! I went past that long ago. I'm over in percentage."

"Then, you know that six hundred and forty acres make a square mile."

"No, I don't remember any thing about it. I don't expect to remember a thing after I've been past it a little while, and I never do: so I don't see what's the use of learning books at all."

"And if there are six hundred and forty acres in one square mile," continued Johnny, "in a quarter of a square mile there would be one-fourth of that, which is one hundred and sixty acres."

"Why, if there are that many acres in the park, one acre wouldn't be any thing," replied Felix. "It isn't a large park at all."

Johnny laughed as he replied, "Isn't our yard of pretty good size?"

"Yes."

"Well, our yard hasn't a quarter of an acre in it, I am sure. Let's measure it to-morrow, and see just what part of an acre there is in it."

"How can you tell?" replied Felix.

"Why, don't you know?" replied Johnny.

"No. How did you learn how?"

"Why, by studying square measure at school."

"I guess your schools are different from ours, then: I didn't learn any thing but the table, and how to do a few sums; and just as soon as I had learned that, I forgot all about it!—I say, I can't stand this! I'll go and call Clyde in, and have a good time with him."

Clyde had been in so many times, putting his muddy paws upon the furniture and her delicate dress, that Mrs. Le Bras was dismayed at this announcement.

"I think you will enjoy yourself better with Clyde out on the platform," she suggested.

"Come, Johnny, let's go out, then," said Felix. "I'll show you some of Clyde's tricks. He's a trained dog."

"Can't I go?" said Sue.

"Yes, come along if you want to; but I ain't used to having girls tagging me around."

At first Sue was a little provoked, and thought she would not go; but she was so fond of romping, that she soon followed the boys, saying to her mother,—

"Johnny will have to romp now, whether he wants to or not."

"Poor Johnny!" sighed Mrs. Le Bras.

Presently Mr. Le Bras came in; and his wife told him how restless and out of humor Felix had been, and said she could not imagine what they were to do with him, especially evenings, if they tried to be at all particular where he was, and what company he kept.

"We must manage it somehow," replied Mr. Le Bras thoughtfully; "and I cannot have you and Johnny fretted either."

"I don't know but I had better go to the cottage, whether you can go or not," continued Mrs. Le Bras; "for then he and Clyde will wear out and soil Louis' furniture instead of ours. Clyde has nearly ruined my dress already, by jumping up upon me in his good-natured way; and I have been around trying to get stains off of the upholstering of the chairs. As for Sue, I cannot pretend to dress her up at all nicely while the dog is around; and I know it frets Johnny very much to have the mud-stains on his new drab suit. If we were at the seaside, the children could dress in common clothes, and there would be more harmless outdoor amusements."

"It will never do for you to take the whole charge of that boy: it would make you ill. He must be under the eye of a man; I will see to him: and as for Clyde, I will soon settle him. I hope to be able to leave my business a while by the first of August, and then we will go to the cottage: by coming back for a few days at a time, now and then, I think I can stay some weeks; and whenever I come back, I shall bring Felix with me, unless he has greatly improved."

Just then Johnny came in, and asked his father if he would let him take his large tape-measure.

"What do you want it for?" replied Mr. Le Bras.

"I want to show Felix how to find out what part of an acre there is in our yard."

"Hasn't he learned enough arithmetic to do that himself?"

"No, sir: he's been over as far as I have, but he says he don't know any thing about square measure."

"I'll warrant!" replied Mr. Le Bras, taking the measure from one of the drawers under the library-shelves, and handing it to Johnny.

When Johnny reached the garden again, he found Felix on the roof of the shed.

"Come down, and help me measure, Felix," he said.

"No," replied Felix: "I'll sit up here, and see you do it."

"Oh! that's the kind of a surveyor you'll be," replied Johnny; "you'll survey from a distance: but this is ever so much more interesting. Come, Sue, you hold the measure for me, and I'll measure the width of the yard first. Stand back there, and keep the measure close to the fence; and when I say 'Come,' bring it to me."

As it was getting pretty dark, Felix could not see much except Johnny's and Sue's forms as they moved about. Having measured the width of the yard, Johnny measured the length.

"It is three times as long as it is broad," he announced.

"I could have told that without measuring," returned Felix scornfully.

"Arithmetic isn't of any use at all."

"You had better come down before it gets any darker," said Johnny, "or you may fall."

"Fall! Oh, ho! I guess not! I ain't a baby."

"I'm going in now, to reckon this out," said Johnny. "Seventy-five feet wide, and two hundred and twenty-five feet long, or twenty-five yards wide, and seventy-five yards long. It will be easiest to find the square yards."

"How do you find the square yards," demanded Felix.

"Oh! I know that," remarked Sue; "just multiply the yards long by the yards wide: don't you, Prof.?"

"Of course," replied Johnny.

"'Of course!'" mimicked Felix. "Well, I guess I'll come down now, since the prospect isn't as good as it might be."

Johnny went in to get a pencil and a piece of paper: Felix began to come down from the roof by swinging himself off, and letting his feet rest upon the slender railing that passed along the outer edge of the platform. Just as he was putting his feet down, Clyde jumped upon him; and in trying to extricate himself from the dog, and touch the railing at the same time, he missed the railing in the darkness, and fell down, giving an impatient exclamation of pain as he reached the ground.

Sue was frightened, and ran in with the announcement that Felix had fallen off of the roof. Mr. Le Bras went out immediately, followed by Johnny and Mrs. Le Bras. Felix had arisen, but was limping up the steps, and half crying with pain. "Oh, dear!" said he, "I've sprained my ankle awfully; so I'm about sure I can't ride my bicycle for a week; and then I'd like to know what I'm going to do, staying around in the house all the time!"

Johnny's heart sank: he had counted on Felix's being off on his bicycle a good part of the next day, and what should he do if he were to be at home all the time expecting him to keep him company. Would he be able to enjoy his beautiful sky-room after all?

"Perhaps it is not as bad as you imagine, Felix," said his aunt encouragingly, while his uncle helped him up the steps and into the house; but the boy limped badly, and there was an expression of genuine pain upon his face. Mr. Le Bras seated him in an easy-chair, and placed another chair for him to rest his foot upon, while Mrs. Le Bras got the arnica to bathe the ankle. After the ankle had been bathed and bandaged, and the slippers which Sue had found in Felix's trunk substituted in place of shoes, to accommodate the swollen foot, Felix began to exclaim desolately at his forlorn condition. "I can't even do any thing to amuse myself this evening," he said; "and it's no use to go to bed, because my foot pains me so that I couldn't sleep, even if it were not early in the evening."

"Sit up here by the table," replied Johnny, "and let's figure out what part of an acre there is in the yard. Here's an extra pencil and sheet of paper. It will be real fun: let's see who gets it right first."

"It won't be any fun at all," replied Felix; "just as if there is any fun in figuring! you might as well say there is fun in going to school and studying old dry books."

Johnny made no reply. He had begun to cipher.

"What are you going to do first?" asked Felix languidly.

"Why, multiply the length by the breadth in yards, to get the square yards in the garden."

"What next?"

"Why, then reduce an acre to square yards, so as to know how many square yards there are in an acre."

"I can do that," said Felix, looking slightly interested; "but I never could see what use there was in it, and I don't see now."

"Come and do it, then," said Johnny coaxingly.

Felix hopped to the table slowly, on one foot, and sat down in the chair Sue placed for him; while Johnny brought the other chair for his foot.

"How many square yards were there?" said Felix, taking the paper and pencil, and resting the paper on a book he took from the table.

"You do it all yourself," replied Johnny; "seventy yards long, you know, and twenty-five yards wide."

Presently Johnny stopped figuring.

"Have you got through?" asked Felix.

"No: I'm waiting for you to catch up."

"1,875 square yards," said Felix.

"Yes; and now reduce an acre to square yards."

After figuring a few minutes, Felix announced 4,840 square yards in an acre. "What do you do next?" he said.

"One yard, then, would be what part of an acre?" asked Johnny.

After a moment's hesitation, Felix said, "1/4840 of an acre."

"Then, 1,875 square yards would be how many 4,84Oths of an acre?"

"Why," replied Felix, after a little further consideration, "1875/4840 of an acre."

"Now let's reduce that fraction as low as we can, by dividing both terms by five, and what does it give us?"

"375/968 of an acre."

"Now, is that about a fourth of an acre, or about a third of an acre?"

Felix looked at the figures a moment, and then said, "It's a good deal more than a quarter of an acre, and—it's more than a third of an acre too."

"Yes, it's a little more than a third of an acre: there's more ground in our house-lot than I thought there was. You know now about how large those boys' farm was,—nearly three times as large as our yard. Now let's see exactly how many roods and rods and yards and feet and inches there are."

"How do you do that?" asked Felix, looking very blank.

"Why, reduce your 1,875 square yards in the garden, to higher denominations."

"Oh, yes!" replied Felix, brightening: "I've done those sums lots of times, and those denominate fractions like 1875/4840, but I never could see any sense to it before. Let's see,—what do you divide by first? Oh! I remember, 30¼."

Felix figured away bravely; but when he gave his result, it differed considerably from Johnny's. After some expressions of impatience, he looked it over, and, with some assistance from Johnny, found his mistake; their answers then agreed; and he read the result aloud, with something of an air of pride in his achievement,—

"1 rood, 21 square rods, 29 square yards, 6 square feet, 108 square inches. And that's the first time I ever saw any sense in square measure, and all those things. I thought arithmetic was just to keep boys busy in school, and I could always find enough to do without it. I tell you, I've played more pranks on the teachers! and I didn't get found out very often neither; and when I did, they didn't dare punish me, for fear my folks would make a fuss; and they would too."

"It is eight o'clock now; and I always read to our children for an hour or so before they go to bed," said Mrs. Le Bras, "or have them read aloud to me."

"Let us all take turns to-night," said Johnny. "You or father begin."

"Very well," said Mrs. Le Bras, taking a book from one of the library-shelves. "We are to begin our new book to-night, which is fortunate on Felix's account."

"It'll be awful stupid, I know," said Felix: "all books are. I wish books had never been invented, and then a fellow would not have to go to school at all."

"You begin, Frank," said Mrs. Le Bras.

Mr. Le Bras put down his paper, and began to read in the book. It was an account of a pedestrian excursion made by two boys in the Alps: they were German boys, and this was the way they spent their summer vacation.

Felix did not intend to listen to the reading: he had begun to draw comic pictures on his sheet of paper; he was trying to represent himself and Clyde, as he was falling from the roof; his attempt, however, was not very artistic. But soon he became very much interested in the story, and sat quite still, listening. Mr. Le Bras, after reading about fifteen minutes, passed the book to Mrs. Le Bras. She read about the same length of time, and then passed the book to Felix. Felix said at first that he did not like to read aloud, and would have passed the book to Johnny. But his uncle said, "No, Felix, I want to hear you read;" and Felix, who

stood rather in awe of his uncle Frank, did not like to disobey him. He made so many mistakes, and mixed his words up so badly by reading too fast, that Sue was about to say she could not understand his reading, when her mother shook her head at her.

When Johnny's turn came, he read remarkably well,—so much so, that Felix felt quite ashamed of his own reading, which he knew was not good, although he did not know exactly what was the matter with it, except that he could not pronounce all the words. Sue read exceedingly well for a little girl,—very much better than Felix.

"It is nine o'clock now," said Mrs. Le Bras at length, "and we must put the book aside until to-morrow night."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Felix: "we are at the most interesting part now."

But Mrs. Le Bras explained that they never read more than an hour in this way; and, as she said this, she replaced the book on the shelf, remarking that it was time for the children to go to bed.

"I never go to bed till I get ready," replied Felix, "and generally I sit up until ten."

"What time do you rise in the morning?" inquired his uncle.

"Most any time,—about eight generally."

"We breakfast at half-past seven," replied his aunt: "so you see you will need to go to bed earlier than you do at home."

Mrs. Le Bras then bathed Felix's ankle again with the arnica, and Mr. Le Bras said he would help him up to his room.

So ended the first day of Felix's visit. The next morning Felix's ankle was so badly swollen that it was evident bicycle-riding was out of the question for the present.

"I wish now," said he, "that I had brought my pony and dog-cart; but I was tired of them at home."

"Where are they?" asked Johnny.

"They're at our summer place, with the other horses and carriages. Oliver has gone down there to take care of the horses and things while father is gone."

"If we go to the cottage, can I ride in your dog-cart?" asked Sue.

"Yes, if you want to; it's just fit for girls: but give me a bicycle or a boat. We've got a sail-boat; but father won't trust me without Oliver goes, and Oliver hates to go sailing with boys. I've got a row-boat of my own."

After breakfast, it was discovered that Clyde was missing. He had been put in the summer kitchen for the night, and the door had been left open. The whole household called him, and searched for him, except Mr. Le Bras; but nothing could be heard or seen of him. A sudden suspicion flashed upon the mind of Mrs. Le Bras; and she said, in a low tone, to her husband, "Do you know where Clyde

is?"

"The fewer questions you ask me, the better," he replied; and she said no more.

"If he is not found by to-night," said Felix, "I shall have an advertisement put in the paper."

"That would be of no use," replied Mrs. Le Bras; "since his name, you say, was on his collar, with the words, 'Owned by F. Le Bras.' As your uncle is the only man by the name of Le Bras in town, and F. is his first initial, any one who found him accidentally would bring him here."

"While, if he was taken intentionally from the shed during the night, as I have no doubt he was, the person who took him does not mean to return him," added Mr. Le Bras.

"Then, I must have another dog," replied Felix.

"Very well," said his uncle: "if you do not find Clyde by the time we go to the seaside, you shall have another; but I think, while you are in town, you can get on very well without a dog, provided Clyde does not find his way back."

"He would have woke us all up if the thief had not muzzled him," said Felix.

"I presume he was muzzled," replied Mr. Le Bras. "This is a bad neighborhood for dogs; I have no idea that you could keep a dog safe here a week; there is a great prejudice in this neighborhood against dogs."

Mr. Le Bras then turned the conversation by saying to his wife, "You remember Pierre was to stay here while his folks are away?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Le Bras: "I am quite willing he should come at any time; he makes scarcely any trouble at all."

"Trouble!" exclaimed Sue: "I think he makes a great deal of pleasure."

"So do I," said Johnny. "When is he coming?"

"Week after next, I believe," replied Mr. Le Bras, taking his hat, and going toward the door. "His father and mother have decided to spend the rest of the summer at the White Mountains, on account of his father's health: he is suffering seriously from malaria."

The next thing was, what was to be done with Felix that day, since he was contented with nothing but lively outdoor amusements. Johnny was too polite and kind-hearted to leave him to his own slender devices, while he was in such a helpless condition; but he thought sadly of the quiet and beauty of the sky-room,

which he had not been able to visit since Felix arrived.

CHAPTER V.
COMPROMISES.

"How will you amuse yourself to-day, Felix?" asked Johnny, as they walked aimlessly into the sitting-room. Johnny was thinking to himself, "I wish school was not out, and then there would not be so much time in which I should have to think of being polite to Felix, instead of going about the things I like to do myself, and which he don't care any thing at all about."

"Oh! I don't know, I'm sure," replied Felix, yawning: "can't you think up something? I know it's going to be as stupid as can be. I wish I had insisted on going to Europe."

"I know what I would do, if I was only tall enough," said Sue: "I'd try to ride Felix's bicycle myself. I think it must be great fun."

This made Felix laugh. "It would be good as a play to see you try," he said; "I just wish you could; it would give us some fun to see you wobble about on it, and scream every time you thought it was going to fall over."

"Why don't you have Johnny try?" suggested Sue; "it would be pretty near as much fun; only Johnny wouldn't scream, if he did fall over; he never screams at any thing."

"That's an idea," said Felix. "Yes, Johnny, you try the bicycle: it's great fun to see a beginner."

Now, the truth was, Johnny had for some time been wishing he had a bicycle, although he had not as much as hinted this desire to his father or mother; since he belonged to a society of boys and girls who called themselves "Independents," because they had pledged themselves not to spend any money for amusement, etc., which they had not earned themselves. Johnny wore the badge of the society, and had taken great pleasure in earning the not very large amount of money he needed for his chemicals and other trifling expenses, by carrying papers, and doing various other little odd jobs which came in his way. Indeed, he had got to be the great errand-boy of the neighborhood, because it had come to be understood that he was willing to make himself useful for a very reasonable remuneration. His father and mother had not discouraged this endeavor, because Johnny was inclined to read and study too much, and any thing which

would divert his mind out of doors in healthful exercise was beneficial to him. But as for earning enough to buy a bicycle, of course that was beyond Johnny's present abilities as an Independent.

"Would you be willing that I should try it?" replied Johnny.

"Why, of course! You may hurt yourself, but you can't hurt the bicycle; and if you did, I could have it mended or get another before my ankle gets well."

"You must ask mother, Johnny," said Sue, who began to look rather sober over the possibility of Johnny's getting hurt.

Mrs. Le Bras was just entering the room.

"May I try Felix's bicycle, mother?" asked Johnny, with a wistful look.

"Why, yes," she said, "if you can try it in a safe way: you will have to have some one hold it for you."

"I'll hold it, ma'am," said Kate, who was clearing off the table in the dining-room: "I'm very strong in my arms."

"The platform will be a grand good place to mount," said Felix. "You can step up on the railing, and get right on: you can't get on as I do, very well, until you get used to it."

"Come right out now, before I wash my dishes," said Kate.

"But you must promise, Johnny, that if think there is any danger, and ask you to get down, you will obey me at once," said Mrs. Le Bras: "I am almost sorry I said you could try, before your father came home."

They all went out on the platform; and Johnny brought the bicycle out of the shed, and leaned it up against the railing of the platform, near the steps on which Kate was standing. Kate came out, and held the wheel with a firm grip, while Johnny stepped on the railing, and got upon the seat.

"Now, Katie," said Johnny, "just help me wheel it out, where I can balance it."

Kate cautiously pulled the machine away from the platform; while Johnny placed his feet firmly on the pedals, and turned the wheel slowly at first, while Kate was holding it. "Let go now, Katie," he said.

"Shall I?" asked Kate doubtfully, looking at Mrs. Le Bras.

"No, no!" cried Sue: "he'll fall if you do, I know he will!"

"I am afraid so too," said Mrs. Le Bras. "We don't want two boys with sprained ankles, Johnny."

"But I think I can keep my balance," replied Johnny; "and of course I can't learn to ride while Katie is holding the wheel still."

"Oh, let go of it!" said Felix. "I don't believe he would fall; anyway, he can jump off: he'll only waver around a little, but he's got to do that before he learns."

"Move it over gently, Katie," said Mrs. Le Bras.

Kate tried to do this; but in moving her hands to turn the wheel, Johnny,

who was working the pedals, eluded her, and sailed off into the garden. After he had gone a little way, the bicycle wavered to the left. Sue shrieked; Kate rushed forward with outstretched arms; and Mrs. Le Bras called out, "Jump off, Johnny!" But Johnny quickly recovered his balance, and went bravely on down the garden-walk.

"I knew he wasn't going to fall off," said Felix. "He's getting on all right."

Johnny experienced a slight difficulty in turning around the walk at the foot of the garden, but performed that feat without falling, and arrived safely at the platform amid hearty congratulations, and loud clapping of hands.

"I knew that boy could do any thing he undertook," said Kate admiringly; for she was very fond of Johnny.

"All that is necessary," said Johnny, "is to preserve the centre of gravity."

Johnny then took a more extensive tour, going around the house, and making another circuit of the yard.

"I guess I can try the street now," he said: "I might as well get really used to it while I am about it. I don't go very straight yet: but there are ever so many beginners who go on the street; I see them almost every day."

"Yes," replied Sue: "you go better than Walter Cross now, and he's been trying ever so long."

So they all went out to the front-door, to see how the novice would succeed there. The sequel was, that Johnny rode out of sight, and left them gazing into vacancy.

"If that boy don't beat all!" said Kate. "Law, ma'am, he'll be on the race-course before we know it."

"That is a good joke!" said Mrs. Le Bras, laughing: "our professor on the race-course! Aren't you afraid you have lost your bicycle, Felix?"

"No," replied Felix: "this is prime! for uncle will have to get Johnny a bicycle now, and then we can ride everywhere together, when my ankle gets well; for by that time he can ride capitally, I'll bet."

Johnny came back in about half an hour, quite flushed with success and exercise, and looking very animated.

"I surprised the boys I met," said he. "I met Alec and Fred walking together, and they said, 'Oh, you've got a bicycle too! Now you must go to ride with us.' They were a good deal disappointed when I said it wasn't my own."

"You've got to have one," said Felix: "I'm going to tell uncle Frank so this noon!"

"No," replied Johnny. "I can't buy one,—they cost too much: but perhaps I can hire one while you are here, sometimes; I know a boy who rents his for so much an hour, when he don't want to use it himself."

The bicycle was put away; and then Johnny, who had enjoyed his success

and the ride very much, began to feel grateful to Felix for letting him take it, and for saying he could use it every day until his ankle got well. It no longer seemed such a heavy task to think up some amusement for his cousin. Mrs. Le Bras had sat down at the sitting-room window with her sewing. Johnny stole up to her, while Felix was whittling into the waste-basket, with his back turned that way, and whistling rather drearily. "Mother," said he, "I have a mind to ask Felix to come up and see the sky-room."

"Then," said his mother, in a whisper too low for Felix to notice it, "you must not blame any one if you are not able afterwards to have it to yourself."

"No; but I'll make a bargain with him about it."

"Do as you please, only don't get fretted over the consequences."

Felix was trying to cut out the deck of a boat.

"Where is your boat?" asked Johnny.

"I thought I'd make the deck first: I haven't got the right piece of wood for the boat. Have you any thick blocks of wood?"

"No, but I can get some. Richard Scott is a great friend of the man who has charge of the wood-working room at the brass-works, and the man gives him any odd pieces of wood he wants, and lets him use the machinery too: he could cut out your boat in a very short time, with a circular saw and other machines."

"I wish I could get him to do it, then: I'll pay him for it. What I like to do, is to rig a ship: I can't make the hull very well."

"If you will let me take your bicycle again, this afternoon, I will go down and see Dick about it."

"Of course you can have the bicycle whenever you want it, till my ankle gets well."

"You didn't know I had a room all to myself. I have a room where no one can come in unless I tell them they may: my father gave it to me to read and study in."

"What a dismal place it must be!—I guess I'll keep on with this deck, and then you can take it down and tell Dick I want the hull made of about that size."

"No, it isn't a dismal room at all: it is the pleasantest room in the house, I think."

"Oh! you'd think a room was pleasant if it just had some books and bottles in it, and an old mortar and pestle, and a lot of such trash."

"I was going to say that if you want to come in and see it some time, you can ask me, and I will unlock it for you. I shall be in there a good deal of the time, probably; so, if you miss me, you will know where I am, and can come up if you want to. Of course I will let you in, if I am not very busy indeed."

"So it's up-stairs, is it? Is it what you call 'the spare room'?"

"No: it's an unfinished part of the French roof."

"Ho! It's up in the attic, is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I guess you won't find me troubling you much up in the attic this hot weather: you must like to read, to go up there to do it! When you get a room down-cellar, let me know, and perhaps I'll pay you a visit once in a while."

So it did not seem very likely that Johnny's generous disclosure would cost him very dear, at present at least. But how to get away from Felix was still a question; although sitting around, and seeing him whittle, and hearing him fret about his ankle, was not very delightful employment. He had proposed, too, that, as soon as he finished the deck, Johnny should assist him in writing an advertisement to have put in the paper, in case Clyde did not appear by the next day. Johnny finally took a book from the bookcase, and sat down to read.

"Bother your book!" said Felix. "Why don't you talk?"

"I don't see as there is any thing in particular to say."

"Who wants you to say any thing in particular? There! I've got that old deck done, I hope! What's your old book about?"

"It's about those boys and their one-acre farm."

"Haven't you read that about a thousand times before?"

"I have read it twice."

"And I don't believe it's fit to read half a time."

"If you want me to, I'll read a little of the first chapter aloud, so that you can see how you like it."

"Fire away, then! Only stop when I tell you to, for I know I can't stand much of it."

Johnny began to read, in a clear, expressive tone, while Felix picked up one of the pine sticks he had laid on the floor, and began to whittle a mast. Pretty soon the shavings began to fall almost anywhere except into the basket; and Sue, who was playing with her dolls in the corner, said, "Look out, Felix! your shavings are falling over everywhere."

"Bother the shavings!" replied Felix, seeming to notice them for the first time, and getting down to pick them up. "I don't believe they ever spaded over a whole acre of ground in any such time as that. Just read that over.—Oh! I thought you said in one hour. I mean to have father let me have an acre of ground by the cottage next season, and go down early, and see what I can do with it."

"But you have all the money you want without earning it," said Sue.

"That's so,—I forgot that; but I just wish my father was a poor man. I'll bet I could do as well as either of those boys. Go on now: let's see what they did next."

The morning had advanced considerably, and yet Felix had not asked Johnny to stop; although the masts were finished, and the shipbuilder was ly-

ing on the floor with his head on a hassock, for lack of any further employment. Johnny's throat ached with reading so long, and at last he felt obliged to say,—

"My throat is getting tired: let's put the book up now, until some other time."

"No: go on a little farther; just finish up that chapter, so you'll know where you left off."

"Stop a few moments, and rest, Johnny, and then, if Felix wants you to, you can finish the chapter," suggested Mrs. Le Bras, giving a significant glance towards Felix, which was intended for Johnny's benefit. Johnny looked, and saw that Felix's eyes were closed. Johnny put down the book, and in a few moments it was evident his audience was sound asleep. Johnny immediately rose softly, and left the room: he went into the back entry, and then ran up-stairs with light bounds to the sky-room. He opened all the windows; and the breeze, which was scarcely perceptible below, began to blow in very freshly. Johnny got one of his philosophies, and sat down by one of the front windows to read. He did not lock the door, since Felix had expressed himself as disinclined to pay him any calls. There was no danger of visits from any other source, for Sue understood that Johnny was not to be disturbed without permission. After reading in that book a while, he took down another, still leaving the first open upon the table. After consulting the second book, he took down the dictionary, and consulted that. While he was still in the midst of his researches, he was startled by a loud voice behind him.

"Well! I say! This isn't so bad, is it? Let's call this aboard ship, with the sky for sea; 'cause you can't see any land up here, except off at a distance as you do on the water. But I'd like to know if this is how you lock yourself in?"

"I didn't think of any one's coming up," replied Johnny, looking blankly at the open door. "But that's all right," he added, smiling. "I'm not very busy now: I've got about through with my studying."

"What are you studying?"

"I am studying about heat and light."

"What can you learn about those things, I'd like to know? When it's light, it's light; and when it's hot, it's hot; and when it isn't either of them, it's dark and cold."

"If folks didn't know any more about heat and light than that, you would have to go without a good many things you have now; for instance, there wouldn't be any machine-shops and railroads, and you couldn't have your picture taken."

"Why not?" said Felix.

"I can't tell you very well to begin with, any more than you could learn the back part of the arithmetic before you had studied fractions. But here is a

magnifying-glass: we'll use it for a sun-glass."

As Johnny spoke, he placed a piece of white paper on the window-sill where there was a patch of sunshine, and, taking a magnifying-glass from the stand, held it above the paper in such a manner as to bring the rays to a focus.

"That is a regular sun-glass," said Felix: "I have had one many a time. It will burn the paper in a minute."

"It is something like a sun-glass," replied Johnny, "because it is a double convex lens."

"What do you mean by a double convex lens?"

"I'll show you in a moment."

Just then the paper began to burn, and Johnny removed the glass.

"Why didn't you let it go on burning?" said Felix.

"Because, you see, it was blackening the paint on the sill, and might have burned into the wood if I had kept the glass there. Now, what made the paper burn?"

"Why, you held the glass so that it made a focus, and that made the paper burn."

"But why was there what you call a focus? and why did that make the paper burn?"

"I never thought any thing about that," replied Felix, looking a little confused. "Do you know the reason?"

"Oh, yes! I knew that the first time I ever saw a sun-glass: my father told me. Just look at the shape of the glass on both sides; it's convex, you see; that is, it rounds out toward the centre. The rounding of the glass causes the rays of light to strike it obliquely everywhere except in the very centre; and when a ray enters a transparent surface obliquely, or comes out of it obliquely, it is bent out of its course in a particular manner,—it would take too long to tell you exactly in what manner, although I can lend you a book that will show you exactly,—and in passing through this convex lens, the rays are all bent towards a point at a little distance from the glass, and exactly opposite the centre of it; so that, if you hold any thing that will burn easily exactly at that point where the rays all join together, their united heat is sufficient to burn the article. I know exactly why each side is made convex, and why the glass is so much thicker in the middle; but it would take a long time to explain it to you, although you could read about it all in fifteen minutes in one of those volumes of 'Science for the Young,' there on the shelf. Any time you want to look it up, I will show you the place."

"No: I don't want to be bothered with reading it. I guess what you've told me will do."

Johnny then held the glass over the paper again.

"The focus is the gathering together, or concentration, of the rays of light;

and as every ray of the sun has heat in it, the concentration of the heat of all the rays at that point makes the paper burn."

"Then, the larger the glass,"—

"The convex lens, you mean," said Johnny.

"Yes: the larger the lens, the more rays of the sun would be brought together at the focus, and the more heat there would be?"

"Of course."

"Then, if I had a real big convex lens in my room, in front of the window, I could sit in the focus of it, in the winter, and keep warm without any fire."

"You could keep too warm, perhaps; for you know a sun-glass will burn your hand: but even if the focus would be just right on a winter day, the light would be too bright for your eyes; and sometimes the sun wouldn't shine in at your window, and you would get very tired of sitting in one place. Besides, a convex lens of that size would cost a great deal more than a very nice stove and ever so much coal. So I guess convex lenses will never take the place of wood and coal, which are the best provisions the sun has made for warming people, that we know of yet, when it is not nearly enough over their heads to warm them itself, or when its rays are shut out by bad weather."

"I don't see what the sun has to do with wood and coal," replied Felix, sitting down by the table, and holding the magnifying-glass over Johnny's books and various other objects on the table.

"Why, the sun has stored up a lot of its heat in wood and coal, and all those things which we call combustibles."

"Come, now! none of your fooling," said Felix, staring at Johnny incredibly: "there isn't one bit of heat in wood or coal till you burn them."

Johnny began to laugh.

"Why, of course they are not hot until they begin to burn; if they were, you couldn't say that the heat was stored up; it would be escaping all the time: and then, wouldn't it be dreadful to have the trees hot instead of making a nice cool shade? and how could the miners get the coal if it were hot? and how could we carry fuel about from place to place? and we should have to be made like salamanders, if every thing around us that the sun had put heat into was hot: we couldn't sit at this table, or in these chairs, or handle these books; and the floor would burn our feet, and our clothes would feel hot."

"My clothes do feel hot," said Felix, beginning to laugh, also, at Johnny's vivid picture of what would be if the sun had not locked its stored heat up so coolly and comfortably for our use.

"It isn't your clothes that are hot, though, unless your body has heated them, or you have been sitting or standing in the sun; it is you who are warm, and your clothes keep the heat that comes from your body from passing freely

into the air: your clothes themselves are not any hotter than they would be if they were in an ice-chest; that is, I mean the heat that the sun has stored in your clothes would be every particle there if your clothes were kept next to ice."

"I'd like to know, now, how you make all that nonsense out?"

"Heat is force: in one sense, the heat of the sun is the force of the sun. Now, when things are growing, the force of the sun goes into them in some way, and makes them take carbon out of the air, and hydrogen out of the water in the ground, and from the rain and dew: and just exactly as much heat or force as the sun has put into a tree or plant, or any thing else, can be got out of it by causing it to burn; that is, making the carbon and hydrogen contained in it, unite with the oxygen in the air.

"I don't wonder the boys call you professor," said Felix: "I'd like to know how you ever got to know so much about every thing. What you say is a great deal harder to believe than fairy-stories: I guess I'll go to believing fairy-stories."

Johnny laughed again.

"Because some very strange things are true, that is no reason every thing strange should be true, or why some things should be true that wouldn't be so very strange. Do you like fairy-stories?"

"Yes, I like them as well as any thing: I've never read many stories but fairy-tales. Story-books are all lies; and if I'm going to read lies, I'd rather read some good big ones."

"I don't think story-books are all lies. I don't think that story about the boys and their farm is all a lie."

"Do you suppose there were two just such boys, and that they had just such a farm, and did just as those boys did?"

"No: I think very likely that was not all true, and I don't much care whether it was or not: but I know there might be two such boys, and that they might do just as is described; and that makes the story interesting, and a good deal more so than a story might be about two other boys with every thing told exactly as it was and happened. But I don't like fairy-stories, because they couldn't be true, and so are not like any thing I am interested in. If there ever was a fairy, I should like very much to hear one described, even although this particular fairy was only a made-up one. I should say, 'I have learned how a fairy might look and act, which is a good deal as real fairies do look and act.'"

"I like a good fairy-story, anyhow: only I don't see why the fairies can't be men instead of women; men-fairies could do a great deal more wonderful things than women-fairies."

Johnny thought to himself that Felix was much too large a boy to care for fairy-stories, and to know nothing about books of a more mature description; for Felix was nearly fourteen,—a year older than Johnny, and also taller and broader.

"Suppose you tell us how it is that this glass magnifies these letters so much," said Felix, after a little pause.

At that instant Sue entered the room, saying,—

"Why! you let Felix in the very first time he came up, didn't you? That's funny enough! But dinner is ready, and papa has come, and Katie is going to ring the bell before we come down, if we don't hurry; and you know papa don't like to have us late."

"I'll explain about the magnifying some other time, then, Felix," said Johnny; and they all went down-stairs. Johnny forgot to lock his door when he went out. And when they reached the next floor, Sue reminded him of it.

"Never mind," replied Johnny: "I guess there won't any one go up before I do."

As soon as they entered the dining-room, Felix said to his uncle, who was just sitting down at his place,—

"Uncle Frank, Johnny's got to have a bicycle right off: he's been riding mine around finely this morning, and he likes it ever so much."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Le Bras. "Is that so, Johnny?"

"Part of it is so; it's so that I rode on Felix's bicycle, and that I like it: but I haven't got to have one right off, because, in the first place, I don't suppose you would feel rich enough to buy me one; and in the next place, I couldn't have one if you did; because I am an Independent, and it would be spending money for amusement which I did not earn."

"But it would not be your spending it, if I made you a present of a bicycle; it would be my spending money for my amusement or pleasure or some other reason: I am not an Independent, and even if I were, I have earned my own money."

This was such an entirely different aspect of the case, that Johnny was quite surprised.

"Why, I didn't think of that," he said.

"You see, lawyers can look at matters from a good many aspects," remarked Mrs. Le Bras, who had been inclined to think, as Johnny did, that so expensive and unnecessary an article as a bicycle would interfere with his being an Independent.

"But then," said Johnny, "of course you are not able to buy me a bicycle; and, if you are, you probably won't think it best for me to have one."

"You are wrong in both instances. To be sure, I am not able to buy you a bicycle as a mere amusement; but if a bicycle will save me doctors' bills on your account, or have a tendency to aid in your becoming a strong, able-bodied man, it would be money in my pocket, now and for years to come, to get you one. It would save me considerable worry, too, if you could be diverted from your

books, and engaged in open-air exercise, far more than you have heretofore been inclined. Yes, Johnny, if you want a bicycle, go down street with me after dinner, while you are in that mind, and I'll fit you out. But remember, after I have spent so much for the sake of your health, you must not let it become an unnecessary expense to me instead of a great saving of money, by not using the bicycle more or less, every day, when it is reasonably pleasant."

At first, Johnny was so astonished and grateful and happy, that he could not reply; but Felix said,—

"There! I knew he'd do it right straight off, Johnny! That's just the way my father does."

Mr. Le Bras laughed at this.

"Johnny is not so used to having what he wants at the first hint," he said; "but, in this case, he happens to want just what I have been wishing he would ask for, and so it comes easy."

Johnny went down street with his father after dinner, and came back on his own bicycle, almost too happy to express his delight at the acquisition.

After Felix had examined the new bicycle, he remarked,—

"It isn't quite as fancy as mine, but it's exactly as good for riding: yes, it's a real good bicycle, Johnny. How I wish my ankle was well! We'd go right off to ride together."

"I'll go right down now, and see Dick about your boat," said Johnny; "and then you can amuse yourself this afternoon, rigging it. I saw him, and asked him if he should be at the shop this afternoon; and he said, 'Yes, come down,' and I said I would."

CHAPTER VI.

TWO LESSONS FROM NATURE.

After his first terror over the prospect of having Felix with him for three months, Johnny got on very well with his cousin. Although it was evident Felix had been accustomed to be very wilful and disobedient towards his seniors, and overbearing, with his companions, the respect with which his uncle's decided yet friendly manner inspired him, and Mrs. Le Bras' firm though mild manners, held his forwardness and self-will well in check. He soon began to appreciate the advantage, also, of having a boy like Johnny for a companion; he had never before had

the benefit of a constant companion; and the boys with whom he had been accustomed to associate were more or less undisciplined, like himself, ready to be offended and quarrel at the first provocation. It would have been very difficult to quarrel with Johnny, because he never gave any ground for offence himself, and was not disposed to find any such ground in the manners of others; the most that he asked was not to be disturbed in his quiet and studious ways; and there was something in his gentle and thoughtful manner which impressed even such a reckless boy as Felix with something like deference and consideration.

About two weeks after Johnny had been presented with his bicycle, and when he had learned to ride it so well that none but an experienced wheelman would have noticed that he was a novice, Mr. Le Bras met the grammar-school teacher who had been Johnny's instructor the past year, preparatory to his entrance to the high school.

"I see Johnny has become a bicyclist," said Mr. Farnsworth.

"Yes," replied Mr. Le Bras: "what do you think of the amusement?"

"A very good thing for Johnny, and a very bad thing for some other boys."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Le Bras. "How is that?"

"Why, there is Harrison Brown, for instance: it would be the best thing for him if he could be wholly deprived of his bicycle for a time, and then allowed to ride it only Saturdays. That boy's education is all going into his legs, and all his vigor is going the same way. He rides his bicycle before school in the morning, at noon, after school at night, and every Saturday. Now, he is a backward scholar, to begin with, and this wheeling has just used him up, so far as learning any thing is concerned: he comes to school all tired out, without enough life and energy left to even give attention to what the teacher says; and as to studying, he hardly knows what lesson he is expected to get from day to day; he sits half asleep and dreaming,—probably dreaming of his bicycle-rides,—and knows almost nothing of what is going on around him: he has been a mere figure-head all this year, and is no nearer to entering the high school than he was a year ago."

"I can see the disadvantage in such a case as that," replied Mr. Le Bras: "in fact, I have a nephew at my house who is wholly given up to outdoor sports, fun, etc.; although he is such a vigorous, wide-awake fellow, that he is not often caught dreaming or asleep: he and Johnny are having very good counter-influences upon each other, I find; he is getting Johnny into outdoor exercise more, and Johnny is beginning to put the idea into Felix's head, that there is some use and interest in books. I think riding a bicycle is a very good thing for Johnny: he is so much inclined to sit down and read and study, that we have apprehended serious danger from it; indeed, the doctor is constantly warning us to put some stop to it. The teachers have been very kind about heeding my request to hold him back as much as possible at school, but we have found it no easy matter at home to keep him

from his books. I hope much from his taking to bicycle-riding."

"A very good thing! a very good thing indeed!" replied Mr. Farnsworth. "The quickness with which Johnny learns, and his fondness for books, are extraordinary; considering that, I think we have kept him back pretty well: a good many quite ordinary scholars get into the high school at thirteen, provided they have been to school pretty steadily."

"Oh, yes!" returned Mr. Le Bras. "I began to prepare for college at twelve; but I was very strong and healthy, and exceedingly fond of outdoor sports. I was fully as well balanced physically as I was mentally, and that is what I believe in."

"Just so! just so! you've got the right of it: but I can tell you, there are very few boys who are well balanced nowadays; they are chiefly one thing or the other,—brains or brawn. But I hope you'll bring Johnny out all right."

"You know Pierre Stein?" said Mr. Le Bras.

"Pierre? Oh, yes! he's just right, isn't he?"

"I think so. The Germans understand what education should be better than we do, in some respects. But it is a great pity about his father. I'm afraid he will not be able to go back to teaching for some time: and that is bad for Pierre, too, just as he is ready for college; he don't feel now as though he ought to ask any help from his father. I tell him, if I were he, I would look out for some employment that would pay pretty well without confining me too closely, and be studying up to enter the junior class next year: in that way he will lose no time, and yet have some money to pay for the next year at college."

"That would be a good idea. What does he say to it?"

"He agrees with me, but don't know where to find such a place. I have been looking about for him myself, but nothing suitable seems to offer. I could give him considerable writing in my office, but that would be bad for him: it would soon use him up to write and study constantly, although he is ready enough to undertake it. He has been in my office a good deal, off and on, for several years, out of school-time. You know, he used to be my office-boy when he was a youngster?"

"Yes: he went to school to me then."

"I am some in hopes," continued Mr. Le Bras, "that my nephew will take a fancy to him: and if he does, I shall advise my brother to hire Pierre next year for Felix's tutor; it would be a great thing for Felix, and my brother is able to pay a young man well for bringing his son into the traces; he is what we call a spoiled child at present."

"That would be an excellent arrangement, then."

"Yes; and as Pierre is to stay with us while his father and mother are at the mountains, I hope to bring it about by fall, when my brother gets back from Europe. In fact, Pierre is coming home with me this noon to stay: his parents

start this morning. Tell Lester to come over and see him as often as he can."

"I will. Lester and he were always good friends, and Lester will be very much disappointed that they cannot enter college together this fall."

Mr. Le Bras and Mr. Farnsworth had now reached the corner, and bade each other good-morning, as they were going different ways.

Johnny and Felix had gone off on their bicycles after breakfast. They crossed the river on the long, open bridge, which commanded a fine view on both sides, and went up the river-road on the other side, until they came to a hill on the left. The plan had been to go on up the river to the manufacturing-town above, and visit the carpet-mill there; but when they came to the hill, Felix said,—

"Let's get off of this level road, and go up on that hill: I want to show you how to come down hill with your feet in rest."

"I don't believe I should like to try on such a steep hill as that."

"It isn't any thing at all: the hill is just right."

Felix immediately turned, and rode up the hill, which, although quite long, was not very steep. Johnny hesitated a moment, and then followed, saying,—

"If we linger on the way very much, we sha'n't be able to visit the mill and get home before dinner."

"Never mind: all we want is a good time. We can go to the mill some other time; and I don't much care how carpets are made, so they keep on making them all right."

Felix was considerably ahead; and when he reached the top of the hill, he called out,—

"Oh! here's a steeper hill, Johnny! This is just fine! Now I'll show you!"

When Johnny reached the top of the hill, he saw there was a shorter and much steeper hill a little way off, in a nearly opposite direction from the river-road.

"Come, now, Johnny, just try it with me: this is the way."

Felix then told Johnny just how to proceed in going down the hill.

"But I don't like to try, the first time, on such a steep hill," replied Johnny. "I am about certain I shouldn't have confidence enough to do just right, and so should lose my balance, or get a header."

"Nonsense!" replied Felix: "I can go down this hill blindfolded. I'll prove that I can."

Felix immediately alighted from his bicycle, and, taking out his handkerchief, bound it about his eyes.

"Please don't, Felix," said Johnny anxiously. "I'm afraid you'll get badly hurt."

Johnny also alighted from his bicycle, for he was resolved not to go down either of these hills before he had tried some declivity that was not as steep.

"Oh, ho!" said Felix, mounting his bicycle without any apparent difficulty, in spite of the bandage. "I didn't suppose you were quite so much of a coward! Now just see me go down this hill blindfolded."

With this, he glided off, while Johnny stood almost holding his breath with suspense. Felix went on all right, and in a perfectly straight course, until he was about half way down the hill. Johnny had begun to breathe more freely at seeing how well Felix kept the middle of the road, which was quite even: but all at once he turned to the right, and the reason was at the same time evident to Johnny; for a heavy team appeared at that moment, around the turn, coming up the hill. Before Johnny had time to wonder how his cousin had dodged this danger so well with the handkerchief over his eyes, Felix was thrown violently forward from his bicycle, upon the rough surface at the side of the road, which was covered with bushes, briers, and stones. Johnny uttered a terrified "Oh!" and, dropping his bicycle, ran down the hill, fearing that Felix was killed. The teamster at the same time alighted, and hurried towards the fallen boy. Felix was lying motionless, half covered by the wild growth about him. As the man had been rather nearer the scene of the disaster than Johnny, and, having longer legs, could run faster, he was just lifting Felix up when Johnny got there.

"Is he killed?" asked Johnny, with whitened, quivering lips.

The man brought Felix out of the bushes, and put him down on a smooth strip of turf by the side of the road: his face was covered with blood. But when Johnny drew off the bandage, he could see that his eyes were open, and that he was moving them about, although in a vacant, languid manner.

"There's a pail in the bottom of my cart," said the man: "go and get it, and then run to the brook down yonder, and bring some water."

[image]

"To his delight, he found that Felix was sitting up."

Johnny ran to the cart, and found the pail: then, springing over the rail-fence, he hurried to a little stream that ran through the pasture below, scooped up some water hurriedly, and hastened back. To his delight, he found that Felix was sitting up, although he was supported by the teamster: still better, he was answering a question the teamster had addressed to him. Johnny did not hear the question; but he heard Felix say,—

"I guess I didn't know much at first, but I see where I am now."

The man had wiped off the blood as well as he could with the handkerchief, and then bound it around Felix's head; but his face was smeared with blood,

and the stained handkerchief added to the ghastly effect. Johnny pulled out his handkerchief, and, wetting it in the water, handed it to the man, after he had filled a little telescope-cup, which he had brought in his pocket to drink from if they should get thirsty on their excursion. The man told Felix to drink some of the water, and then wiped the blood from his face with Johnny's handkerchief, and asked him how he felt.

"I guess I don't feel so very badly," he replied, in quite a natural manner; "but I wish that blood wouldn't come trickling down my face all the time."

The bandage was by this time saturated, so that it no longer absorbed the blood from the wound: Johnny's handkerchief was wrung out as dry as possible, and substituted for it.

"I'll tell you what we had better do," said the man. "I'll put him in my cart, and carry him right to the doctor: he lives about as near as any one, and he'll know just what ought to be done."

"Yes," said Johnny: "I wish you would."

It was found that Felix could now walk tolerably well. He was helped into the cart; and the bicycle, which had continued on down the hill a little way, and lodged in another clump of bushes at the side of the road, was put in behind. The man then got in and drove up the hill, supporting Felix with one arm; while Johnny walked up, and got upon his bicycle, for the man said the doctor lived on the hill.

They passed one house, and then came to a brown cottage with a piazza running along the side, facing an apple-orchard. A little boy was sitting upon the piazza, with some playthings about him.

"Hallo, Charley!" said the man: "is your father in?"

The boy made no reply, except to jump up and run into the house. The man stopped his team, and Johnny alighted from his bicycle. A moment afterwards, a gentleman came out of the front-door, and approached them with, "Good-morning, Mr. Jenks."

"Good-mornin', doctor. I've got a boy here who took a bad header going down our hill here blindfolded: he's got lesson enough without any remarks of mine, for he's cut a pretty deep gash on his head. I guess you'd better tend to it, if you've a mind to, and send the bill in to his father."

"Never mind the bill," replied the doctor in a hearty, cheery tone, as he helped Felix out of the cart. "I was a foolhardy boy myself once, and I'm willing to help a young fellow out of a little trouble, any time."

"I can pay, myself," replied Felix: "I guess I've got money enough in my pocket; and if I haven't, I can come over some day and bring the rest."

By this time, his face was very bloody again, although he had been wiping it with his handkerchief, which Johnny had rinsed in the pail.

"I'll pay you for your trouble, too," said Felix, as the man began to drive on.

"No, you don't!" replied Mr. Jenks. "That's all right. Hope the doctor can make you as good as new."

Johnny leaned his own bicycle and that of Felix against the fence, and then followed the doctor and his patient into one of the front rooms, which was the doctor's office. The doctor immediately washed Felix's face, and then bound the wound together with strips of court-plaster, after cutting the hair as close as possible in the neighborhood of the gash. It was evident that Felix had struck his head against the sharp edge of one of the stones at the side of the road.

"There, young man," said the doctor, when he had finished: "you'll be all right after a while, and you'll be a little wiser than you were before; so, on the whole, you may be even better off for the accident. But what possessed you to try to go down hill on a bicycle blindfolded?"

"I just did it to make Johnny wonder how it was done: I've tried it before with the boys at home, without their finding out the trick. I didn't put the handkerchief so but what I could see some, just down under; and I should have been all right, because I could see the ground close ahead of me well enough; only when I heard the team coming, I lifted up one side of the handkerchief so as to pass all right, and then I turned out to the side without thinking of its being rocky there; and as I couldn't see off that way, easily, because of the handkerchief, I ran on a stone all of a sudden, and that gave me a header. If the team hadn't come, I should have kept on in the middle of the road all right."

"This going along without the full use of your eyes isn't a good plan, you see, young man; and it's so all through life. Keep your eyes wide open, my boy, keep your eyes wide open. And now about your getting home. I presume you feel pretty weak and faint after losing so much blood, and having something of a fright?"

"No; I'm all right now, I guess; I'll pay you, and then I'll get on my bicycle and ride home."

Felix pulled out his pocket-book, opened it, and took out some bills. "How much will it be?" said he.

"You are quite a capitalist, I see," remarked the doctor; "but put up your money; I don't want any pay; you are perfectly welcome."

"No: I shall pay," replied Felix. "I've got plenty of money."

"In that case, if you think you will feel better for paying, you can give me a dollar, which is the usual fee for such an operation when the patient comes to my office; but you would be quite welcome to the service free of charge."

Felix handed the doctor a dollar, and then said he guessed he had better be going.

"You must not go for an hour, at least," replied the doctor, "or I cannot

promise that you will have no unpleasant results from your injury. Sit down in the fresh air a while, on the piazza, with your friend, until you are fully certain that you are equal to the exertion of returning home. At the end of an hour I will feel of your pulse and tell you whether you can go on your bicycle, or had better be sent home in my carriage."

The doctor then felt of Felix's pulse, and continued,—

"No, you can't go yet, my boy: just step out on the piazza, and sit down in that arm-chair, till I see you again."

Although Felix would have preferred to have his own way, there was something in the doctor's manner that made him hesitate about attempting to disregard his advice, the more especially as the doctor took hold of his arm, led him upon the piazza, and sat him down in the large out-of-door rocker, with its wide, comfortable arms. Once set down in front of the cool orchard, Felix felt a consciousness of languor and restfulness that made him quite willing to keep his seat. Johnny seated himself on a settee near; and the little boy, who had gone back to his play, said,—

"Isn't this a good place to stay in?"

"Yes," replied Johnny. "I should like just such a place to sit and read in, of a summer day: it's almost as good as the sky-room, isn't it, Felix?"

"I guess so: only you can't see much of the sky; it's all green whichever way you look, except where the house is."

"That would make it all the better for reading, because green is such a good color for the eyes."

"It's lucky, then, that the grass and leaves are green instead of red: if every thing were red and yellow always, as the trees are in autumn, it would get to be sort of tiresome, I suppose."

"It isn't luck that makes the foliage green," replied Johnny; "somehow or other, Nature does it on purpose; you can tell that because every thing is all right in just the same way: if it was luck, things would happen right only now and then, and sometimes they would happen all wrong and uncomfortable."

"They do happen uncomfortable, lots of times: it's uncomfortable to have the sun hot in the middle of a summer's day. If Nature wants to fix things all right, why don't it have it just about the right warmth all day, summer and winter?"

"There are ever so many things we need to eat that would never ripen in that case, besides a great many other disadvantages. You see, Nature don't always do what is pleasantest for us at the time, but what is best for us in the end. She might make every thing so convenient that nice crops would grow without any care, and we should have our clothes all ready made and fitted for us, like that cow and horse over in the lot; but it is better for us to have to work and contrive to supply our own wants out of the material that Nature has supplied in the rough,—

like trees for our fine houses, and cotton, flax, wool, and silk for our hundreds of sorts of clothes."

"She has made some things all ready for us: there are fruits and milk and vegetables and meat for food, and furs for clothing."

"Yes, of course, she supplied some things all ready to eat and wear, so that folks could get along until they became civilized; and then, you see, she is very good-natured, and likes to make it as easy and comfortable for us as she can without spoiling us and making babies of us: there are ever so many pleasant things in the world that we could get along without; but it is intended that it shall be a pleasant world to live in after all, so that we sha'n't want to get out of it before we've learned all we need to learn. I suppose that's why death is made to seem so horrible; for if death seemed pleasant, we shouldn't take such good care of our lives."

"How did you know all that?"

"Some of it I learned myself by studying about Nature from books, and some my father and mother told me ever so long ago, and some I've heard the minister say at church."

"Our minister don't say that Nature looks out for us: he says God does it. I don't pay much attention to what he says; but as he always keeps on saying that, I can't help remembering it."

"He says God takes care of you, and gives you a pleasant home, don't he?"

"Yes."

"But it's your father and mother that do it, too, isn't it?"

"Yes: it always seems to me that the minister don't put it right, and I've wanted to tell him so, sometimes."

"Yes, he puts it right, if you understand what he means: he means that God made the world so that children have parents to take care of them. God don't appear to do things in this world directly himself, but seems to have agents to carry out his plans; and Nature is the greatest of these agents, who appoints all the smaller agents. Of course, God made Nature, and some think he is in Nature; and we can find out a good deal about him by studying her ways."

"What can you find out?"

"We can find out that he is wise and good, and that he doesn't let us know every thing in a minute, even about his wisdom and goodness, and that we've got to wait until we get into another world before we can understand the meaning of some things that happen in this world; so we learn to have faith in him,—that is, to believe he will make every thing right sometime, even though we can't see how."

"Do you suppose we shall ever know just how the trees and grass came to be so green?" said Felix, who was getting sleepy, and looking dreamily into the

thick, low boughs of the apple-orchard.

"Why, we know that now; that was explained long ago."

"Was it? Well, I'd like to know how. I never heard any one tell about it."

"Hasn't your teacher at school told you what makes colors?"

"She's talked something about it; but I never saw any sense to what she was saying, and so I didn't pay attention."

"I learned about that in the primary school, but I didn't understand it very well until I read about it in my 'Science for the Young.' I'll see if I can explain it to you."

There was a rubber ball among the little boy's playthings, and Johnny asked him if he might take it a few moments. As the boy was not using the ball, he handed it to Johnny very willingly, saying, "You can play with it as long as you've a mind to."

Johnny threw the ball on the floor of the piazza in a straight line, remarking,—

"You see, Felix, the ball bounds right back to my hand, in just the direction in which I threw it down."

"That's nothing: everybody knows that a ball always does so."

"But that is just the way some of the rays of light bound back whenever they strike any thing which is not transparent; that is, if they strike it directly, or at a right angle. The rays which come back are called reflected rays. Every thing which is not transparent reflects light that shines upon it; that is, the light bounds back. It is just the same with heat: that which is not absorbed by the substance upon which it falls, bounds back, or is reflected."

"If that's so, what of it?"

"Why, that's what makes the grass green, and flowers of different colors, and your suit blue, and your necktie red, and your eyes brown: that's what makes things seem to be colored."

"Seem to be colored? Why, they are colored! my suit was colored with a blue dye, and there's a kind of green dye in grass: I've got it on my stockings and handkerchiefs many a time."

"The juice, or fluid, in the grass looks green, just as the grass does, because its particles are so arranged that they absorb all of the light except the green rays, and those they reflect. The substance of those roses out there in the garden absorbs all except a red part of the light, and reflects that. Your collar reflects all the colors in the light, and that makes it white, which is the mixing of all the colors together in certain proportions. My spectacle-case looks black, because it absorbs the light without reflecting any of it.'"

"I don't believe that," replied Felix: "I shall always believe things are colored in themselves, without any regard to the light. How do you know that there are

different colors in light? You can't see any thing but a kind of yellow."

"You can't see yellow, unless it is reflected."

"Why, yes, you can. Look over in that field; it's just as yellow there where the sunshine falls as can be; and where it falls between the trees here in the orchard, the green looks yellowish, while it is just bright green under the trees; and the sun itself is just as yellow as can be."

"The grass has been mowed out in that lot, so the sun has dried it, and changed the substance of it so that it reflects more yellow rays. I suppose that here in the orchard more of the rays striking the parts that are not protected by the trees gives a different reflection. As for the sun being yellow, it isn't always yellow; that is, I mean it doesn't always look yellow; I have seen it look quite red."

"If it isn't yellow, I'd like to know what color it is!" exclaimed Felix, rather impatiently.

"I don't suppose it is any color at all, though it gives the impression of a good many colors to our minds: color is nothing but a sensation produced by the kind of light that is reflected to our eyes. But light that is not separated at all, gives us only a sensation of whiteness. I don't suppose the sun would look yellow to us if we could see it without looking through any air. The air even changes the direction of the sunlight so as to make the sun appear to us to rise a little while before it does rise."

"I don't see how folks found out all that, and I don't believe they have! I'll bet they made it all up!"

"I have a fine prism at home: we'll go up in the sky-room this afternoon, and I will separate some light into its different colors. But look here, Felix! see! When I throw this ball against the floor in a slanting direction, notice how it bounds back the other way in just such a slant line as I threw it in from this way. Light does just like that, and heat too: if a ray of light strikes a plane surface at a slant, it is reflected the other way in exactly the same slant. And it's something so when light passes through any transparent substance: it comes out the other side just as it went in. That is, if it goes in at a slant, it comes out at the same slant it went in at, making an angle; but if it passes in at a right angle, as I throw this ball against the floor, it comes out and goes on the other side, in the same straight line."

"I should think it would make your head ache to try to study about such things," said Felix, with a yawn; "it makes mine ache just to hear about it; it's all so queer and unlikely and mixed up. I think it's ever so much pleasanter to just take things as they are, without trying to make out what makes them so and so. I'm glad the grass is green, and the sky blue, and that there are other pretty colors in the world; but I don't care a cent what makes them so. Though I don't

believe the color is just in the sun or our eyes."

"I like to know why things are so and so; in order to see how wise and beautiful the laws of Nature are, and what wisdom and beauty there must be in all the rest of the universe."

"What do I care about the rest of the universe? all I care about is the part of it which I am in."

"But when we see how wonderful this little part of it is, we can get a pleasant idea of what another world might be which we shall go into when we leave this: and that is ever so much pleasanter than having such a common idea about it as some folks have, as a place paved with gold, and built of stones; or to have no idea of it at all, or only to think of just being dead and buried. When we learn how every thing is made for some purpose, and nothing ever really dies, and then remember that our minds and feelings are the very highest part of all creation, and the most delicate and complicated, we feel very certain that there is some great future before us that we can't tell any thing about."

"If you can't tell any thing about it, what's the use of trying?"

"Why, it's enough for us to see that it must be something grand; that's all we want to know now: we've got plenty to enjoy and take up our minds here; all we want to know is, that we shall keep on having enough to busy us, and make us happy always; and Nature tries to tell us that in every way she can, or as much about it as she thinks it best for us to be told of. I am sure I am happier for knowing what little I have learned; and it makes me happy, too, to keep on learning curious things about Nature."

"I'd rather ride 'round on a bicycle, and see what's going on, any time, than study about such things," replied Felix, with another and longer yawn. "I know I feel well enough to ride home now. I'm going to get my bicycle."

Felix immediately rose, and walked around the house to the place where Johnny had placed the bicycles. But Johnny went into the office, and told the doctor Felix was determined to go, and asked him if he would try his pulse. The doctor, who had been sitting near a window of his office, not far from where the boys were conversing, had heard the whole of their conversation. But as the blinds were closed, the boys had not noticed this, and were rather surprised when, after feeling Felix's pulse, and saying it was safe for him to go, he remarked,—

"Well, my boy, you have had two lessons from Nature this morning: she taught you herself that you will get punished if you trifle with her laws,—viz., in this case, if you try to get along without using the eyes she has given you,—and she has taught you, second or third hand, through Johnny, something of the way in which she produces her beautiful and useful effects. So, although this is vacation time, you see a great many things can be learned outside of a schoolroom. Life is a great school, and you have just begun your course in it. Make the most

of your advantages; for some folks go through life without learning much of any thing, just as some boys go through school and college, yet come out ignoramuses at last."

The doctor then told the boys he should like to have them stop any time they came that road, and that, if they would come in apple-time, they might take their choice of fruit from the trees in the orchard.

After, they were on their way, Felix asked,—

"What is an ignoramus?"

"It's Latin for an ignorant person," replied Johnny.

Felix looked thoughtful a moment, and then he began to whistle: he was thinking how little he had learned at school, and wondering if he was in danger of going through life, and turning out an ignoramus at last. He wondered, too, if he was so much duller than Johnny, or what the reason was that Johnny knew so much and he so little. As he did not like to take any blame himself, he concluded it was because his father and mother did not try to teach him any thing, and did not seem to know any thing themselves of these things which Johnny had learned about, and part of which he said his father and mother had told him.

When they came to the hill, Johnny got off of his bicycle, and walked down. At first, Felix was inclined to laugh at him; but when he reflected how much smarter Johnny was than himself in some ways, he refrained for once to boast of his superior acquirements.

When they reached home, they found the family at the dinner-table; and at one end of the table, by the side of Sue, sat a young man with auburn hair, which, being closely cut, stood up smartly all about his head. His eyes were hazel, his complexion ruddy, and he had a very bright and good-natured expression of countenance.

"How d'y' do, Pierre?" exclaimed Johnny, apparently very much pleased at seeing the young man. "Have you come to stay?"

"I believe so," replied Pierre, smiling.

Johnny had sat directly down at the table, since he knew his parents did not like to have him late; but Felix remained in the sitting-room with his hat on, looking curiously through the door at Pierre.

"Come, Felix, don't be any later than necessary," called out his uncle. "I do not think Johnny timed himself very well, or you would have been home earlier."

Johnny said nothing in self-defence; but Felix replied promptly,—

"We were late because I had a header, and that's the reason I don't like to come to the table: I've got a lot of court-plaster on my head."

Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras immediately rose from the table, and went into the sitting-room to examine into the extent of Felix's injuries; but when he told them he felt pretty well, and had no objection to eating dinner except concern for his

personal appearance, their minds were much relieved. His aunt bound a handkerchief over the wound; and his uncle led him out, and seated him in his usual place, beside Johnny.

"Johnny must entertain us with an account of your adventures," said Mr. Le Bras; "but you had better keep pretty still yourself, this afternoon, Felix."

Felix kept quiet while Johnny was telling the story, but more because Pierre was present, and he was quite busy observing this new member of the family, than from any disinclination to talk. He was a little afraid, too, that his uncle might be displeased with his trying to cheat Johnny about the blindfolding. Johnny did not refer to that deception, however. But when Mr. Le Bras said, "How could you do such a foolish thing, as to attempt riding with a bandage over your eyes?" Felix stated exactly how it was, rather than have it supposed he was so very foolish as appeared.

"Very well: I will not say any thing about the deceptive part of the performance," said Mr. Le Bras; "when one has had the kind of lesson you have, words don't add much to it. But it seems a very astonishing good fortune that there were no bones broken, and no worse bruises or wounds."

"I think that was on account of the bushes," replied Johnny; "he fell right into a whole lot of stout bushes: but there happened to be quite a high stone, and so his head hit against it."

"I hadn't but just got over my lame ankle," said Felix, "and now I was awfully afraid I should be laid up again. But I don't feel badly at all: I guess I'll go up to the carpet-mill with you this afternoon, Johnny."

"No, young man," replied his uncle: "no more bicycling for you to-day. Amuse yourself around home this afternoon, and we will see how you feel to-morrow. In fact, I shall veto more than half a day's riding at a time, either on your part or Johnny's; that is enough for any boy; and always take the cool of the morning for it too."

Felix would have liked to remonstrate, but there was a decision about his uncle's manner which prevented his objecting at that time.

CHAPTER VII.

PIERRE'S STORY.

The evening reading had continued as usual: it was a practice that had been

instituted when Johnny was a little boy, and was never omitted unless Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras had company or were away from home at that hour in the evening. Felix had so much trouble in reading distinctly, and pronouncing words, that he had finally declined taking part altogether: he saw that even Sue could read far better than he could, and he began to be ashamed of his own deficiency in this line. But he had become quite interested in hearing the others, and was glad when the reading-hour came.

Mr. Le Bras had insisted upon Felix's going to bed early the evening after the header, and he had obeyed quite willingly: indeed, he owned that his head did not feel quite right. When the time for reading came, Mr. Le Bras said,—

"I feel badly about Felix's poor scholarship. It would be a great thing for him if he could learn to read while he is here. I wonder how my brother could allow him to grow up so deficient as this!"

"He says he never read much in any books except the readers at school, either aloud or to himself," remarked Johnny, "and that no one ever read to him, except his nurse when he was a little boy, and she always read fairy-stories: I suppose that is the reason he says he don't like to read any thing but fairy-stories. He thinks he could get through a fairy-story now, better than any other. I guess that is because the fairy-story books are generally written for young children, and so have easy words in them."

"Very likely," replied Mr. Le Bras. "Pierre, do you think you could contrive any way to get Felix to read to you, and so teach him how to enunciate and pronounce a great deal better than he does?"

"Possibly," replied Pierre; "but I may need a little help to begin with. Suppose you offer him something you think he would like very much, if he will learn to read one story well, I being the teacher, and you the judge, who are to hear the final reading after I pronounce him ready for the test?"

"That is a good idea. Do you know of any thing in particular that Felix would like, Johnny?"

"He has money to buy about every thing he wants; but I did hear him say once he would like to visit Boston, now he is so near, because he never was in Boston."

"That will answer nicely. I am going to Boston on business before we start for the seaside; and if Felix will learn to read the story well, I will take him and you with me."

The next morning, Mr. Le Bras took Felix aside, and told him he was very anxious he should learn to read, as that was the first step toward a good education, and a very essential one, as well as something which could be learned out of school, and could be made a recreation instead of a task; also that by devoting a little time each day to reading aloud from some interesting book, to a person

competent to give advice and corrections, the deficiency could be soon remedied. He then made the proposal that Felix should at once make a beginning, by learning to read some short story well, and said Pierre would teach him, and that he himself would offer the trip to Boston as an inducement.

Felix was quite well pleased with the plan: he thought it would be rather fine to have a young man like Pierre to teach him, and he was exceedingly pleased with the idea of going to Boston. He had secretly been wishing he could read as well as Johnny, or at least as well as Sue; but he did not own this.

After the bargain was made, Mr. Le Bras took Felix by the hand, and led him up to Pierre, who was sitting in the piazza, reading the morning paper.

"Here is a scholar for you, Pierre," said he: "you can look him up a story to learn as soon as you please; and the sooner he reads it correctly, the sooner we will visit the famous city of Boston."

Mr. Le Bras then left Felix and Pierre alone together.

"What kind of a story shall we select?" inquired Pierre.

"I don't want any thing very hard. I think fairy-stories are always the easiest to read. I've never read aloud except at school: and the teacher don't say any thing to you, if you only get through a paragraph somehow; at least, she never says any thing to me. My mother told her she didn't want me pushed; she was afraid it would make me sick: and my father said he didn't care how long I was getting my education."

"But you might be so long getting it, that it would be very unpleasant for you: I think it is generally unpleasant for a boy to be in school with children a good deal younger than himself. And then, you won't want to be so long getting an education that you will be a man before you have learned all that is necessary; for a man don't want to keep on going to school, even if he has ever so much money."

"No," said Felix: "you won't catch me going to school when I'm a man."

"So I am to find you a fairy-story?" continued Pierre. "Well, I will be looking up one that I think will suit you. It may take me several days; but, after I've found it, we'll make up for lost time by beginning to learn to read it nicely as soon as possible, in order that your Boston trip may not be unnecessarily delayed."

Since Pierre was helping Mr. Le Bras at his office at present, Felix saw him only at meal-times, and had almost forgotten about the fairy-story, except when the reading-hour came at night, at which time Pierre was usually out calling on some of his friends, until one afternoon several days afterwards, when Pierre came home with a book in his hand.

"Is my story in that book?" inquired Felix.

"No," replied Pierre; "but I think I can have the story ready for you by tomorrow. And now the question is, what time of day will you give to it, and how

long will you read each day?"

"I couldn't read more than a half an hour at a time, possibly; and I think I'll have it over right after breakfast before I go off on my bicycle; then it will be off my mind for the rest of the day."

"That is a good plan, and the time will suit me very well. So we will say to-morrow morning, and so on, until you have earned your trip. Should you like to hear the story first to see if you like it?"

"No: I don't believe I care any thing about hearing it."

"Oh, yes!" said Sue. "Do let's hear it. Read it to us all, this evening, Pierre; 'cause we got through with our other story last night, and I do like fairy-tales so much!"

"I don't," said Johnny, "because there isn't ever hardly any kind of truth in them at all."

"Then, the one I have is an exception," remarked Pierre. "I flatter myself that there is considerable truth in the fairy-story I have found."

"I am sure, since Pierre has been so long finding it, it must be an unusually good fairy-tale," remarked Mr. Le Bras, smiling: "I should like to hear it myself very much, and so, I am sure, would Mrs. Le Bras."

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Le Bras: "I want to hear it very much indeed, Pierre. Do read it to us to-night, if you have no engagement out at that hour."

"Very well, then, since you all insist, and I shall be in early this evening, I will read the story to you; but you must not expect any thing wonderful, for you know Felix wanted an easy story to begin with. This is a regular paper-covered one-story book, in large print."

"I am glad it is large print," said Felix: "I can always read that sort of books better."

Pierre came home early, as he had promised; and when the family were all ready for the reading,—even Kate having come in to hear the fairy-story,—Pierre took out of his pocket a large, thin book, in a plain green paper cover, and seated himself in the arm-chair which Johnny had placed near the drop-light on the table. Johnny, upon glancing over Pierre's shoulder, was astonished to see that the story had been printed upon a typewriter, and was about to make some remark regarding that circumstance when his father caught his eye, and shook his head at him. Johnny knew by this, that there was some secret about it, which was not to be divulged, at present at least. Felix also glanced over Pierre's shoulder; but as he had never seen a typewriter, not having yet visited his uncle's office, he supposed the story was printed like any ordinary book. As for Sue, she was sitting by her mother, waiting impatiently for Pierre to begin, which he did, after Mr. Le Bras had said,—

"We are all ready now, Pierre. Go ahead."

RICK AND THE FAIRY.

Rick Lordelle was the only child of a rich man. In the winter he lived in a great city; but in the summer he lived in a famous old castle upon the bank of a river which wound between grand, picturesque mountains.

But although Rick was the son of a rich man, he was in great danger of growing up a dunce: worse than that, he was in danger of growing up regardless of any law except his own will.

His father was so busy, and so much from home, that he saw little of him; and he was so fond of the boy, and so proud of his beauty and high spirits, that he only laughed at his pertness and independence. To be sure, he was very sorry that Rick did not take to his books; but he had not sufficient firmness to insist upon his going to school, or having a tutor at home. Rick boldly declared that he would not go to school; and as for having a tutor, he had had several already, neither of whom he liked, or would obey, or treat with respect. His father kept saying,—

"We will wait a while, and see if some way cannot be found to coax him to be a scholar. Before he is much older, I may come across a tutor who will suit him, and make it pleasant for him to learn."

Rick's mother was so fond of him, that she would not have him crossed in any thing, if she could help it. She, too, wanted him to learn something, and often tried to persuade him to say his lessons to her or Nanette; but his attention could seldom be gained for fifteen minutes at a time. As for persuading him to go to school, it would have been as well for her to try to persuade a young lion to go there.

Nanette had more influence over him than either his father or mother. She was a very bright and sensible young woman, and had helped to take care of Rick ever since he was a baby. Although he would not mind Nanette unless he pleased, he was more willing to obey her than any one else; and as she was a very good story-teller, and had a particular gift at telling fairy-stories, she could often persuade him to do as she wished, by the promise of one of her wonderful tales. The fairies she told about were generally old women who lived in the woods, and could make persons rich and beautiful, or poor and ugly, and tell what would happen to any one, and make every thing turn out to suit themselves.

Rick had sometimes asked Nanette if there were any fairies about the castle, and she had told him she knew of no better place for them than in those wild mountains; but as they never came near houses, that she knew of, and she did not go into the mountains, she had never seen any herself.

One day Rick had a bright idea. Why did he always ride up and down the river-road which he knew so well, instead of striking off across the mountains,

at one of the many lanes which he had sometimes followed a little way until he found they led into the forests? What might there not be beyond those hills that was new and strange?

Beyond those mountains must he go, and that right speedily.

He at first told his mother of his intention, not expecting any worse opposition than that she might insist upon his being accompanied by the groom. But his mother, for once, replied "No," with some decision: it was a wild region, she said; there was nothing behind the mountains but other mountains, which ended she knew not where. She never had crossed those mountains herself; his father had never crossed them; no one would think of attempting it. Sometime, when he was older, his father would take him around to the other side of the mountains, by the cars or some other conveyance; but even a grown man would not try to cross them.

Rick made no reply, but simply resolved to investigate for himself. He had sometimes known his mother to represent dangers far worse than he knew them to be, in order to keep him away from them: he thought, as likely as not, it was a far more easy and common thing to cross those mountains than she had represented.

So, what did this venturesome youth do but start off the very next day, ostensibly for a ride up the river, but with the real intention of penetrating into the mountains by one of the mysterious paths, to test the correctness of his mother's statement.

Gayly he rode along the beautiful river-road; and his mother, from the castle-window, watched him until he was out of sight.

"How well he rides!" she said to Nanette. "He looks exactly like a little lord."

Nanette made no reply: she was thinking to herself, "But he can neither read nor write with any decency, and he is not mannerly nor obedient."

On rode the "little lord," over the winding road, until many a turn, and at least two good miles, had separated him from the castle.

There were several narrow roads leading into the wooded district which bordered the river-road. Beyond these woods rose the mountains, some near, some distant, blue and purple against the fleecy sky.

A delightful sense of novelty took possession of Rick as he entered one of these unknown paths. He felt as an explorer feels when he comes into a strange country. How stupid he had been, he thought, always to be riding up and down the river-road. It was a shady forest-lane: little brooks winding down the hills and ledges made a pleasant sound, and sometimes a swollen stream ran directly across the road. The pony, as well as Rick, liked to go splashing through the water.

After riding about a mile through the woods, a narrow path diverged from the lane. The lane itself had been a gradual ascent, but this path evidently led up a much steeper hill. Rick wondered very much where this narrower path would lead: he was inclined to think it was the way to some castle. In that castle, perhaps there was another boy. There were no children living near the Lordelle castle, except the children of the servants and peasants.

No sooner did it enter Rick's mind that he might find a playmate by following the smaller path, than he turned his pony out of the lane, thinking he would come back and follow that at some other day.

The new path wound upwards constantly; but, as it was seldom very steep, neither Rick nor the pony minded that. It was a very pleasant path; and after Rick had given up the hope that it led to a castle, he was so curious to know where it ended, that he still kept on.

After a while this path branched off, by several other paths, still narrower,—one of them to the left, one to the right, and another between these two, but yet not in a direct line to the main path.

Rick concluded to go a little way on one path, and then come back and go a little way on the others, so as to get an idea of each. Accordingly, he took the middle path. But he had scarcely entered this path, before it divided into two other paths. As one of these was wider than the other, he took that. After riding on a little way, Rick and the pony came suddenly out into an open level space.

This space was a clearing, where many noble trees had been felled, and which was surrounded by a majestic wall of beautiful pines still standing. It was a circular opening, and Rick took it into his head that it would be fun to ride around the edge of it, as he had seen men ride around the mile circle at a horse-race.

Skip was as tired as Rick was of going up hill all the time; and she at once pricked up her ears, and started off, jumping over the stumps, and frisking generally.

Whether Rick went around the circle of the clearing more than once or not, he was never certain; for when he looked for the path by which he had entered, he could not find it, or, if he found it, he did not recognize it. There proved to be a number of small paths leading into the clearing, and one larger path leading out of it, down which the timber had evidently been carried.

After trying in vain to find the path by which he had entered, Rick, who was by this time getting a little anxious, concluded to follow the main path, which would be likely, at any rate, to take him out of the woods.

To his delight, he found the path led down hill. He concluded he was going down the hill he had come up, at another point, and should now easily find the road by which he had entered the woods.

He rode down hill for some time, most of the way through an open district, which had long been cleared of trees, and at length came upon more level land, and another path running at right angles with that which had led down the declivity.

Rick was now sadly perplexed. His head was so much turned that he had no idea of the points of compass. It was impossible for him to retrace his steps, on account of not knowing by what path he had entered the first clearing.

Far ahead of him, to the left, however, there was smoke curling up above the trees. At the right, the path seemed to lead along the edge of a quarry and to end there.

Turning to the left, Rick rode along until the road ended in a clump of low woods. There was nothing to be done but to follow the direction in which he had seen the smoke rise. But, now he had entered the woods, he could no longer see the smoke; and, worse still, the underbrush was so thick, and the ground so swampy, that Skip could not make her way, but soon became entangled in the thicket, the bog, and the brambles.

To add to Rick's troubles, it was getting late in the afternoon, the sun had become clouded over, and there were signs of rain. His only hope was to get to the place where the smoke came from, and inquire his way. With a heavy heart, he dismounted, and after leading Skip into a clearer place, near the entrance to the wood, hugged her around the neck, told her he would be back by and by, and started out on foot, in the direction in which he had seen the smoke as nearly as he could judge of it.

As he disappeared, he heard Skip neighing after him, and he felt very lonely and downhearted indeed.

He pushed his way through the briers and underbrush, sometimes sinking into the mud, and sometimes going splash into the water, without coming to any signs of a habitation, or any thing which could have caused the smoke. Finally, he was not sure that he was going in the direction of the smoke at all, as the trees hid it from his sight, and he resolved to return to Skip: perhaps, by trying again, they could find their way home, either by the paths they had come, or some other.

But now that he was resolved to go back to Skip, Rick was not sure of that direction either; and he had gone so far that he could not possibly hear the faithful creature neigh for his return.

Brave as the boy was, this dilemma, together with weariness, overcame him so much, that he sat down upon a rock and began to cry: perhaps he could never find his way out of this miry, tangled wood, and would die there alone. He thought of the babes in the wood, and that they were better off than he, since they could share each other's woes. If only Skip were with him! "Oh, dear!" he said, "if some one would only come and find me!"

"You have your wish, and what now?" said a rather cracked and sharp voice.

Rick took his hand from his eyes, and looked up. Directly in front of him was a thin, oldish woman, with gray hair, and very black eyes, dressed in what seemed to Rick a yellow satin skirt, richly embroidered, a red satin waist, and a sort of red turban. She was a very bright object in the dusky woods.

At another time Rick would have been frightened at such an apparition, alone in the woods; but, under the circumstances, he was more relieved than frightened at hearing a voice, and seeing what at first appeared to him to be a human form.

"You have your wish," she repeated, "and what now?"

"I want you to tell me how I can find my way home."

"The idea! Was Rick Lordelle ever willing to do any thing he was told to do, before he got into this scrape? Since you would never take good advice until this day, Master Rick, you may now do the best you can without it. Has not Nanette told you about the fairies in the woods?"

"Yes," said Rick, so frightened that he was hardly able to speak the word.

"You see one now, and little comfort will you get from her. Fairies have better business than helping headstrong young gentlemen out of their scrapes. I know very well that you never told your mother and Nanette that you were going wandering about in the woods, and a pretty fright they are in now! So help yourself, if you can!"

"But I don't know which way to go to get home," sobbed Rick.

"You'd better start off somewhere in a hurry, if you don't want to spend the night in these woods. Boys that have their own way must go by their own way, and suffer the consequences. So get up, and make your way across the mountains the best way you can; for you've gone up one hill, and come down another."

"I thought I came down the same side I went up."

"And so you would go and travel off in this direction, and leave the castle farther and farther behind, you? A fine fellow to have your own way! Come with me, and I will show you the mountain that lies between you and the castle; for I would have a boy of your stamp out of my woods as soon as possible. Nanette has told you, many a time, that fairies have no liking for folks who are no better disposed than you are. Come along, in a hurry, and stop your babyish crying! If Nanette and your mother could see their fine young gentleman now!"

Rick followed the fairy, sobbing more quietly to himself, until she brought him out of the woods, into a green open space with a brook flowing through it. Just before them was a mountain, sharply defined against the sky.

"Across that mountain you must go; and now let the young gentleman who likes his own way so well, take it as he chooses," said the austere fairy.

"Thank you," replied Rick, with more politeness than he had ever exercised

before; and he started across the meadow, beyond which there was another wood at the foot of the mountain.

"How shall I get across the brook?" he asked, stopping suddenly, but not daring to look around at his stern guide.

"Go to the brook first: you cannot cross it until you get to it. When you reach it, a bridge will grow across it."

"And I cannot see any path in the woods, across the meadow, at the foot of the mountain."

"If no path opens before you in those woods, my fine young gentleman, say that the fairies have bewitched it."

Rick dared ask no more questions, and so he walked on towards the brook. When he reached it, sure enough, there was a foot-path across it, which looked like soft green moss, but was formed by an old tree-trunk overgrown with lichens. Rick ventured upon it very cautiously, but he found it firm; and, when he came to the woods, quite a broad path opened directly before him.

As he entered the path, he ventured to look back. The bridge over the brook had disappeared, but there stood the fairy, where he had left her; and, as he looked back, she called out with a laugh,—

"Ten to one, you'll come across the old man of the mountains with a big whip in his hand; but tell him that Zenia is near, and he will not touch a hair of your head."

Rick was now in great distress. The stern fairy was behind him, and, possibly, a man of the mountains before him. The best he could do, however, was to keep on towards the castle. Fearful as he was, he was consoled to find the path opening steadily before him up the mountain. It at length led him out upon a rocky spur, and here a narrow foot-path began to trace a winding line up and around ragged precipices. Without this path, he could never have made his way among the many ledges about him.

After toiling up this rocky ascent, very fearful regarding "the old man of the mountains," and hoping he would be away from home that afternoon, Rick at length stood upon the summit, and, still following the little winding path that seemed to creep along just before his feet, came suddenly upon the brink of a great precipice. Down, down, hundreds of feet below him, lay the river-road, and, yes, the castle itself: he could see its tower and ivied sides. And here was he on a rocky height that went sheer down a dizzy wall of ragged bowlders and ledges, to rough, rocky hills below.

Just as a dreadful conviction came upon him that he should never see his mother and Nanette again, but should die in sight of his home, a great figure arose close before him over the brink of the precipice. Two brilliant circles surrounded the giant form, and a yellow halo encircled his head. Bright-colored rays shot

out from the figure on all sides. In his hand, the strange, airy giant held a long, shining whip; and he was moving towards Rick in an ominous manner.

The poor boy was so terrified, that, although he tried to shout, he only began to sob frantically.

"Ho! ho!" said the man of the mountains, "Ho! ho!"

"Zenia is near!" Rick tried to say, but it was hardly more than a faint, wild shriek.

As soon as he spoke those words, however, the giant began to look less brilliant, and the figure itself to grow less distinct and farther away, until it disappeared, leaving the clear air, the sky, and the valley below, just as they had been before.

When the giant had disappeared, a voice behind Rick said,—

"I thought he would appear to you. Do you know what it means to see the old man of the mountains, with that long stick in his hand?"

Rick recognized the sharp voice, and, turning around, saw the fairy seated upon a low crag behind him, fanning herself with a bough laden with green leaves, and flowers just the color of her skirt.

She repeated the question again, in a louder voice; for Rick was so frightened and confused that he made no reply.

"No, ma'am," he faltered.

"Well, I'll tell you what it means, my fine young gentleman: it means that it is high time for the person who sees that sight, to make a change in his ways. Do you know what change you had better make in your ways?"

"No, ma'am," responded Rick meekly.

"Perhaps you don't know what you're coming to, my fine young gentleman. You're coming to be an ignorant man, more ignorant than many a peasant's son, as ignorant as a gypsy. And it's a bad man you're going to make,—a spendthrift, a drunkard, a sluggard, a ne'er do well, a villain, like enough. No one will respect you, no one trust you, no one love you, except your father and mother and Nanette, whose hearts you have crushed, and whose names you have disgraced."

Although Rick did not understand all the words she used, his imagination pictured even a worse prophecy, if possible, than their true meaning. He felt as if his future was pronounced, and was a terrible doom, which also involved his parents and Nanette in disgrace and ruin.

He fell upon his knees, and burst into a fresh flood of tears. Though he tried to speak, and beg the fairy to take back the dreadful words, he was so frightened and grief-stricken that he could utter nothing but convulsive sobs.

"What is the matter?" asked the fairy.

"Oh! oh!" sobbed Rick. "Don't let it happen to me! don't let it happen to my father and mother and Nanette!"

"How can I help it, silly boy? No one can help it but yourself. You might prevent it, if you would, but there is no use in supposing you ever will: you would rather have your own way, and go to destruction, than cross your own wishes, and come to a good end. I could tell you how you could change your fortune, and, instead of all this, grow up a good and noble man, of whom your father and mother would be proud. But to do that, you would have to change your present course entirely; and that you would not do."

"Oh, yes, I will! I will!" cried Rick eagerly. "Tell me how I can change my fortune!"

"Very well, I can tell you, although it will be only a waste of words. But you sha'n't have it to say it wasn't told you, and so you will have no one to blame but yourself, for going to destruction. There's Herr Schuler, in the village, who has taught many a peasant's son more than you are ever likely to know, and taught many a gentleman's son besides; so that it's been well said that the boy who has begun to learn under Herr Schuler never can grow up a dunce. If you will give up your play and nonsense from morning to night, and your lazy, lounging ways, and go over to Herr Schuler's, to learn to read, write, and cipher, to talk like a well-educated young gentleman, and to get a dressing with his long whip once in a while, to mend your ways and your manners, there'll be a chance for you yet."

"I'll go to-morrow!" cried Rick joyfully.

"A likely story, that! If I show you your way home, when you get there, safe and sound, that'll be the last you'll think of Zenia, and the good advice she gave you."

"No! no!" cried Rick. "I truly will go to Herr Schuler and learn!"

"If there's man enough in you to keep to that mind, my young gentleman, what will your lady-mother say to your going to Herr Schuler to learn? She'll say it's not the place for a fine gentleman's son like you."

"I sha'n't care what she says," replied Rick, conscious that he could have his own way with his mother. "I shall certainly go, let my mother say what she will."

The fairy laughed, and began to look upon Rick rather more graciously.

"It's not a likely story. But it's a good turn you'll do your mother and yourself, if you do as you say. And mind you, you'll need the long stick, and don't you be afraid of it: there'll be a power of good in every stroke; it'll help to make a man of you, and it'll be the best medicine that ever you had. But one thing's sure: if you tell your mother and Nanette, or any one else, of your meeting me in this wood, and receiving this advice from me, there'll be an end of your changing your fortune. Tell no one a word, but get your own way, and go to Herr Schuler to-morrow. Tell him you're coming every day, to take lessons, as long as

you stay at the castle."

"I'll do it!" cried Rick, "I'll do it!—and if I do, the bad things won't come to pass, will they?"

"Never a one of them, my lad, never a one of them; but if you don't keep your promise, mind you, they'll every one of them come true, you may depend upon it. Get up now, and go ahead of me. I'll show you how paths will open before you that you'd never have found without Zenia behind you. And with Herr Schuler behind you, there'll open a way that it will pay you well to walk in. So, go ahead, my laddie!"

Rick was very much comforted and re-assured by the pleasanter tone of Zenia's voice, as well as by the prospect of avoiding the awful future she had described, under the guidance of Herr Schuler; and he went on before her with a springing step. He wanted to look behind very much, now and then, but was afraid to do so: neither did he dare address her, but he followed her directions very obediently and promptly.

Her first direction was to go to the left. Now, at the left, there was apparently nothing but a thick growth of briers and bushes. But he had no sooner reached this thicket, in the way indicated, than a narrow but distinct path opened before him, which wound down the hill by the side of a little rivulet.

At the bottom of the hill, there was a swamp, in which Rick sank at every step, until the fairy said,—

"Let me go before you, and follow in my footsteps."

So Zenia took the lead; and, to Rick's surprise, he found that, by following directly in her steps, he had a perfectly firm footing in the midst of the swamp.

On the other side of the swamp rose another line of high hills, and it made Rick's tired limbs ache harder to think of having to climb over them.

But as they approached these hills, the two directly in front of them appeared to move apart, disclosing a very good, grassy road.

The fairy followed Rick along the winding road between the mountains, singing to herself in a low, monotonous tone, and not deigning to speak to Rick until they came out into a meadow, whose farther end seemed to rest against the sky. But to Rick's surprise, they had gone only a little way before they stood upon the verge of a hill, and below him Rick saw the familiar river-road again, lying, a white, winding streak, as far as he could see on either hand, and, not far to the right, half hidden by the trees, was the castle, its windows burning with the sunset glow shining beneath a mass of clouds that had just lifted from the horizon.

Rick's heart leaped with joy and thankfulness. Never before had his mother and Nanette and the castle seemed so dear.

"Hurry home now, as fast as you please; but don't forget all that Zenia has

told you," said the fairy.

Rick ran down over the long, slanting fields of the descent before him as fast as he could go. He had turned to thank the fairy for her kindness; but she had suddenly disappeared, leaving him alone upon the brow of the hill.

His mother and Nanette had grown so anxious about him, that they had sent Peter, the groom, off on horseback to look for him. They were astonished enough to see Rick coming into the yard on foot, with torn and soiled garments. But as soon as they found he was sound and well, although exhausted by fatigue and excitement, Nanette said,—

"What has become of Skip?"

Rick had been so frightened, and so taken up with his strange situation and the fairy's presence, that he had, until that moment, forgotten all about poor Skip.

He burst into tears, and was about to tell his mother and Nanette all of his adventures, when he remembered the fairy's caution, and the awful fate which awaited him if he should disclose his meeting with her. So he only explained that he had got lost, and had to leave Skip in some woods of whose situation he was ignorant, and that he had come home on foot through strange and curious ways.

"Poor boy!" said his mother, kissing him fondly, and feeling glad to see him appear so singularly gentle and downcast, although she was very sorry for him. "He is crying because he is so sorry about Skip. When Peter comes home, we will send him off at once to get Skip."

But it was in vain that Peter, following Rick's directions as far as the bewildered boy could give any, searched the woods for the pony. Long after dark, he came home without having seen a trace of her.

The next morning, Skip was found tied just outside the castle-gate; and no one about the castle could tell how she came there, unless it was Rick, who was certain, in his own mind, that it was Zenia's doings.

Before the dew was off the grass, Rick mounted the pony.

"Now, my love," said his mother, "do not ride far this morning, for fear you will get lost again in these wild woods. Keep to the main road, or I shall never dare to trust you away from the castle again without Peter behind you."

"I shall never go into the woods again," said Rick, in a tone of decision, which quite re-assured his mother. "I am going over to Herr Schuler's, to get him to teach me to read and write and cipher, and to train me with his long stick."

His mother could not believe her ears; and, while she was collecting her wits, Rick rode away, not in his usual gay manner, but looking as serious as a judge.

When he came to Herr Schuler's house, he dismounted, and knocked at the door.

Herr Schuler himself appeared.

"Ah, my little man!" said he, "what can I do for you?"

"I want you to teach me," said Rick.

"Indeed! Did your mother send you to me?"

"No, sir: I have come because I wanted to."

"Are not you the boy who dislikes schools and teachers so much?"

"I was that boy; but I am a boy now who wants to learn, and no one can teach me but you."

"I must go over and see your mother, then, and find out about it," replied Herr Schuler, who was much perplexed.

"But I want to commence this morning, and have brought the books that my mother and Nanette tried to make me study in."

Hereupon Rick ran and took off a little satchel which he had hung upon his saddle.

"This looks like business," said Herr Schuler. "If you keep on as you have begun, it will not take long to make a scholar of you."

He took Rick in, set him down at a little table, and gave him an easy lesson to learn, in spelling. It was soon learned, and then followed one column of the multiplication table. After that, Rick wrote the words of a copy over half a dozen times, very carefully. Then he read a short story aloud. Herr Schuler said that was enough for once; and Rick went home feeling very proud and happy, to tell his mother and Nanette what Herr Schuler said,—that there was now no reason why he should not become as good a scholar as any in the whole country.

His mother and Nanette praised and encouraged him; but they said behind his back, that this new freak would not continue long. They were greatly mistaken. Day after day Rick went to Herr Schuler's, and learned his lessons faithfully: more than that, he seemed to enjoy them as much as he had previously enjoyed his idleness. One reason of this was, that Herr Schuler had a way of making lessons so interesting that they seemed like play, and he did not give too long tasks.

After Rick had been to school about a fortnight, he lingered after he had been dismissed.

"Do you want to speak with me, Rick?" asked Herr Schuler.

"I only want to ask you," replied Rick, "when you are going to use your long stick upon me?"

"What!" exclaimed Herr Schuler, in great glee, thinking Rick was joking. "You don't want a whipping, do you?"

"Yes, I do!" replied Rick soberly and emphatically.

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Herr Schuler, in amazement.

"Why not?" replied Rick. "I never shall make a man, if you don't whip me

some; and I want you to begin right off."

It was with much difficulty that Herr Schuler restrained his smiles. "Well, well, Rick! if you are really willing"—

"Willing!" interrupted Rick, "I am in a great hurry."

"Very well: perhaps there are some things that you will learn better by the use of my long stick, than you will from books or lectures; so look out for a whipping soon."

Rick hurried home in high spirits, to tell his mother and Nanette that he was getting on so well that Herr Schuler was going to begin switching him with his long stick, to teach him some things that he could not learn out of books.

"My dear child!" exclaimed his mother. "It is because you have never known what a whipping is, that you are in such glee. What have you been doing to displease Herr Schuler? Tell me at once. I will go directly and ask him to pardon you and spare his rod."

"No, no!" cried Rick excitedly. "If you do, I will never forgive you!"

"But do you know, my child, that a whipping hurts?"

"Of course I do! Don't I switch Skip with my whip, to make her go faster, and to mind what I tell her? And haven't I switched myself with it, too, for fun? And haven't I seen boys whipped ever so many times, and crying and dancing about? But I shall neither dance nor cry, because I shall like it."

"What a strange boy!" said his mother, laughing. "But I will trust Herr Schuler not to do my boy any injury, and we will see if you like the rod so well after you have felt it."

The next day, when Rick made his appearance, Herr Schuler said,—

"This is the third or fourth time you have been late, my boy. One of the worst of faults is to be habitually late. Suppose we apply a little birch, to strengthen your memory of this fact?"

So Herr Schuler went to a little closet in one corner of the room, and took down a long, smooth birch switch, from a nail upon which it was hanging.

Rick's eyes glistened with anticipation, and he began to pull off his jacket.

"Oh! you needn't take off your jacket," said Herr Schuler.

"Yes," answered Rick: "that's the way Peter makes his boy do, when he whips him."

Herr Schuler whizzed the rod through the air with a great flourish and noise, but brought it down as lightly as possible upon Rick's back.

"You are only making believe!" exclaimed Rick, with a sort of indignation at the sham. "Such a whipping as that will never make a man of me."

Upon this, Herr Schuler laid on with a will, determined to give Rick so much of the stick that he would never again plead for a whipping. But the little hero never winced.

"Will that do?" asked the master at last, in almost a tone of entreaty.

"Perhaps it will do for this time," replied Rick; "but it's no more than a respectable whipping. Now I'm ready for my lessons, and I'll try never to be late again."

"Bravo!" cried Herr Schuler: "at this rate, I will soon put you in a way to become such a man as your country will be proud of."

But Herr Schuler's resolution failed him. Although he had whipped many a rough and heedless scholar into better manners by his long stick, his kind heart and his just soul recoiled from the thought of punishing so steady and earnest a boy as Rick had become, for trivial faults of which the boy himself was unconscious. It was Rick himself who next referred to the rod.

"It is two weeks since I have had a birch lesson," he said.

"Ah! h'm!" replied Herr Schuler, getting up and going to the closet very reluctantly. "So you want another birch lesson, so soon?"

He took down the stick, and then resumed his seat in front of Rick.

"What was that you were telling little Jean Pettis, when you first came this morning? Did you not say that you had seen an elephant as high as my barn, and that you rode upon his back with about a hundred other children?"

"Well, he was a very large elephant."

"Was he as high as my barn?"

"Why, he was almost as high, I think."

"Look out of the window at the barn, and tell me, truly as you can, about how high you really think the elephant would reach."

Rick looked out, and, after a careful examination, said, with rather an ashamed look, that he thought he would reach about to the top of the barn-door.

"Very good," said Herr Schuler; "and now think, and tell me truly, about how many children you really suppose there were on the elephant's back."

After thinking a while, Rick said, with a deep blush, that he was not sure that there were more than twenty-five.

"Very well," said Herr Schuler: "if you go on at this rate, do you expect to grow up a reliable man, whose word can be depended upon? Take off your jacket!"

"There!" he continued, after he had given Rick a number of sharp blows, "will that make you remember to be more truthful in your statements?"

"I guess it will help," replied Rick; "but if I find myself talking so carelessly again, I will tell you, and take another whipping to help my memory."

He was as good as his word: he came to Herr Schuler several times after that, with the information that he had not told the exact truth, and took a whipping for it.

Only once, however, did Herr Schuler whip him with a right good will of his

own; and that was after he had paid a visit at the castle, and heard Rick, several times, speak disrespectfully to his mother.

For instance, when his mother said she thought she should have a branch cut from one of the trees near the castle, because it shaded Rick's window too much, Rick said,—

"A branch! I guess I'll have that whole tree down, or nothing; it's only a bother, anyway; it not only darkens the window, but it spoils the view out of the window. I'll have the tree cut down to the ground!"

Herr Schuler was so polite a man that he appeared to take no notice of Rick's independent remarks; but the next day, he said to him,—

"If you want a good whipping now, young man, you can have it, and I can put it on with a good will."

"All right," replied Rick very cheerfully: "what is it for?"

Herr Schuler then told him how sorry he had been to find that he was in the habit of speaking disrespectfully to his mother, and to other elders at home.

"Why, I didn't know there was any harm in that," replied Rick, in unfeigned surprise. Thereupon Herr Schuler gave him a very decided little lecture upon the danger of growing up without habits of respect and politeness for others in word and action. At the end of the lecture, he gave Rick so smart a whipping, that he was fully satisfied for that time.

By the end of the summer, Rick had made such progress, that his father, who had been away from home for several months on important business, was completely astonished at the change in his son, when he came to take his family back to the city.

One of the best changes in Rick was the improvement in his manners. Herr Schuler's little lectures, and the way in which Rick had insisted upon having them impressed upon his mind with the long stick, according to the hints given by the fairy, had worked a complete transformation: he had, even in this short time, become a very gentlemanly boy, careful to do right for the sake of doing right, and thoughtful of others' comfort.

During the following winter, he made great progress at the grand school at the capital, to which he was recommended by Herr Schuler; and the carefulness, both in lessons and deportment, which he had already learned, helped him even more than his natural brightness. He was so conscious of this himself, that, whenever he was asked how he came to be so good a scholar, and why he was always so polite and thoughtful, he answered,—

"Herr Schuler taught me how to study and to be mannerly."

As his mother's health was poor, the next summer, it was decided that she should go to the seaside instead of the castle; and Rick spent the summer there with her and Nanette, and was a great comfort to them.

The following summer, however, his mother's health being fully restored, they went back to the castle; and, soon after their arrival, Herr Schuler was invited to pay them a visit with his wife and daughter.

Rick had now become a tall, manly youth, and would have smiled incredulously at one of Nanette's fairy-stories. He knew that there were not, and never had been, any fairies; but he had, for a good while, been greatly perplexed about the woman in red and yellow whom he met in the forest, and who had so cunningly induced him to go to school to Herr Schuler.

In the evening, he said that, if they liked, he would tell them a curious story, which, although it would convince his mother and Nanette and Herr Schuler that he had been no such wonderful boy as they had thought him, was well worth hearing.

He then told them all about his losing his way among the mountains; his meeting with the woman in red and yellow clothing, whom he had believed to be a fairy; the wonderful appearance of the bright and airy giant who had advanced towards him with a whip in his hand, saying, "Ho! ho! ho! ho!" the supposed fairy's terrible warnings and good advice, and how singularly the way out of the mountains had opened before him.

Herr Schuler laughed loud and long.

"So that was the secret of your wonderful docility!" he exclaimed. "As for the giant figure, it was nothing but the mirage which is frequently seen in these mountains: it was a magnified reflection of Rick Lordelle upon the vapor in front of him."

"But how came the figure to have a long whip in his hand?" inquired Rick.

"You must have had a stick in your own hand."

"Oh, yes! I carried my riding-whip in my left hand, and the giant appeared to have a whip in his right hand. But how came the giant to say 'Ho! ho! ho! ho!'?"

"It was, without doubt, the echo of your sobs, from the ledge near you."

"And as for the fairy," said Herr Schiller's daughter, "she was one of the band of gypsies who passed through here about that time; and the smoke you saw in the woods, came from their camp. I remember this woman very well. I saw her the day before you met her, and she had that yellow satin skirt and red waist in a bundle of old clothes she carried: I gave her the old red silk handkerchief myself, for one of her baskets; and she opened the bundle, to put it in with the rest of the clothes."

"And I saw her too!" exclaimed Rick's mother. "She was here at the castle, and begged me to give her some old clothes in exchange for some of her pretty baskets. She showed me an old embroidered yellow satin skirt, which a lady had given her, and asked me if I could give her a waist to go with it. Knowing

how much the gypsies like bright colors, I gave her an old red satin waist, which pleased her greatly."

"Oh, yes!" said Rick; "and now I remember her myself. When I first saw her, she was dressed in an old faded calico: she was about the castle some time, and finally went out of the yard carrying her bundle of old clothes with her. I scarcely looked at her at the time, she appeared to be so uninteresting. Nanette was having great trouble with me that morning, trying to get me to read a lesson; and I told her, that, if she did not stop her noise, or tell me a fairy-story, I would slap her in the face, to which she replied, 'Rick Lordelle, you will surely grow up a disgrace to every one who belongs to you!' I remember this distinctly; because, after Zenia foretold what would happen to me if I kept on in my ways, I recollected Nanette had said something like that to me, when she was so vexed with me in the morning."

"As for the paths opening, that is plain enough," added Herr Schuler. "These little woodland paths seldom appear until you are close to them, and the road that opened between the mountains was in one of those narrow defiles which are quite invisible in the distance. Across that marshy district, there are a great many moss-grown stones, which serve for footing, if any one can tell them from the rest of the bog."

"It does not make any difference now," said Rick, "that Zenia turns out to be only a gypsy; for her warnings were just as true, and her advice just as good, as a real fairy's could have been: but I should not have thought so two years ago, and so I am very glad that I took her for one of Nanette's fairies."

After Pierre had finished reading, they all expressed themselves as much pleased with the story: Johnny was especially enthusiastic.

"I thought you didn't like fairy-stories, Johnny," said Sue.

"I never did like one very much before: but, you see, this fairy didn't turn out to be a fairy after all, and every thing she said was true, and really came to pass, so far as the person reading the story can know; and then, there is a good deal of sense in it from beginning to end; and that's the kind of story I like."

"It's just as good as a fairy-story, I think," said Felix; "because you suppose there is a fairy in it, until the very end, and then when you find it was a gypsy, you like the old gypsy just as well as you would a fairy. The worst of it is, I think it is a very long story for me to learn to read well very soon; and so I'm afraid it will be a good while before I get to Boston."

"I don't think it will take you long to learn to read it well, if you pay good attention to my directions," replied Pierre; "and if you want to get on faster at

any time, you have only to give more time to the practice."

CHAPTER VIII.
AT THE COTTAGE.

Johnny found plenty of time for undisturbed possession of the sky-room, for Felix was always off on his bicycle in the morning on pleasant days; so that, when Johnny preferred to stay at home, he was sure of the time until noon to himself. When he could not persuade "Prof." to accompany him, Felix generally found Harrison Brown quite ready; and since Harrison was a pleasant, well-disposed boy, Mr. Le Bras had given Felix permission to go with him at any time in the morning. As bicycle-riding was vetoed for the afternoon, Felix had various expedients for amusement during that portion of the day, among which were lawn-tennis at a neighbor's, base-ball with some boys on the park towards evening, and other outdoor recreations. In fact, he was in the house so seldom that Johnny experienced very little inconvenience after the first terror at his coming had subsided. And Felix had never behaved well for so many days in his life before, as since his residence with his uncle: his parents would have been greatly pleased and astonished at his unusual affability and tractableness, which were simply the result of the firm, orderly government under which he found himself placed.

Felix had read to Pierre every morning for two weeks, and at the end of that time accompanied his uncle to Boston, the latter having expressed himself satisfied with the test-reading. Johnny had accompanied them, and, as he was quite familiar with Boston, had shown his cousin the principal sights while his father was transacting the business on which he had come. As soon as Mr. Le Bras was at liberty, he took the boys down the harbor, to Nantasket Beach, after which they returned home.

Felix had made so much improvement, during the two weeks, in reading, that he was now quite ready to take part in the evening readings; and this practice, with the standing instructions Pierre had given him, caused him to make constant improvement.

The morning lessons in the fairy-story had been given by Pierre in his own room, which was the spare chamber. The lesson always began by Pierre's reading the portion of the story he wished Felix to read, while Felix listened to him, with the purpose of imitating him as nearly as possible when his turn came. As

Pierre was a good elocutionist, he read very finely, changing his voice admirably; so that, by the second or third lesson, Felix had nearly given up the monotone which had helped to make his own reading so painful to hear. By being made to read over any words that sounded indistinct, Felix soon overcame the defects of his enunciation. Pierre made him spell, by dividing into syllables, all the words he could not pronounce. This discipline was kept up also during the evening readings, for Felix's benefit. Of course, the drill rather detracted from the interest of what Felix read; but no one was inclined to complain, except Sue, who had been strictly charged to exhibit no impatience, or say any thing that could discourage Felix or hurt his feelings. He was certainly making a braver attempt to overcome his deficiencies than any one could have expected of him, and his aunt was certain that the example of Rick in the story helped him not a little. "I think," said Sue one day, "that Rick Lordelle was exactly like Felix in every way,—anyhow, as Felix used to be, whenever we went to see him in New York; though I think he's an ever so much better boy now; and I like him first-rate, when he isn't too rough, and don't get to teasing me awful bad."

By the last of July, Mr. Le Bras was able to leave his business for a while, and accompany the family to his brother's seaside cottage. They started off one pleasant morning, with trunks and valises, a very merry company. Mr. Le Bras himself was almost as light-hearted as a boy at getting away from his office: and Pierre, who was a great lover of the sea, by which he had lived when he was a little boy, was full of anticipations of fishing and hunting excursions; he carried his gun in his hand, and had a fishing basket and tackle in his trunk. As for Johnny, Felix, and Sue, of course they were exceedingly happy: Felix and Sue chattered incessantly.

It was a four hours' journey, with one change of cars. They reached the village nearest the cottage about noon, and found Oliver waiting for them with the carriage. As they were getting out of the cars, an enormous dog jumped upon Felix, barking loudly, and then began to bound about him and the rest of the party with every demonstration of joy possible.

"Why, Clyde!" exclaimed Felix. "Yes, it is Clyde! Of course it is! But how did he ever come here? Where did you find him, Oliver?"

"He jumped off the cars one day, and came right over to the cottage," replied Oliver, with a smiling side-glance at Mr. Le Bras.

"Well, now! if that wasn't knowing of him!" said Felix. "But I wonder how he knew which train to take, and how the conductor came to let him stay on, and how he happened to know just what station to get off at?"

"But you've always heard tell, Felix, that dogs are mighty knowin' creatures," returned Oliver, smiling from ear to ear.

"But they're not quite so knowing as that, after all," said Johnny: "there's

some other explanation, if we could only find out."

"I'll tell you just how it was, boys," said Mr. Le Bras, as soon as they were all stowed in the roomy two-horse carriage, and Oliver had started off, with Clyde following behind, wagging his tail joyously. "I think I must confess, now"—

"Oh! you did it, did you?" interrupted Sue. "Before I'd have thought"—

"Hush, Sue!" said her mother: "you must not interrupt papa."

"Well, the long and short of it is, Felix, that it was unpleasant for us to have such a great, warm-hearted dog as Clyde rushing into a city-house, with his feet dusty or muddy, and jumping up on our clothes, and on the furniture, to say nothing of his tracks on the carpets; and so I concluded, after a little observation of his mischief, to send him down to the cottage. But as I didn't know you as well as I do now, and wrongly supposed, you might be vexed with me, and not get over it very easily, if I told you Clyde must be banished from the city, I took him down to my office one morning, wrote a note to Oliver, which I tied to his collar, and then accompanied him to the depot, and put him in charge of the conductor, who agreed to hand him over to the conductor of the other road, with instructions to put him off at this station, where I was certain, if he did not find his way to the cottage himself, some one would carry him there; since I knew Oliver would be well known all about here."

"So that's the trick you played on me!" replied Felix, looking at his uncle with more of an expression of admiration than indignation. "You're a pretty fellow, ain't you? Now, I'll bet I'll play you as good a trick as that before you go home!"

"But I thought conductors would not allow dogs on board the cars," said Johnny.

"The conductor said he would have him tied up in the baggage-car; but I didn't stop to see what disposal he made of him, beyond the fact that he gave him in charge to one of the baggage-men, who said he would see that it was all right. I offered either to buy Clyde a half ticket, or pay his way as freight; but the conductor, who is a friend of mine, said it was unnecessary, and that the other conductor would be glad to oblige him. So Clyde came as a deadhead."

"I'm mighty glad he wasn't lost," said Felix, "and that I didn't spend any of my money advertising him. I don't care so much for the money; but you see, if I'd advertised him, I should have been all the more fooled. I didn't know how to get along without Clyde down here by the water, and I was going to remind you of your promise that I should have another dog, if he didn't turn up before we came to the cottage; but we were all in such a hurry and excitement this morning, that I forgot all about it."

After passing through the village, they came upon a very hard, handsome road perfectly white.

"What makes this road so white?" asked Sue.

"It is a shell road," replied Felix: "it has been covered with clam and oyster shells, and the carriage-wheels have powdered the shells."

"It is a very handsome road," remarked Johnny, "and will be fine for our bicycles."

"Capital!" returned Felix; "for it is a very long road, and even as a floor; it extends two miles at least, as far as two monstrous cottages which are the only ones beyond ours, though ours is a mile this side of them."

The shell road soon led along the beach, and in front of a row of small but pretty cottages built quite closely together. Beyond these cottages were larger summer residences, placed much farther apart. As they drove on, there were no more houses to be seen.

"Why! Where is your cottage, Felix?" asked Johnny.

"Oh! you'll see it in a minute."

They soon came to a sharp turn in the beach, and just ahead was a handsome house in the Queen Anne style.

"Oh! what a pretty house!" exclaimed Sue. "Is that your cottage?"

"No; but ours is just as handsome; I think ours is painted handsomer."

There was a little strip of woods beyond the Queen Anne cottage; but when they were past this obstacle to the view, they came suddenly upon another cottage, which was really a large wooden house, built in fancy style, abounding in odd and pretty windows, balconies, and verandas.

Before Sue had time to ask if this was the cottage, Oliver entered a driveway at the right, which led, with a broad sweep, up to the front-door, and continued around the house.

Oliver's wife met them at the door with,—

"I'm awful glad to see all of you! It's ben dreadful lonesome here without the folks, and nothin' to do to keep one busy."

"You must not suppose, Mary," replied Mrs. Le Bras, "that you will have all the work to do for such a company. Katie will be here to-night: she could not get away this morning very well."

The interior of the cottage was prettily furnished with straw mattings, wicker chairs, light curtains, and other furnishings in style appropriate for a summer residence: nothing was lacking to make it as convenient and comfortable as possible. Mrs. Le Bras had her trunks carried to the chamber facing the water, and told Pierre and the children that they could make a selection of the other chambers to suit themselves, if the boys and Sue came to no disagreement in doing so. Johnny said he thought Felix ought to choose first, because it was his father's cottage; but Felix insisted that Pierre should have the first choice. Pierre said he should like the chamber looking up the road, as that direction, being free

from houses, was where he should be most likely to see game. Since that was the most retired room, Felix seemed to think it was the worst choice that could be made; but Pierre said he was perfectly satisfied.

"Felix must choose next," said Johnny, "because he is the next oldest."

"Then, I'll take the room I had last summer, which looks down the beach. To be sure, you can't see down the beach only a little way, on account of the grove: but there's a real nice girl lives in the cottage there; and when she could play with me, she used to hang a blue ribbon out of that window in the corner, which is the only one you can see through the trees. I sha'n't want to play with her this year, because I have other company; but I was glad enough to, last year, for there wasn't a boy or another girl in any of the other cottages around here.—And now it's your turn, Johnny."

"I'll take the corner room next to yours, then, which has one window toward the woods, and two towards the grounds back of the house, where there is such a fine huckleberry pasture in view, with rocks and juniper-trees. Now for you, Sue."

"I think I'll take the little room that opens out of mamma's, because that looks towards the sea too; and although it isn't as big as your rooms, if it gets too little for me any time, I can go right through into mamma's big room. There is a real cunning balcony out of the little room, too, and I can sit out there ever so much."

"Yes," said Felix: "there is a canopy there; and, if you draw it up, it will make it cool and shady in the balcony any time."

"There is the north-west corner room left for company," said Johnny.

"But where will Katie sleep?" asked Sue.

"There are two splendid rooms up the next flight, a good deal like your sky-room at home," replied Felix: "Oliver and his wife have one of them, and Katie can have the other. Come up, and I'll show it to you."

The verdict was that Katie's room was very pleasant indeed, and had the best landward view of any; since you could see through and over the grove, and down the beach from the east window, and far beyond the huckleberry pasture, to a country road in the distance, from the north windows. It had a west window also, looking much farther west than Pierre's room; so that, if he had not already chosen, he thought he should have preferred that room. The boys said, however, that he must not change; for they wanted him on the same floor with themselves. By the time the selection was made, Mary announced dinner and; they went down into the cool dining-room, which looked very inviting, with its neatly set table.

Mr. Le Bras was seated before a platter of roast lamb, with a smoking dish of potatoes by its side; while bread, green peas, and other accompaniments were

interspersed at suitable intervals.

"Mrs. Oliver has treated us very handsomely," said Mr. Le Bras; "although we wrote that she must not put herself out, since we could very well wait till Kate arrived, and I had a chance to go marketing."

"Where shall I go to hire a sail-boat, Felix?" inquired Mr. Le Bras when dinner was over.

"Hire a boat? Why, we've got two boats—a row-boat and a sail-boat—of our own!"

"I remember, now, hearing you say so; but as I saw no boat around here, I had forgotten about it. Where are the boats kept?"

"They are down at the pier usually, when they are in use. I'll go and ask Oliver about them."

Oliver soon came in with Felix, and stated that the boats were at the pier which they had noticed just this side of the row of cottages; they had been in the keeping of a man in the village who owned a boat-house, and had not been taken out until Oliver heard Mr. Le Bras was coming; but, the day before, he had told the man to bring them to the pier, and he presumed they would be found there, although he had forgotten to notice as they came past. Felix's father was intending to have a little wharf built out in front of the cottage, but he had not been able to attend to it yet.

"But the beach comes to an end for a while, a little above here," continued Oliver; "and you can run a boat up there, and land by the rocks, when you don't want to go down as far as the pier; but the pier is a handier place to get out and in, if you've got ladies along."

Sue was very anxious then to see the pony and dog-cart which Felix said she could use. Oliver told her he would harness the pony by and by, so that she could drive along the beach.

"But it won't be half so nice to go alone, and the boys don't care any thing about riding in a dog-cart."

"I shouldn't at all wonder," said Mary, who was standing in the kitchen-door, "if Miss Julia, the young lady who lives in the next cottage, would like to ride with you: she has asked to borrow the dog-cart several times herself, when she's had young friends here, and she seems to like it very much. Mr. Le Bras told her she could take it any time she wanted it."

"I wish some one would ask her," said Sue. "Won't you, Felix?"

"Yes: if you and Johnny will come and sit in the front piazza, I'll go and ask her to come over here and get acquainted."

Accordingly, Johnny and Sue sat down in the veranda while Felix ran off towards the cottage. Pierre was just going up the road with his gun.

"Don't you want to get back in time for a sail about four?" asked Mr. Le

Bras. "Oliver, who, they say, is a good hand with a boat, is going to take Mrs. Le Bras and myself out about that time, and we should like to have you along."

"Which way shall you go?" inquired Pierre, stopping.

"We thought we would go up toward the cottages above here. Oliver tells me there is a good landing there; and, as I have a little business with a gentleman who lives in one of the cottages, I thought I would make him a call."

"I am going up that way," replied Pierre; "and I will be around about the time you arrive, and come back with you, if you are willing."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Le Bras, who was standing in the front-door: "we will be on the lookout for you."

Presently Felix came back, accompanied by a pleasant-looking girl of about Johnny's age: she had golden-brown wavy hair, and eyes that looked quite blue before she came into the shade of the piazza, after which they appeared to be of a grayish color, with a slight suspicion of brown in them; they were very bright eyes, that seemed to take in every thing at a glance.

"This is my cousin Johnny, Julia, and this is Sue," said Felix, as if he thought a very slight introduction indeed would answer for a little girl like Sue. But Sue pieced out her introduction by saying, "I'm Johnny's sister: but I sha'n't tell that I'm Felix's cousin, because he wouldn't say so himself; and I don't much care, because I've got a good many relations without him."

Julia laughed heartily at this, and Felix looked a little nonplussed.

"I'm real glad there are to be so many young folks here this season," said Julia: "there wasn't any one here last summer, except Felix, without I went ever so far to see them. It wasn't pleasant at all: I was just as homesick as I could be. But now I think we can have very nice times, unless,"—and she looked questioningly at Johnny,—"unless Johnny is as great a tease as Felix is."

"Johnny is not a bit of a tease," said Sue: "I don't know as he ever tried to tease me in his life; though I tease him once in a great while, when I have what he calls one of my 'high times.'"

"He must be a new kind of a boy if he don't tease," returned Julia: "every boy I ever knew liked to tease, but Felix is the very worst boy to plague any one I ever saw."

Felix laughed, and made up a comic face.

"But you liked to play with him last year, or you wouldn't have hung the blue ribbon out of the window," replied Sue.

"Now, you go and tell every thing! that's just like you!" exclaimed Felix, with a look of vexation.

"He didn't see the blue ribbon very often," replied Julia, laughing. "After he had teased me real hard, I wouldn't play with him for ever so long, and that happened pretty often. I guess he wouldn't have got on very well if it hadn't been

for a boy who came up from one of the cottages."

"I wonder if Jack is here this year?" said Felix.

"Yes: I saw him one day down by his cottage, firing pebble-stones at a little kitten he had thrown into the water, to keep her from coming ashore. I stopped the carriage, and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself. Then he let the kitten come ashore; and I got out, and took up the poor, shivering little thing, and brought it home. I saw him a while after, and he accused me of stealing his kitten; but I did not pay any attention to him: I didn't believe a boy had any right to a kitten he wanted to keep just for the sake of treating it cruelly. It's a beautiful little tortoise shell; and he'll never get it again, if I can help it!"

They had all been talking so fast that Johnny, who was always careful not to interrupt, and who never forced himself into notice, had not said a word, except to bow, and say "Good-morning," when he was introduced.

"Why don't you say something, Johnny?" whispered Sue in his ear, as Felix went on talking about Jack, saying he was a pretty good fellow to have a gay time with, and he thought he should look him up before long.

"I haven't had a good chance," Johnny whispered back: "I'm waiting for Felix to get through."

"He never will get through," returned Sue: "when he makes a little pause, you just say something as quick as ever you can."

"What if I should set Clyde on the kitten?" said Felix to Julia.

"You'd better not, young man: I'll never forgive you if you do!"

"Just let me get a sight of her, that's all," returned Felix, running off in the direction of the cottage in which Julia lived, looking back, and laughing roguishly as he ran. "Come, Clyde!" he called back; and Clyde, who was lying in the piazza, jumped up and followed him.

"I sha'n't please him by running after him," said Julia: "but if he does set Clyde on the kitten, I've a mind not to have any thing to do with him all summer; he is one of the most annoying boys I ever saw; I only came over because I wanted to get acquainted with the rest of you."

"Felix has been pretty good at our house this season," replied Johnny, "and I don't believe he will tease you this year if father finds it out; for father don't believe in teasing, and he has charge of Felix this summer."

"Then, you don't tease!" returned Julia, with a pleased look. "I am so glad! I think I can have some nice times with you and your sister."

Sue then asked Julia if she would go to ride in the dog-cart with her.

"Yes, indeed! I should like to go very much, any time."

Felix soon came back, saying he could not find the kitten this time, but he should be on the lookout for it.

"I should like to stay longer, if Felix had not begun to tease," said Julia; "but

since he has, I think I will go home:" and she rose, and began to go down the steps.

"I wish you wouldn't go yet: I haven't more than half got acquainted," said Sue.

"I'll go home with you, and see if I can find the kitten," remarked Felix, beginning to walk down the steps also, and laughing.

"No, you won't!" replied Julia, sitting down on the steps. "I declare, Felix Le Bras, I won't come over here another time, if you are going to act like this!"

It happened that Mr. Le Bras, who had been sitting in a balcony over the piazza, had heard most of the conversation between the children. He now appeared at the door, and said, "Is this the young lady who lives near us?"

"Yes," replied Johnny: "she came to make us a call."

"And Felix is teasing her," said Sue.

"How is that, Felix?" asked Mr. Le Bras, in a tone of feigned surprise. "I hope you would not be so ungentlemanly, and towards a visitor too!"

"Oh! I'm only joking with her a little," returned Felix.

"Is the joke amusing to you or to her?"

"Why, to me."

"And it is very annoying to me," said Julia.

Mr. Le Bras came out, sat down in a chair on the piazza, and began to talk with Julia. She seemed much pleased, and conversed with him very prettily.

"I want you to come in now, Julia, and see Mrs. Le Bras," he said, after they had conversed for about ten minutes, "so that we shall all be acquainted with you." He then took Julia up into the balcony where Mrs. Le Bras was sitting.

"I think you've been a good deal of a tell-tale this morning, Sue," said Felix, looking quite cross.

"I haven't told any thing but the truth," replied Sue, quite decidedly.

"But you know, Sue," said Johnny, "that you shouldn't tell any thing any one would not like to have told, unless there is some very necessary reason."

"I didn't think when I told about the blue ribbon," replied Sue: "and I told papa, because I thought Felix ought not to tease Julia; but I won't tell any more, unless Felix is very troublesome indeed."

"All the fun there is in being with girls is to tease them: every one knows that," replied Felix. "I don't tease you, Sue, because you are not as old as I am; but it's all right to tease Julia, and she don't care half as much as she pretends."

"But you wouldn't really set Clyde on her kitten, would you?" asked Johnny.

"Why, of course I would! What harm would it do? It would only scare the kitten a little, and make her bristle up her tail, and run up a tree."

"How would you like to have a great, savage-looking animal run after you?"

replied Johnny.

"Perhaps I shouldn't like it. But what has that to do with it?"

"The kitten wouldn't like it, either," said Sue.

This putting himself in the place of a kitten, imagining her terrors, and pitying them, was an entirely new idea to Felix; but he was not willing to admit that he saw any force to the argument. "Oh! girls have queer notions," he said, "and Johnny's just like them. For my part, I'm going to do as other boys do: I ain't going to be a girl-boy. I shall tease Julia some; and if Sue wants to keep on being a tell-tale, she can."

Julia then came running down-stairs.

"I've had a splendid visit," she said, "and I'm going home to tell mamma about it. Now, don't you follow me, Felix!"

She ran down the steps and towards home like a flash. Possibly it might have been Felix's intention to follow her with Clyde; but as his uncle appeared at the door just after Julia left, he sat still on the steps.

"That is a nice, bright girl," said Mr. Le Bras: "you are very lucky to have such a neighbor, children."

Mr. Le Bras then returned to the balcony, and Sue accompanied him. Felix whistled to Clyde, and went to the barn to see Oliver. But Johnny continued sitting in the piazza for some time, looking at the light waves that curled up over the beach in front of the cottage, and gazing off at the blue expanse, here and there dotted with a white sail. He was interested, too, in the flight of the sea-gulls, of which a great many were darting about over the water. For once, when alone, he forgot to wish for a book to read.

CHAPTER IX.

LOST.

They all started out, about four o'clock, on pleasure excursions, that first day of their arrival at the cottage. Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras walked down to the pier, and embarked in the sail-boat with Oliver. Sue and Julia went riding in the dog-cart, first going to the pier to see the party set sail, and then riding on down the beach to the village. Felix and Johnny, having found their bicycles at the baggage-house, near the depot-building, went up the beach. As they came through the village, they met Julia and Sue, who were driving leisurely about the streets.

"Don't you wish you could ride on a bicycle, Julia?" said Felix, as he shot past at his best pace.

"No," called back Julia, "not with you!"

Johnny, who came after at a slower rate, lifted his hat politely, saying, "I hope you will have a very pleasant ride."

"I like your brother ever so much," said Julia to Sue. "I think he is very manly and polite."

"Felix thinks he is the manliest," replied Sue.

"I don't," replied Julia, with emphasis.

As the boys passed the cottage, Clyde, who had been commanded to stay at home by Felix, ran towards them, barking loudly.

"You can come on now, Clyde," said Felix; and the dog bounded happily after them up the road.

"It will be fun to go on up this way," remarked Felix; "because I've never been any farther than the cottages, where the shell road ends. We'll have to go across through a kind of cart-track after we get there, in order to cross over to the regular country road, which is a good deal back from the water. You can see the road when we get to the cottages, and it leads to the Point, where they blast rocks. They're to work there all the time, Oliver says. I didn't explore this region much last year, because I hadn't a bicycle; as for a pony-cart, it isn't worth any thing for exploring; but if you are on a bicycle, you can go over stone walls, if you want to, and then set your wheel up again and go on."

For the whole length of the shell road, the white-sanded beach was just at their left, with waves dashing gently in and retreating. The expanse of water beyond extended a long distance, and was bounded by a blue, misty strip of land that looked almost like a dark cloud lying along the horizon. There were many sail-boats visible, and now and then a yacht, a schooner, or a steamboat.

"We can see no end of yachts by going down to the Harbor," said Felix.

"Where is the Harbor?"

"Oh! they generally take the cars, and go away down below the village, you know: but we could go on our bicycles well enough; it isn't so very far. If you go down to the town, you can see all sorts of vessels: sometimes there's a whale-ship in. And there are two or three big steamboats that go from there. There are propellers and tugs and barges and schooners, and lots of excursion steamers, and a school-ship, and some of the cunningest little steamers, not much bigger than a real big sail-boat, which run between the Harbor and the town; they only charge you ten cents each way; it's a fine sail, too, past the fort and up the river."

"I should like to go to the town some day," said Johnny, who was quite captivated with this description, as he had never had an opportunity to see much shipping, except from a distance.

"We can go down there most any time: there are some things I want to buy, and they have all kinds of shops there."

So the boys talked, on one subject and another, as they rode up the shell road; and at length they reached the cottages, just beyond which the road ended.

"Let's get off here, and wait until father and mother come up," said Johnny; for Felix had wheeled around, as if to go back a distance, after they had reached the end of the road, which terminated very abruptly.

"I'm going back to the cart-path," replied Felix. "Didn't you see it as we came by?"

"Yes: I noticed some tracks of wheels going across a pasture."

"That's it. I guess we sha'n't have any trouble getting along through it to the road. If we do, we can get off and walk across. Let's just go and try it a way, and then we can come back and wait."

Accordingly, the boys rode back to the cart-path, which was a little distance below the cottages. As it had been considerably travelled, they found a very good road for their bicycles in the middle of the track, which had been worn by the feet of the horses and oxen.

"We may have to get off in that rocky place," said Johnny; "but I think we can get along very well. How far is it to the road?"'

"Oliver said it is a short half-mile."

As they were about to turn back from the lane, after their exploration, they observed a sail-boat coming toward the shore.

"There they are!" said Felix. "I saw that sail-boat as we were coming along; but it was so far off, I couldn't be sure they were in it, as there were so many boats around."

The boys rode back to a little wharf between the two cottages, and alighted. There was a row of bathing-houses back on the beach at one side of the wharf, against an end of which they leaned their bicycles. They then went and sat down on the wharf, with their feet hanging over the side. The sail-boat was still some distance off.

"What enormous cottages these are!" remarked Johnny: "there must be large families in them, to need so much room."

"No: that largest one has only two folks in it besides the servants,—a man and his wife,—unless they have company; and there are only four persons in the other family,—a man and his wife and two grown-up daughters. But the men who own the houses are millionnaires, and my father says they build big houses to use up some of their money: they don't know what else to do with it."

"I should feel lonely in such a great house, unless it had a good many folks in it," replied Johnny. "I think I should look up some folks to enjoy it with me, or else I should think of some other use for my money."

"I would build a great, magnificent ship, and sail around the world in it," said Felix.

"That wouldn't be bad; only I don't see any use in having the ship so large, unless you wanted to take a great many friends with you."

"So here are the bicyclers!" said a voice behind them; and turning quickly, they saw Pierre just crossing the road.

"What luck?" asked Johnny.

"I have merely a brace of wild-ducks for to-morrow's dinner. After I had secured them, I did not look any farther for game: I have been talking with the men over at the Point."

"That is where we are going," replied Felix; "but we thought we would wait until the boat got in. You're going back in the boat, aren't you?"

"Yes: I think so. I have walked about enough for one time."

Pierre sat down by the boys, and showed them the ducks, which he had shot down by the Point.

After the boat landed, Mr. Le Bras went up to the larger of the cottages.

The gentleman who lived in the cottage was one of Mr. Le Bras' clients. Mrs. Le Bras said Oliver could take the boys for a little sail, if they wished; so they and Pierre got on board, and sailed about until Mr. Le Bras came out of the cottage.

"Did you have a nice time?" asked Johnny, as his father joined them at the wharf.

"I had a pleasant call; but I should be very lonely if I lived in that great house, with no young persons around."

"Yes," said Mrs. Le Bras: "put some children in there, and as many more grown folks to look out for them, and it would be quite a fine place."

It appeared the gentleman was off in his yacht, and no one was at home but his wife: she stood in the piazza to see them off, and bowed politely. She was a somewhat sober-looking lady. Mr. Le Bras said she was very kind and pleasant, and he was glad to have made her acquaintance. Mr. Le Bras, having promised her husband, Mr. Frothingham, that he would let him know when he arrived at the beach, had concluded to call and inform him in person. Mr. Frothingham was anxious that Mr. Le Bras should take a trip with him in his yacht; but Mr. Le Bras had decided that he should not be able to go at present, since he wished to see his family fully domesticated at the cottage first. Mrs. Frothingham said she and her husband intended to come down to call upon their new neighbors as soon as possible.

"So you are going to the Point, boys?" said Mr. Le Bras, when he and his wife and Pierre were seated in the boat, and Oliver was preparing to put off from the wharf.

"Yes, sir," replied Felix: "we want to see them blast rocks."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Le Bras, looking rather anxious.

"That is all right," replied Mr. Le Bras. "Johnny knows enough about gunpowder not to go into any danger, and the men will look out for them too. Felix, you'll be careful, won't you? Don't go anywhere unless Johnny goes with you."

"All right," said Felix.

Mrs. Le Bras said no more, although the shade of anxiety had not wholly vanished from her face.

After the boat had put off, the boys mounted their bicycles, and rode down to the cart-track. They were able to proceed for some distance without dismounting; but finally, coming to a place where there were a good many stones, they alighted, and walked some distance, wheeling their bicycles by their sides. At length the path became smooth again; and they resumed their wheels, which they were able to keep for the rest of the distance to the road. The street was level and quite broad, and although not smooth, like the shell road, was sufficiently so for comfortable wheeling.

"We don't have to turn into any other road to get to the Point, do we?" said Johnny.

"No: we keep right on, for about two miles."

There were frequent farmhouses on the road; and just before they reached the Point, they came to a small village.

"I shouldn't wonder if the men who work in the quarry live here," remarked Johnny.

"Yes: see what good stone steps there are at the doors."

"It's very nice granite too. Notice what an even grain. I heard father and Pierre talking about it; and they said this stone is sent to New York and Philadelphia for very fine buildings, and that nice monuments are made of it."

Presently the water appeared before them, but as yet no quarry, only green fields ending abruptly against the blue of the water. But after proceeding a very little farther, they found themselves overlooking a very different scene. They were at the top of a gradual incline to the water's brink, covered over with stone ledges broken into quarries, among which a large number of men were working busily. Near the water, the rock was worn by the waves into very fantastic shapes; and, as there was a steep ascent from the shore, it formed natural steps and terraces in many places.

"Let's go down there by the water," said Felix: "it's always great fun walking about among such holes and windings in the rocks, where the waves keep rolling up to catch you. It's as good as a game of tag."

"Yes: I would like to go down there presently. I never saw rocks so much worn by water as they are. It has taken Nature a good many hundred years to

do all that chiselling, but she's made handsomer work of it than these men have. There's going to be a blast now. See those men running this way. Let's go and find what luck they've had, when it's over."

The boys got off of their bicycles, and, a moment after, there was a loud report. The men then went back to the place where the explosion had taken place, and the boys followed them. They found the stone very evenly split.

"This granite don't give you much trouble about splitting evenly," said Johnny to the men.

"If it did, we shouldn't be at work here, year after year."

"I didn't know there was any difference in granite," said Felix.

"There's just as much difference in granite as there is in boys," replied the other man, winking at his companion: "you know there's good boys and bad boys, dull boys and smart boys, and boys all the way between."

"I know of a granite quarry," remarked Johnny, "where they don't get out any stone better than is used for making the cellars and underpinnings of common houses, and for walls and rough buildings."

"There's plenty of that kind of stone for miles around," replied one of the men: "the stone just here at the Point is all there is that's worth much of any thing, all along this part of the State."

"I'd like to know how that happened," said Johnny; "but perhaps even a geologist couldn't tell, for sure."

"What's the use of knowin'?" returned the man: "the rock's here, and that's all there is to it."

"Let's go down by the water now," said Felix.

"Very well," replied Johnny: "only we mustn't stay too long, because father told us to be back before dark. What time is it by your watch?"

It happened that Felix had not wound his watch at the proper time; so when he took it out to look at it, he saw it had stopped. "It is a quarter-past five," he replied, beginning to wind the watch.

"Then, it is a good deal earlier then I supposed: I thought it must be pretty near six. We came over the road faster than I thought, or else the time at the wharf seemed longer than it was: I'll go down a little while, then."

After they had clambered among the ragged and tortuous rocks, covered with sea-mosses and mussels, dodging the inrunning waves merrily for about fifteen minutes, Johnny said it was time to go.

"But this is great fun," replied Felix. "Let's go down by that long gully."

"No: we shall be late home. Besides, we can come here earlier, almost any day, and stay as long as we please."

"Anyhow, let's sit down here a minute, and watch those wild-ducks by the shore: see how splendidly they swim."

"Yes. I think Pierre must have shot at them in the water. I'll sit down just a minute."

At the end of a minute, Johnny was up and on his way to the place where he had left his bicycle. Felix followed slowly, calling him "Grandfather Prim" for being so particular about getting home early.

"I say, Johnny, there aren't any pickpockets or kidnappers about here! What's the matter if we don't get home till after dark? It's going to be bright moonlight to-night."

Johnny made no reply, but walked on, and regained his bicycle.

"Are you going home with me?" he said, as Felix sat down on a block of granite, still laughing, and trying to tease him.

"Oh! I an't in any hurry, and it wouldn't take me long to overtake you if you were half way home. Besides, Oliver told me of a nearer way, and so I can cut across and get home before you."

"If there is a nearer way, we had better take it; for don't you see it is clouding up? I don't believe we shall have any moonlight to-night." As he said this, Johnny mounted his bicycle.

Felix now noticed, for the first time, that it was growing suddenly darker, and that a heavy cloud was rising from the waterside. He did not care about going home in total darkness and a rain-storm, with the wind blowing from the ocean: he had seen enough such storms the year before, to know what they meant.

"You saw that other road we passed, just the other side of the quarrymen's houses?" he said, stepping upon his bicycle.

"Yes, I noticed it. But come on: we can be talking while we ride, and there is no time to lose."

The quarrymen were now beginning to leave work.

"I don't understand why the men are leaving work," continued Johnny: "it isn't six o'clock, and it won't rain right off."

One of the men was just passing him; and Johnny said, "Do you always stop working before six o'clock?"

"It's after six," replied the man. "If you live far off, you'd better make haste; for there's a hard storm coming up."

"We are staying in a cottage down the shell road," said Johnny. "We came up the shell road, and then crossed over to the other road by a cart-path. Can you tell us of a nearer way home?"

"Yes: keep on this road till you come to the road that turns off, and then keep on that till you get home."

"It's just as I told you," said Felix, going rapidly ahead of Johnny. "Oliver told me all about it. It's that road we saw as we came along."

By this time Johnny was ahead of the man, who had stopped to speak with

another of the quarrymen. He hurried on, and overtook Felix. "I don't understand," he said, "why our road turns to the left from this road, when we are going to the cottages on the right."

"It doesn't go much to the left; and Oliver said it is a slant road that turns and comes right out on the shell road, just this side of the lower cottages."

The boys now rode at their best pace, Felix keeping so far ahead of Johnny that he was some distance upon the other road when Johnny reached the turn, and quite out of sight; for the road made a sharp angle at this point, and the space between was filled with trees and underbrush. Johnny hastened as much as possible, and soon came in sight of Felix, who was going slower, now that he was sure Johnny had followed around the turn; for he had been rather afraid he would go back on the old road rather than trust to his guidance, even though he had quoted Oliver's advice.

"I hope you're all right about the road," called out Johnny; "but, you see, your watch was wrong; and this road slants in the wrong direction, unless it turns and crosses the other one somewhere.

"You'll find it will turn before long," replied Felix: "yes, here it turns now!"

It was true: it did turn very slightly to the right at a point just ahead, while another road branched off of it to the left. This was enough to quiet Johnny's fears, and they proceeded rapidly on their way, Felix accommodating his pace to Johnny's for the sake of the company; for it was now quite dusky on account of the clouds, and the wind was beginning to blow hard.

The woods, which had been quite thin at their right when they entered the road, soon became thicker, and presently there were woods upon each side: they were passing through a strip of forest. It was so dark here that they could not see distinctly, and were obliged to ride slowly for fear of getting out of the road, or coming across some obstacle in their track.

"If father and mother would not be so frightened, we had better go back to the village at the quarry, and stay till the storm is over, or until morning," said Johnny anxiously, after they had proceeded some distance through the woods.

"I an't going back through these woods," replied Felix, "not if I once get out of them; and don't you see that kind of opening ahead?"

Johnny had been looking down to see, if possible, where he was riding; but now, glancing forward, he saw a lightish spot in the distance at the left.

"If that is the opening in the road, this road don't lead anywhere near home," replied Johnny; "but I guess it must be, for I think I can see that the road turns around just ahead of us. Don't you see how thick and dark it is, right ahead, like thick woods?"

"Yes, I noticed that; and that's what made me think the light spot you see over there through the trees was where the road comes out of the woods. We

might just as well go out there, and ask to stop at some farmhouse, as to try to go back to the village through the woods."

"I don't see what makes that place look so light," said Johnny: "I shouldn't suppose that just the difference between the woods and outside would make it as light, unless it has cleared off; and if it has, I should think we could see some of the light here in the woods."

"We'll find out pretty soon: here we are at the turn, now."

As they passed on around the turn, and beyond, it became much lighter: they could see their way with tolerable distinctness. As they approached the bright spot, which was now plainly the end of the woods, the light increased.

"The sun is certainly shining," remarked Felix, "and so we can get home some way: though I don't intend to go through these woods again."

When they came out of the woods, they found themselves facing a meadow, with the view just beyond obstructed by a thick fog. The sky was dark with heavy clouds; and the road they were on led, at the left, directly down upon the beach, upon which the surf was rolling heavily. Just outside the woods, the road continued to the right, at nearly right angles with that upon which they had been travelling. Close by the water, and almost within reach of the boiling surf, was the lighthouse, which explained the mystery of the bright spot which had so puzzled Johnny. The wind here was blowing a gale. It was no longer possible for them to guide their wheels. They dismounted, and stood shivering in their light garments before the gale.

"It seems to me that if we take this road at the right, it might lead us home," said Johnny.

"You don't get me trying any more roads, until I am sure," returned Felix: "I don't see how Oliver came to get us into such a fix. Let's go over to the lighthouse, and ask the way home. If we've got to go through those woods again, we'll have to stay till morning. I guess we'd better stay, anyhow, if they're willing."

"No," returned Johnny firmly. "I must get home to-night, if possible: it would frighten my mother almost to death, I am afraid, if we didn't get back. But, of course, we had better go to the lighthouse, and inquire our way. Let's leave our wheels here in the road; for we must come back here on our way home, probably."

Being relieved of the bicycles, they proceeded to the lighthouse as rapidly as the wind, blowing from the sea, would allow, and soon reached the keeper's dwelling, which was a stone building attached to the lighthouse. They stood for some time upon the steps, buffeted by the strong wind from the ocean at the left, the spray from the waves dashing in their faces as the breeze blew it towards them. They were only a few yards from the shore.

"We didn't rap loud enough," said Felix, pounding with both hands upon

the door: "the waves and wind make such a noise, they can't hear us."

"I wondered how the wind came to make such a strange noise, when we were coming through the woods," said Johnny: "it was the rush of the surf."

"I came over here several times with my father, last year," said Felix: "we used to come over whenever we had company, to show them the ocean and light-house. I have seen the man who keeps the lighthouse so many times, that I think he will remember me."

Still no one came to the door.

"They can't hear, on account of the surf," said Johnny.

"Let's both pound together, then."

So both of the boys rapped as loudly as they could upon the door, with both hands.

"The lighthouse-keeper has a boy about seventeen years old," said Felix. "He told me there was an awful undertow here. I hope he will come to the door, for I am sure he will remember me."

"Who is it?" asked a youthful voice inside the door. At first the boys could not distinguish the words; but after shouting back, and putting their cars close to the door, they soon made out the repeated inquiry, although it sounded very faint.

"We're two boys who have lost our way!" called back Johnny.

"I'm Felix Le Bras, from one of the cottages on the beach!" sang out Felix, in a loud tone. "I know the folks here, and I want to come in and inquire the way home."

The door was opened a very little way, and a soft, timid voice said,—

"You can come in, but there isn't any one at home but me."

The boys followed the owner of the voice into a room at the end of the hall, which was upon the farther side of the house. It might have been a pleasant room in a sunny day; but being very plainly furnished, with no books, pictures, or papers about, and only lighted by a small kerosene-lamp, while the wind and waves howled without, it seemed to Johnny a rather dull place for a girl to stay in alone.

Felix stared at the girl, while she looked bashfully at the boys, saying,—

"It's too bad you've got lost, and such a bad night too! I thought it was pretty lonesome staying here by myself, such a windy night; but it would be worse to be lost, out of doors. Only, there are two of you. If I had another girl here, perhaps I shouldn't be lonely at all. Sit down, won't you? I'd get you some supper, only I don't know as my aunt would like it. I suppose, if you're lost, you haven't had any supper. I guess I could let you have some pilot-bread, anyway."

"What I want to know first," replied Felix, "is how you come to be here. I was told last summer that no one lived here except the lighthouse-keeper and his

boy; and now you're here, and you tell about your aunt."

"My mother died last spring, and I came to live here. And my uncle got married again last winter, and that's the way I came to have an aunt here. But Andrew isn't here now: he's gone smacking."

"Smacking!" exclaimed Johnny. "What's smacking?"

"Why, he's gone off fishing for mackerel in a smack."

"Oh! I know what that is," explained Felix; "it's a fishing-vessel; I believe it has one mast, but is a good deal larger than a sail boat."

"Do you like to stay here?" inquired Johnny, casting another glance about the dreary apartment.

"No," replied the girl, looking down, with a rather sad expression of countenance; "but my mother's dead, and so I can't help it. Perhaps by and by I can find a good place to go out to work where there are some children: that's what my aunt wants me to do, and I think I should like it better than staying here. My uncle is going to ask some of the cottagers if they want a girl to help take care of children: my aunt keeps reminding him to ask, and he keeps forgetting it, or saying he hasn't time. Sometimes I think I will go over there and ask myself; and I mean to, as soon as I get my new dress done; I'm sewing on it as fast as I can."

The boys then noticed that there was a partly finished blue calico dress lying upon the table near the lamp, and also a little thimble, a spool of thread, and a pair of scissors.

"You can tell us the way to the cottages, then?" said Johnny; "we're in a great hurry to get there: our folks will be very much worried at our not getting home before this."

"I've been there once with my uncle; but we went round by the village, because you can't get across so well with a wagon by the other road; the end of the road isn't finished."

"You can get across with a bicycle, though," replied Felix: "and Oliver says he is going to cut the bushes down back of our place, so we can go right across with our team; father told him to see it was done this year, for we don't want to have to go around by the village every time we take folks over here to the ocean."

"I don't see how we could get across any wild place with our bicycles, as dark as it is now," remarked Johnny, looking very sober. "When you told of another road, I thought of course it was a real road all the way down to the cottages."

"Well, I supposed it would be light enough for us to see. Oliver said we should come right down back of the house, and we could get off, and walk across right into our grounds. We can stay here all night, if you're afraid to try it in the dark."

"I don't think I am afraid, but I don't see how we could find our way. I think we had better try it, though, for I don't see as any thing can happen to us:

it isn't so very late, and perhaps we can find our way very well. If we can't, we can come back here."

"Yes," said the girl: "and, by that time, my uncle will be home; I am sure he will let you stay. He is a real pleasant man: I am not afraid of him at all."

"Are you afraid of any one?" inquired Johnny.

"Why, no: I'm not exactly afraid. But my aunt isn't as fond of children as my uncle is: perhaps it's because she never had any children of her own."

"I suppose the direct road to the cottages is this one up by the edge of the woods," said Johnny.

"Yes: my uncle always goes that way, when he cuts across."

"Are there any turns? or is it just a straight road?"

"I think it is straight, but I'm not certain."

"I think we'd better risk it, Felix. If we keep the road that leads as much as possible in a line from here, I think we must be right, even if there are other roads on the way."

"If you'll risk it, I will," replied Felix.

"Is your clock right?" asked Johnny of the girl.

"Yes: my uncle always keeps it right."

"It isn't eight o'clock, then. We ought to get home by nine easily, even if we do have to go slowly. I don't know but it would be safer to walk, Felix."

"Oh, no! it's a good road, I guess: we'd be forever getting home that way."

"But you know I can't see as well as you can. I might get a header."

"I'll go ahead, then, and lead the way, and you follow in my track."

"Shall I get you some pilot-bread?" asked the girl. "I know I could let you have that; but my aunt don't like to cook very well, and I don't quite dare to get any thing out of the pantry."

"Yes, let's have some, and some water," replied Felix: "I'm most starved to death. If there's any thing to pay, I'll settle with your uncle when I come over here again."

"Oh! my uncle won't take any thing: he's a real nice man. I wish he was here, and he'd give you a good supper, and take you to your cottage. But my aunt was in town visiting to-day, and he's gone in to bring her home. I don't believe he'll get back before nine."

After the girl had disappeared, Johnny said, "Isn't it too bad she has to live in such a lonely place, where there are no other young folks?"

"Yes," replied Felix: "I hope she'll get a good place at one of the cottages."

"So do I: then we could get acquainted with her, and we would introduce her to Julia."

"Oh, no! we couldn't. She would only be a nurse-girl, and we couldn't associate with her; and a rich girl like Julia wouldn't be introduced to her, nor

have any thing to do with her."

Johnny felt quite shocked at this statement; but before he could reply, the girl came back bringing a plateful of pilot-bread in one hand, and a little tin pail of water and a tumbler in the other. She placed these on the table; and the boys sat down, and began to eat with good appetites.

"I didn't know before that pilot-bread was so good," remarked Felix.

"I did," said Johnny: "I always liked it. We have it quite often at home, instead of crackers; because Sue and I like it so well. And this is excellent pilot-bread."

The girl seemed very much pleased at this praise of the refreshment; and, after the boys had emptied the plate, she offered to get some more bread and water. But they assured her they could not wait any longer. They did not say they could not eat any more, for they were still hungry.

As they were about to go out again into the dark, windy night, Johnny asked the girl what her name was; and she replied, "Ruth Anderson."

After some difficulty, they found their bicycles, and walked along the road with them until they were so far from the shore that the wind no longer made it impossible to mount. The light from the lighthouse was a great help to them for some distance; but, the farther they receded from the beach, the darker it became; and finally, as a slight turn to the right brought the woods between them and the light, they were again in darkness. As soon as their eyes became accustomed to the change, however, they were able to proceed tolerably well; although, from their ignorance of the road, they did not dare ride rapidly. Felix kept ahead, and Johnny followed at a little distance behind. Before they had proceeded more than a mile, it began to rain. This complicated matters. Although it did not rain very hard at first, it was evident that a storm was setting in.

"It won't do for us to get soaking wet," said Johnny, "since we are not sure of finding our way home. If it rains real hard, we had better stop at a house, if we come to any."

"I don't believe we shall come to any," returned Felix: "we haven't seen any sort of a building yet."

They rode on now as rapidly as they dared, and all the time the drops were coming faster and heavier. Presently it began to pour, and the wind rose so that they had to give up their bicycles again. The wind continued with such violence, that, after they were upon their feet, they could walk only in the direction in which it was blowing. But, as Johnny said, that was in the direction of home. They were obliged to leave their bicycles, after drawing them to one side of the road, as well as they could judge of that location in the darkness. There seemed to be some tall grass at the side of the road. After proceeding some distance farther, stumbling into puddles, and occasionally into the stone wall that bordered the

side of the road, Felix announced that he was certain there was a house or barn just off at the right.

"For here's an opening in the wall," he continued: "this shows there is some kind of a place along here."

As for Johnny, he declared he could not see any thing. But under Felix's directions, he felt where the wall ended, and walked in that direction. By this time they had lost the road, and could not find it again; and Felix was not as sure as before that they were near a house.

"I know one thing," said Johnny: "we're in a sort of rough piece of land; we'd better get back into the street, if we can."

They finally took hold of each other's hands, for fear of losing each other in the thick darkness. They were drenched to the skin. Felix began to cry.

"We'll have to wander about here all night," he sobbed in a piteous tone, "and we shall, like enough, be half dead before morning." Johnny thought, with aching heart, of his mother's distress, and of what a sorrow it would be to her and his father and Sue if he should be found dead or dying. He thought of the horror of Felix's dying, too, of the double grief to his own parents, and of the despair of his uncle and aunt at the loss of their only child. Still, he did not really think that being out in the wind and rain all night could kill them. "I guess we could live through it, Felix," he returned cheerily: "boys are not killed so easily. Let's try and feel for the road once more."

As Johnny spoke, he put down his hand to see if he could make sure of the nature of the ground, and his head came violently in contact with some obstacle.

CHAPTER X.

TROUBLE.

After Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras had returned to the pier in the sail-boat, Oliver said he should be just in time to go to the station for Kate.

"How far is the town from the village?" inquired Mrs. Le Bras.

"About six miles, ma'am."

"I think, then, that I will ride to the village with you; and, after we have taken in Kate, you may drive into town. I don't know what I shall do in this quiet place, Frank, without more to take up my mind: so I think I will get some oil-colors, and try painting again; there are such lovely views about here. It will

amuse me, and help to keep up my painting, which is getting very rusty indeed. If I can succeed pretty well, the views will be pleasant souvenirs of our summer vacation here."

"I should like that very much," replied Mr. Le Bras. "I would accompany you to town were it not for returning so late. Some one must be here to see to the children: Felix is so thoughtless that I have not the confidence about leaving them that I used to have in leaving John and Sue."

"Oh, no! the children must not be left. But suppose you go, Frank, and get the paints. I am sure you can do it quite as well."

"No: I should be sure to make some mistake. And Pierre and I were to try a little fishing off the rocks. He has some ducks for dinner, and we thought we might capture some porgies or blackfish for breakfast."

"I'll go up and git the carriage, then," said Oliver. "Here's a nice pavilion you can sit in, ma'am, till I git back: I sha'n't be long."

The pavilion was a large canvas roof, supported by a frame placed on the shore near the pier. There were seats under it, upon which nurses and children were sitting, and also several ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Le Bras seated his wife upon one of the vacant benches, and he and Pierre sat down by her side.

"Those rocks, down yonder, look like a pretty good fishing-place," remarked Pierre, glancing at a cluster of rocks projecting into the water, some distance below the cottages.

"Yes: we will try that place. I believe you said you had lines and hooks with you."

"Yes: they are in my pouch. I thought I might try fishing up at the Point, if I did not succeed in getting the ducks; but ducks are very plenty there."

After they had sat conversing for a while, Oliver arrived with the carriage; and Mrs. Le Bras got in, and rode off towards the village. Her last words were,—

"You will have to give an extra good-night kiss to the children, for me, Frank. I am afraid I shall not be at home in time; for I am sure they will be very tired, and wish to go to bed early."

After the carriage had driven off, Mr. Le Bras and Pierre procured some bait at a little fish-market near the shore, and then proceeded to the rocks. By half-past six they had caught several blackfish and a sea-bass: it had by that time become very cloudy and windy, and was getting dark.

"I think we shall have to make the blackfish answer for breakfast," said Mr. Le Bras. "As for the bass, that will make a good first course for dinner. We shall not have much more than time to get back to supper. I will not have it put off again until seven. I did it to accommodate John and Felix about going to the Point in the cool of the day. Hereafter, they can take morning for bicycling, as usual: I thought I would indulge them for once."

Mr. Le Bras was somewhat surprised, on reaching home, to find that Johnny and Felix had not returned. Sue and Julia were sitting in the veranda, talking merrily; but Sue's face fell a little when she found her mother would not be home until late.

"It would have been sort of lonely when I got back, if it hadn't been for Julia," she said.

"I supposed the boys would be at home by this time," replied Mr. Le Bras. "But they will doubtless arrive very soon."

As supper was not quite ready, Mr. Le Bras and Pierre went out by the barn to dress the blackfish, which required skinning, having told Mary that she need not ring the supper-bell until the boys came. But after the fish were dressed, and the gentlemen had washed their hands, and brushed their clothes, there was no further excuse for delaying supper. Yet there were still no boys in view.

"I do not understand this," said Mr. Le Bras. "But we will have supper now, Mary. As for those young truants, they will deserve nothing better than bread and water when they make their appearance. I should suppose that cloud would have warned them home, even had I not told them to be here by seven. If they do not come soon, I fear they will get a wetting."

"It's Felix's fault, some way, I'm sure," said Sue. "You ought to hear Julia tell what pranks he cut up here last summer: she said he wouldn't mind his father and mother at all, and was always getting into some scrape or other, or getting some one else in. He and that Jack, who stoned her kitten,—his kitten, I mean, that's hers now,—they were great friends: only they were always fighting and quarrelling with each other. Dear me! how sleepy I am! I can hardly keep my eyes open long enough to eat my supper."

"That must be what ails the boys," said Pierre, laughing, as Sue leaned back in her chair, holding her knife and fork in a very languid manner, as if the dissection of the sardine on her plate was a great task to be undertaken. "They have been overcome by the exercise and seaside air, and fallen asleep by the side of their bicycles."

Just then the rain began to dash against the panes of the dining-room windows. Mr. Le Bras rose from the table, and, going out at the front-door, looked up the road; but it was now too dark and foggy to see any distance. As he came back to the table, he said rather gravely,—

"It is pretty dark now for the boys to make their way home. I hope they will not try it on the beach-road; for they might ride into the water, Felix is so heedless, and Johnny so near-sighted."

"I think I heard Felix say they were coming back on the other road," replied Pierre: "I'll go and look out the back way."

So Pierre went to the back-door, and looked out: in fact, he went far out

into the huckleberry pasture behind the barn. But nothing could be seen or heard but rain and darkness and the sighing of the wind.

"What can be done?" asked Mr. Le Bras, as Pierre came in with his report.

"I might take one of the horses, and ride up to the quarrymen's houses at the Point, and see if they are there all right. I think I can keep the shell road easily, even in the darkness; and I will give the horse the lead across the cart-path. When we get to the other road, I will turn to the left; and the horse will go on without any trouble till we get to the houses."

"But you will get badly wet."

"That is nothing: I am used to it. Besides, I have a rubber coat."

"Is there a saddle at the barn?"

"If not, it will not make much difference."

"Yes, there is, sir," said Mary, who had just come into the dining-room with a fresh supply of dry toast. "Isn't it dreadful those children ha'n't come? If Mrs. Le Bras was here, she'd be worried enough."

"Yes: that is the worst of it," replied Mr. Le Bras. "I would go and look for them myself, were it not for fear she would be back before I was. I must try to keep it from her, if possible."

"I will go right out, then, and saddle the pony," replied Pierre.

"You'll find the saddle hanging up just at the left of the door, as you go in," said Mary. "An' I'll go and light you a lantern."

By this time, Sue was fast asleep in her chair at the table. Her father took her in his arms, and carried her up to her room. Mary said she would come right up and undress her.

"If she wakes up enough to ask any questions, don't tell her about the boys not being home, if you can help it," said Mr. Le Bras; "for she might hear her mother when she comes, and tell her the trouble: although I hope they will be back before then."

Mr. Le Bras gave Sue two kisses very soberly as he laid her on the bed, and then hurried down to see Pierre off. As Pierre rode up the shell road, in the darkness and wind and rain, Mr. Le Bras called out, "If you come back alone, go quietly around to the back-door, and I will be on the lookout for you. My wife will probably be home by that time."

In fact, Mrs. Le Bras reached the cottage before Pierre had been gone more than a half-hour. Oliver had put his horses to their best speed on account of the storm. Kate went into the kitchen with Mary, who was delighted to have a companion for the whole summer, and knew, by the first glance she gave at Kate's, good-humored, intelligent face, that they should be great friends. Mrs. Le Bras went immediately to her own room, saying she was never more tired in her life, "and all in having a good time," she added. "I have got my paints all right,

and the brushes. It is really a very nice little town, with stores up to the times."

"Did you go to a restaurant and get some supper?" inquired Mr. Le Bras, trying to look unconcerned.

"No: we dared not wait so long. We stopped at a baker's, and got some refreshments, which we ate on the way home. I bought some cookies for the children too. I suppose they came home all tired out?"

"Sue was so tired that she went to sleep at the supper-table," replied Mr. Le Bras.

"And of course Johnny and Felix got home before the rain?"

"I told John to be home by seven, you remember."

"And Johnny is always so prompt. What a good boy he is! Did you give them the extra kisses, my dear?"

"I am afraid they were both lost on Sue, because I carried her up to bed fast asleep."

"I believe you are as sleepy as I am, my dear: your face looks an inch longer than usual, and you have scarcely looked at me all the time I have been talking. Why don't you get ready to go to bed?"

"I must go down and lock the doors first; and I must see Pierre, too, and talk up some plans for to-morrow morning."

"Hasn't Pierre gone to bed?"

"Oh, no!"

"I think I'll just look in on Sue a minute."

Mrs. Le Bras took the lamp, and, stepping softly to Sue's door, opened it, and looked in.

"Just as pretty as ever. I have a great mind to go and look at Johnny in his new room."

"No," said Mr. Le Bras, taking the lamp: "you had better go directly to bed, and let me take the lamp. I am afraid Pierre is waiting for me."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Le Bras, lying down. "You'll be up before long, won't you?"

"Yes. Go to sleep now."

Mr. Le Bras placed the lamp in the lower hall, and then, opening the front-door a little way, put out his head, and listened. He could hear nothing but the wind and rain. Mary stole in from the kitchen, and said, "I haven't told Kate, as you said; but hadn't I better tell Oliver?"

"You get Kate off to bed, and I will tell Oliver."

When Kate had gone, Mr. Le Bras went into the kitchen, and consulted with Oliver. Oliver was sure the boys were safe in some house at the quarry. "An' that's what Pierre'll tell you when he gits back, sir."

"I think so too," said Mr. Le Bras.

At that moment the door opened, and Pierre entered the room.

"Did you find them at the quarry?" asked Mr. Le Bras breathlessly.

Pierre shook his head.

"The men said they took the wrong road, according to the account of the folks at the village, who saw two boys on bicycles turn off the road at the left, just this side of the houses, which leads over by the lighthouse. It seems they asked one of the quarrymen what road to take to come back the other way; and one of them said, 'Turn off at the first road you come to,' supposing they would know enough to turn to the right, and not to the left. But the men say it's all right: the boys would have come out by the lighthouse about the time it began to rain hard, and would stay there, of course, on such a wild night."

"Yes, I suppose they are there," replied Mr. Le Bras. "Even if there could be any less consoling supposition, the storm is now too wild for any further attempt to find them. It is a wonder to me that you got to the Point and back in the wind and darkness. Go to your room at once; and I will come up, by the time you are in bed, and give you some hot ginger-tea."

Pierre said he never took cold, but went to his room, while Oliver went out and put up the horse.

It was agreed that Oliver should get up at daybreak, and go over to the lighthouse, and, if the boys were not there, inquire at any other houses where they could possibly have taken refuge, so that their safety might be known before Mrs. Le Bras awoke in the morning. As for Mr. Le Bras, he spent a sleepless night. But he was grateful for one thing,—his wife slept soundly. He arose early, and, as Mrs. Le Bras was still sleeping, stole downstairs to escape having any questions to answer before Oliver came back from his expedition. Pierre, too, was downstairs, looking anxious and uneasy. It was a very bright morning as far as the weather was concerned.

"Suppose we walk over towards the lighthouse ourselves," said Mr. Le Bras; "the suspense is getting unendurable; although, of course, they are all right."

So Mr. Le Bras and Pierre started off across lots; and shortly after, Mary and Kate came down to prepare breakfast.

About half way to the lighthouse, they met Oliver coming back, looking blank and sober.

"Haven't you found them?" said Mr. Le Bras, with a sinking heart.

"They was at the lighthouse all right; but they left there about half-past seven, in all that 'ere wind and rain. There wasn't any one at the lighthouse but a little gal, a niece of the keeper; an' she says the smaller of them, that's Johnny, said they must try and git home, and that, if they didn't, they'd come back to the lighthouse: and so they s'posed they was home all right."

"What houses are there about?" inquired Pierre; for Mr. Le Bras seemed

unable to speak.

"There ain't none on this road, nor a barn; an' how they could a got away from the road in the storm, an' over the stun walls with their bicycles, I don't see nohow. There's that house, way over yonder; that's the nearest house to this 'ere road: now, 'pears to me they couldn't a got there without flyin' over all them walls."

"If they came this road, they couldn't have got into the water," said Pierre: "I shouldn't wonder if they made their way clear to the end down by the other cottages."

"That may be," said Mr. Le Bras: "let us go right down there. You can go home, Oliver, and Pierre and I will continue the search. If Mrs. Le Bras comes down before we come back, tell her—indeed, what can you tell her? I must try to be back myself. Let us make haste, Pierre!"

Mr. Le Bras and Pierre made inquiries through the whole row of cottages, with all the haste possible; but no one had seen or heard of the missing boys. As they returned home, along the shell road, Mr. Le Bras was silent. He was pale, and walked rapidly. Pierre tried to think of some bright probability regarding Felix and Johnny; but although it seemed unlikely that they could have perished, like the babes in the wood, in a single night, he could picture no place of refuge which they had not searched. The farmhouse only was left; but, as Oliver had said, it would have been next to impossible for them to go across lots and over stone walls to any definite place, that dark and stormy night. Still, he finally suggested to Mr. Le Bras that he might hurry over there and inquire.

"No," replied Mr. Le Bras: "we will go home first, and inform my wife; it cannot be kept from her any longer. And then you and I and Oliver will scour the region in different directions. If nothing serious has happened to the boys, however, they will make their appearance themselves before long. What I am afraid of is that they have been overcome by fatigue and exposure, having been out all night, and are now lying helpless somewhere in the fields or woods."

When they reached the cottage, they entered the front-door. Just then the breakfast-bell rang. Mr. Le Bras paused in the hall to compose himself for the sad task before him. He took off his hat, and wiped his forehead: he tried to look cheerful and unconcerned. Mrs. Le Bras came tripping down-stairs with Sue, in the best of spirits.

"What a lovely morning after the rain!" she said. "How blue the sky and water are! How cheerful the cottage looks! What a delicious sea-breeze! What an appetite we shall have for your blackfish! Isn't it a lovely place, my dear?"

Mr. Le Bras suppressed a groan: he turned away his face, but she did not notice. Sue ran ahead to the dining-room.

Mr. Le Bras had just taken his wife's arm to lead her aside into the parlor,

and there break the startling news to her as gently as possible, when Sue was heard saying,—

"You were very bad boys! You didn't get home at seven last night, as you promised; and I am sure papa will make you pay a penalty."

Mr. Le Bras felt giddy, almost faint; but he had presence of mind enough to lead his wife into the dining-room instead of the parlor, and there at the table in their places sat two rosy-cheeked, happy-looking boys, with their eyes brimful of fun and expectancy; although a keen observer might have noticed a shade more of gravity upon Johnny's face than upon Felix's daring countenance.

Pierre, who was standing in the front-door, thinking gloomily, all of a sudden, of the pond just this side of the lighthouse, of which a man at the Point had spoken as a good place to get water-lilies, and wondering if the boys could have stumbled into it, heard Sue's clear, merry voice also; and his heart bounded joyfully as he turned and joined the group in the dining-room.

After grace had been said, Mr. Le Bras began to serve, without saying a word.

"Didn't you get home until after seven?" Mrs. Le Bras asked the boys, as she began to pour out the coffee.

"No, ma'am," replied Johnny, looking curiously at his father: "we didn't get into the house until this morning. We got caught in the rain."

"And so we lodged away from home," added Felix, who could not wait for Johnny to tell it all himself; "but, as it happened, we didn't have to pay any thing for lodging."

"Why!" said Mrs. Le Bras, looking at her husband with some surprise: "why didn't you tell me the boys were staying away from home?"

"As I could not tell you exactly where they were staying, my dear,—although I supposed, that, having got caught in the rain, they were safe with some good family hereabouts,—I thought it best not to tell you until this morning, for fear you would be anxious, and worry about them."

"I presume I should, and you were very kind; although generally I think I should prefer to know, in such a case. But how did it happen, boys, that you were belated, and so did not get home before it rained hard? I am sure I heard Johnny's father tell him to be back by seven. And where did you stay all night? Just to think of it! Why, Johnny was never away from both me and his father for a night before! Yes, I should have been very nervous if I had known it!"

"You had better begin at the beginning, boys," remarked Mr. Le Bras, "and then, by the time you have finished the account, you will have answered all your mother's questions. Let Felix begin first; and when he has got as far as the lighthouse, Johnny may take up the narrative, and complete it."

"What do you know about the lighthouse?" asked Felix.

"Never mind, my boy: tell your story first."

Felix began, and gave the narration with tolerable accuracy. When he came to Johnny's asking him what time it was, Mr. Le Bras said,—

"Was your watch right, Felix?"

"I didn't know whether it was right then, or not; but it couldn't have been right, we found out afterwards."

"You supposed it to be right, then?"

"Why, I knew, as soon as I took it out, that it had stopped; but I couldn't tell for sure but what it had stopped just about that time. I didn't tell Johnny it had stopped; because he didn't ask me what time it was, but what time it was by my watch; and so I really told him what time it was by my watch, and then I wound it up. I didn't tell a lie anyway, you see; and I didn't know but what the watch had just stopped, and so it was the right time."

"I think we must have a little talk together, by and by, about the watch business, Felix," said Mr. Le Bras rather gravely. "But go on now with your account."

When Felix got as far as their knocking at the lighthouse door, the story was turned over to Johnny, who gave a very interesting account, to begin with, of their visit with Ruth.

"I must get acquainted with Ruth, just as soon as ever I can!" exclaimed Sue; "and I want to see the blue dress. That will be two girls,—Julia and Ruth; and it will be a nice ride to the lighthouse for Julia and me, in the dog-cart."

When Johnny came to their wandering about in the storm on foot, having lost the road, and being so drenched and despairing, Mrs. Le Bras exclaimed,—

"Why, this is perfectly dreadful! My dear, how could you rest easy with these boys away from home? If you had told me, I should have insisted upon some one being sent to look for them. They might have taken their death-cold. Are you certain, boys, that you feel quite well? I am not sure but you ought to be put to bed this minute, with hot drinks, and wrapped in blankets."

The boys laughed at this: they said they never felt better in their lives.

"I think it will not, apparently, endanger their lives to finish the account before going to bed; as I judge that Johnny is nearly through now," replied Mr. Le Bras, smiling.

"Well," continued Johnny, "we were feeling about, trying to find the road again, when I knocked my head against something. I felt of it, and found it was some sort of a building. We both examined it with our hands, and concluded it was a barn; as it was smooth, and didn't have any windows as far as we could reach. We felt our way around to the other side, and came to a door which we managed to open. We went in, and pulled the door together, to keep out the rain, and felt our way around for the hay-mow. We couldn't find any mow, but we

came across a lot of nice clean straw on the floor; and we lay down in it, and covered ourselves up with it, and, after talking a while, we fell asleep."

"You said your prayers first, didn't you?" said Sue.

"Why, no!" replied Johnny, as if the omission had just occurred to him; "I don't believe I did; I guess we were so excited that we forgot to say our prayers. We didn't say them, did we, Felix?"

"No. Let's see: one of the last things I said was to remind you of what you said, one day, about there couldn't be any fire, unless the carbon and hydrogen had oxygen to combine with it, and I asked you how it happened, then, that the men at the quarry rammed the powder down in a hole, with a lot of stuff jammed on the top of it, as if they were trying to keep the air out on purpose."

"Oh, yes!" said Johnny; "and then I said that was what they were trying to do; because there was a lot of oxygen in the saltpetre that was in the powder, which furnished a plenty to unite with the sulphur and charcoal, and then, when they began to unite, all in an instant, because every thing was all mixed just right, there'd got to be ever so much more room for the expansion of the gas, and that forced the rock apart."

"Yes," added Felix; "and then I said, 'Oh! that's it. I'm glad you can tell a fellow every thing he wants to know, except how to find his way home on a dark night.' And that's the last we said."

"So Johnny says his prayers to be kept safe when he's all nice at home, and when he's lost way off somewhere, he forgets all about them," remarked Sue, as she buttered her roll.

"But we got along all right, just the same," said Felix.

"Probably that's because some of the prayers you said before had enough about being kept safe to last over one night," explained Sue.

"I protest against this digression!" exclaimed Pierre. "Here's Johnny come to the most interesting part of his story, and then he leaves off just at the critical part, just like the sensational papers."

"That was what I was going to say. I will talk with Johnny about forgetting his prayer, to-night," said Mrs. Le Bras. "And now go on, my son."

"I am very curious to know what barn they slept in," remarked Mr. Le Bras.

"So am I," said Kate, who having come in with some hot rolls, when Felix began the story, had been standing spell-bound ever since, with her salver in her hand.

"I believe Felix said he awoke once in the night," continued Johnny, "and saw someone with a light, putting up a horse; but I didn't wake up until morning."

"I didn't see the man nor the horse," explained Felix; "but I saw a light, and heard a horse stepping about; and then I saw the light vanish, and heard the man fasten a door. I don't think I had been asleep long then, for I felt pretty wet and

a little cold; and I pulled some more straw up over me."

"Go on, Johnny," said Mr. Le Bras.

"When I awoke in the morning, I was pretty well surprised to find we were in our own barn. I woke Felix up, and we had a good laugh. Then we went out, and found that the reason we couldn't find the road was because we had come to where it turned into another road running down towards the cottages, and the stone wall had ended there. We had left our bicycles in a kind of marshy place, by the side of the road, full of tall reeds: we could hardly find them, they were so covered up with the reeds."

"That is the reason we did not see them, Pierre," remarked Mr. Le Bras.

"We rolled our bicycles back to the barn, and put them up, and then came into the house. Mary and Kate had just come down to get breakfast; and Mary said father and Pierre were afraid we were lost, and Oliver had gone to look us up, but we needn't say any thing to mother and Sue, as they didn't know any thing about it. I told Mary and Kate to let father and Pierre know we had come home; and then Felix and I went to our rooms to change our clothes. They were all dry, but they looked pretty well tumbled and muddy; and we needed a good washing ourselves. Before we were ready, Oliver came up, and said my father and Pierre were in a great fright, and had gone down to the cottages to inquire for us. We told him to hurry off, and let them know we were all right. After he had been gone a little while, the breakfast-bell rang, and we came down."

"Oliver missed your father and Pierre," said Kate; "for he went down on the back road, while they were coming up on the shell road. And he and Mary are in a great state to hear how it all happened; so, now I know, I'll go to the kitchen and tell them."

By this time, breakfast was finished; and Mrs. Le Bras was still anxious, for fear the boys would take cold from their exposure.

"Go to your rooms, boys, and go to bed," said Mr. Le Bras, "and let Mrs. Le Bras roast and dose you, and rub you down with alcohol, to her heart's content. That will be a salutary as well as a sanitary punishment, to begin with. Since Johnny don't seem to have been much to blame, except in yielding his judgment that a place situated on the right could not, in the nature of things, be found by taking a road which turned to the left, I think a morning's imprisonment in bed will suffice for him. But as for you, Felix, since you were somewhat unfair, and considerably reckless, you will have to pay another penalty, I think. Young people under my care and instruction have to pay penalties for any serious fault of demeanor or judgment. But we will have that talk together this afternoon, and adjust the matter."

The boys laughingly protested against being sent to bed, but neither Mr. nor Mrs. Le Bras would let them off. They went up to their rooms still laughing

and protesting, Johnny mildly, and Felix quite vociferously, holding his sides with laughter; while Mrs. Le Bras went to the kitchen to prepare the hot drinks. As for Sue, as soon as she was released from the table, she had run over to tell the whole story to Julia.

Mr. Le Bras went out, and sat down in the veranda, accompanied by Pierre.

"This beats all!" he said. "I wouldn't have had such a fright for a hundred dollars! But there's one thing to be thankful for,—my wife escaped it: if she had known beforehand, it would have made her down sick. Yes! let the boys go to bed! There they are, laughing still, the scamps! and never will know, until they have children of their own, what I have suffered since eight o'clock last night!"

"It's the greatest cheat of a time I ever heard of," said Pierre, sitting down on the steps, and beginning to laugh as only those can whose laughter has been long pent up. "I didn't want to let the boys know I thought it was amusing, they were so inclined to treat it lightly themselves: but, ha, ha, ha!—to think of all the racing and talking and surmising, and scouring the country, and dead boys in ponds, and those youngsters all the time reposing peacefully right out here in the barn! Ha, ha, ha! ho, ho, ho!"

Pierre then told Mr. Le Bras of his dreadful surmise about the pond by the lighthouse.

"I am thankful I was spared the knowledge of there being a pond about here!" replied Mr. Le Bras fervently.

"You see, why they didn't see the house was because Mary had put all the lamps she could muster on the west side to help guide me on my way back from the Point," said Pierre. "So they must have gone into the barn while I was off up that way; for, after that, there were lights in the kitchen, which they couldn't help but have seen."

CHAPTER XI.

GOING FOR RUTH.

The penalty, added to the morning's imprisonment; for Felix was that he should read to Pierre an hour after breakfast every morning, he having nothing to say as to what he should read, but Pierre making all the selections. Felix tried to get the sentence commuted to half an hour, but his uncle was inexorable: he said the prevarication about the time was a very serious matter, and besides that, as

the evening readings had been given up for the summer on account of the unpleasantness of having lamps lighted during the warm weather, Felix would lose all the progress he had made in reading, if he did not practise regularly for some time to come. As Pierre began by selecting easy and interesting stories, however; Felix found, on trial, that he rather enjoyed his daily penalty than otherwise. The readings were carried on in Felix's room, where there was nothing to divert his attention.

Sue was very anxious to go over in the dog-cart to see Ruth. Julia had promised to accompany her. Julia had been to the lighthouse in her father's carriage quite often with friends from the city, and she was to show Sue the way around by the village, which, although the longer way, was much the pleasanter and smoother road; since, for some time before reaching the lighthouse, it was within view of the ocean and of the surf, which dashed high upon the shore. Mrs. Le Bras said, if the next Thursday were pleasant, Sue might go over to the lighthouse in the morning, and she should like very much to have her bring Ruth home to dinner, if her uncle and aunt were willing. Mrs. Le Bras also said, that, if Ruth could stay until toward night, she would carry her back herself in the carriage, as she would like to see the lighthouse and the ocean-side herself.

Thursday proved to be a very pleasant day, much to Sue's delight; and Oliver harnessed the pony into the dog-cart immediately after breakfast. Felix and Johnny had planned to accompany the girls on their bicycles, and Felix was rather vexed when he found they were going before his hour with Pierre was over. He went to his uncle, and tried to get off for that morning; but Mr. Le Bras said it was a bad plan to make any break in what ought to be a regular custom, unless it were either very advisable or absolutely necessary, neither of which was the case in this instance. Felix then tried to get the girls to change their plans; but they argued, that, if they waited, it would bring them back in the heat of the day, which both Mrs. Le Bras and Julia's mother wished them to avoid. As a last resource, Felix asked Johnny not to go until his hour was up. Johnny would have assented to this good-naturedly, although he rather wanted to go with the girls, but Julia opposed it strongly: she said she wanted Johnny to go with them very much; and she added, naughtily, to Sue, and so loudly that Felix could hear her, "I think it will be nicer to have Johnny alone than to have Felix too. Felix will be with us when we come home, and that is enough."

Felix's face grew very red. "You are the most disagreeable girl I ever knew, Julia Peterson!" he said. "I won't go with you, either going or coming; and I am not sure I will come over to the lighthouse while you are there!"

Oliver had just brought the dog-cart around to the door. The girls and Johnny were on the veranda. Felix had been standing in the door on his way up to Pierre's room; but he now ran up-stairs noisily, shouting back, "Go along with

her, Johnny, if you want to! Perhaps I sha'n't come to the lighthouse at all!"

The girls got into the cart. Julia was laughing; and Sue said, "Felix isn't used to being snubbed, Julia, and I'm awful sorry for him. If I were you, Johnny, I'd wait for him."

"But I don't believe he'll come at all, now," replied Johnny, looking wistfully at his bicycle, which was leaning against the veranda. It was such a fresh, pleasant morning, and he liked Julia very much; although he was sorry she had spoken so to Felix.

"It won't hurt Felix a mite to be snubbed; it's my opinion it is just what he needs: you ought to have seen how he teased me last year, and I always meant to pay him off, if I could get a good chance; besides, he's too conceited for any thing," continued Julia.

"I can't help it, anyway," said Sue resignedly, as she gathered up the reins. "I suppose you might as well come, Johnny; for I shouldn't wonder if Felix would be cross all day, and make it unpleasant for you if you stay at home to please him."

Johnny hesitated.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said: "I'll ride over with you, and, if we go pretty fast, I shall have time to come back again, and see if Felix is ready to go over."

"If you must try to be so awful obliging, when he wouldn't think of putting himself out that way for you," replied Julia.

Felix had stopped in the upper hall, and looked out of the window over the front-door. As the window was open, although the blinds were closed, he heard every word of the conversation, and was angrier than ever.

"Where are you, Felix?" called out Pierre. "You are fifteen minutes behind time. Come! I shall have to report you if this occurs again."

Felix went into Pierre's room, and took up his book with a jerk. "I hate girls!" he said, "especially that conceited, mean Julia Peterson!"

The dog-cart moved off briskly along the shell road, with Johnny on his bicycle by its side. Johnny was wishing heartily that Felix was with them, and every thing pleasant as usual; but as he could not help it, he tried to enjoy himself, which was not at all difficult.

When they came to the long row of cottages, some boys were out on the pier fishing.

"What are you catching?" called out Johnny.

"Scup!" shouted back one of the boys.

"Having good luck?" returned Johnny.

"Catch 'em by the pailful," replied another boy.

Johnny then noticed several pails and baskets by the side of the boys, and

that there were also some strings of fish in sight. He said he would go and see the scup, and then rejoin the girls.

"Scup are of no consequence," said Julia; "you can catch them as easy as nothing; and after you have caught them, they are not worth cooking, if you can get any other fish, because they are so full of bones."

Johnny rode down on the pier, however, and looked at the scup. "They are very handsome little fish," he said. "Do you cook all you catch?"

"Oh!" replied one of the boys, "sometimes we cook them, and sometimes we throw them back into the water: I've thrown back almost all I've caught this morning, because we've got plenty of better fish at home."

"My mother likes them, if they are bony, because they are so sweet," said another boy: "we fry them real crisp, and we like them."

"I don't think it is right to catch them, unless you can make some use of them," remarked Johnny. "I think I will come down and catch a few to-morrow, just to try them."

"Say!" remarked the boy who had said he threw back his fish: "where's Felix Le Bras? You live up at his cottage, don't you?"

"Yes: I am his cousin. But he is staying at home this morning: at least, he is at home now."

Johnny then hurried back to catch up with the dog-cart.

"Did you know who that boy was you were talking with?" inquired Julia.

"Which? The one in a sailor-suit?"

"Yes."

"No."

"That's Jack, the boy who threw stones at my kitten."

"At his kitten, you mean," said Sue.

"Why, the kitten that's mine now: a kitten belongs to the folks who can be kind to it."

This peculiar law regarding the ownership of kittens was new to Sue. She thought she would ask her father about it, but she made no reply to Julia.

"Oh! that's Jack, is it?" said Johnny. "I might almost have known it, by his saying he caught the fish just for the fun of it, and then threw them back into the water."

"That isn't so bad as about the kitten," replied Sue; "for, if I were a fish, I would rather be thrown back in the water, than fried in a spider."

"But it isn't right," said Johnny; and then he rode on a little ahead, to escape arguing the matter further with Sue, who was apt to get the best of him sometimes, even when she was on the wrong side.

After reaching the village, they crossed through it, according to Julia's directions, and came out into a country road bordered at intervals with farmhouses.

Shortly they came in view of the ocean, and soon in full view of the surf. The road wound gradually nearer and nearer the shore, until they were almost at the lighthouse, and was separated from the white-sanded beach only by a narrow strip of land covered with the tall, rank grass which grew along the shore. A fresh wind was blowing from the sea, and the surf washed the rocks at the base of the lighthouse. The side of the keeper's house was almost upon the street; indeed, it was at a corner; as the road upon which Felix and Johnny had reached it was in front, running down to the shore.

"I wish there were lines here," remarked Johnny, "so we could come over and bathe in the surf. Oliver says there is such an undertow here, it would be unsafe without lines."

A little way up the road which led past the woods, and on the opposite side from the woods, a man was at work in a large vegetable garden which bordered a cornfield.

"There is Mr. Shepard," said Julia: "he is the lighthouse keeper. Shall we go and see him, and ask if we can go up in the lighthouse? Or shall we call at the house first, and ask to see Ruth?"

"Let's see Ruth first," replied Sue, "'cause that's what we came for; and we want to give our invitation to dinner, so she will have time to get ready while we are in the lighthouse."

"I don't believe we had better ask to see the lighthouse, until we come with some grown persons," said Johnny: "perhaps they won't want to take that trouble for all the children who come over."

"But we aren't all the children," replied Julia.

"We haven't any better right to ask than any other children have; and so, if they let us go, they might have to let others, or have them bother by asking," returned Johnny.

"Very well, if you and Sue don't care: I've been up there so many times, I don't care about climbing up again; and you can't see any thing when you get up there, because it's all full of the lamp."

Johnny laughed at this. "Why, the lamp is just what I should go to see. I've studied about that kind of lamp, and I want to see one very much: I want to notice the way the glass is formed and arranged to collect and refract the rays, so as to make the most of them in sending the light out to sea. But I think I would rather go up with Pierre or my father, who can help me understand it better; and besides, if there is some grown person with me, I can stay longer, and Mr. Shepard will take more pains to tell all he knows about it. Nobody takes pains to explain things to boys."

"There is a good enough reason for that," said Julia: "how much would such a boy as Felix or Jack listen to explanations? I think you are a kind of a

man, Johnny: you only look like a boy. And you don't look so very much like a boy when you have your glasses on. I think I shall call you Professor, as Sue and Felix do."

"It's great if a boy must be called a man and a professor just because he likes to understand about matters! But you just wait till I'm as tall as my father, and wear a stove-pipe: then see if you don't notice a difference."

Julia and Sue laughed at this dignified picture of Johnny as a man. By that time they had turned into the other road, and stopped in front of the keeper's house.

"The house is built right on to the lighthouse, and is of the very same kind of stone," remarked Sue.

"Yes," replied Johnny; "and they can go up in the lighthouse, Oliver says, without coming outside; although there is a door, you see, in the outside. I wonder what that building off the other side of the lighthouse is for?"

"That's the place where the steam fog-whistle is," replied Julia. "I was over here in a fog with my father once, and you never heard such a noise as it made."

"I heard it in the distance the other night, and it was bad enough at that," said Johnny. "My father said it was the fog-whistle, but I didn't know it was here at the lighthouse. I must see that, too, and understand about it, some day, when Pierre can come with me."

They were now standing on the stone steps, and Johnny found there was a bell in a little niche at one side of the door. "Why, here's a bell!" he said. "Uncle Sam means to be up with the times, in his buildings, even if they are out in the country. Felix and I pounded away with both hands the other night."

Just after Johnny rang the bell, the door was opened by a rather severe-looking young woman, with sharp gray eyes, and a look that seemed to say, "Tell your business as soon as possible, and have done with it."

Obedient to the look, Johnny said at once, "Can we see Miss Ruth?"

Mrs. Shepard appeared to be astonished. She looked at the visitors a moment before replying, and then said,—

"What do you want to see Ruth for?"

"We want to ask if she will come to dinner over to our cottage, if you and her uncle will let her," said Sue.

"Where is your cottage?"

"It is Mr. Louis Le Bras' cottage," replied Johnny.

"You are not Mr. Le Bras' son?"

"I am the son of Mr. Frank Le Bras, who is staying at the cottage while my uncle Louis is in Europe. Felix did not come with us this morning."

"You can come in, and I will speak to Ruth. But I don't understand about your wanting her to come to dinner. Does your mother wish to hire a nurse-girl?"

"No, ma'am," replied Sue, as they were ushered into a room which seemed to be the parlor, it looked so stiff and dark: "I am the youngest child."

"Felix and I got acquainted with Ruth the other night, when we stopped here to inquire our way," explained Johnny; "and my sister and this young lady, Julia, who lives in the next cottage to ours, want to get acquainted with her; and so my mother wished us to ask if she could dine with us to-day; my mother will bring her home in the carriage before dark."

Mrs. Shepard looked very much surprised again.

"I have seen this young lady before," she said, looking at Julia.

"Yes," replied Julia. "I was over here quite often last summer."

"I don't know whether I have any objection to Ruth's going to your house, or not," said Mrs. Shepard hesitatingly. "I wonder at your mother's asking her. Of course, she don't know that Ruth is a poor girl, and is looking for a place to work out for the summer?"

"Yes," returned Johnny: "we told her about it. Ruth told Felix and me she was looking for a place to take care of children."

"Oh! Then I presume your mother knows of some family who would like to employ a girl, and so wants to find out what kind of a girl she is. Ruth is a pretty good girl to do as she is told, tell your mother, and she's bright and spry: her worst trouble is that she's a sort of baby, and cries at every thing and nothing; but I suppose she'll get over that, when she finds what sort of a world she is in, and that poor folks can't be babied. It's my opinion her mother humored her almost to death: and my husband would do the same, if he could have his way; he hasn't got any government at all: and I've made up my mind, the sooner Ruth goes among strangers, the better; it's the only thing that will make a common-sense woman of her. You can tell your mother what I have said, and it may help to give her a right understanding of the case. But tell her Ruth'll make first-rate help, if the folks are right up and down with her, as I should be, if it wasn't for my husband."

"Yes, we'll tell my mother all you say," replied Johnny very sincerely: he had a vague idea that Mrs. Shepard was making out a better case for Ruth than for herself, with such a warm-hearted woman as Mrs. Le Bras.

Mrs. Shepard then added, as she opened half of one of the window-blinds a little way,—

"I'll go and tell Ruth to fix herself up, and she'll be ready before long; that is, if you want her to go along with you. She can walk over just as well, right across."

"Yes, we want her to go with us," returned Sue: "she and Julia can sit down first, and there'll be room enough between them on the seat for me."

"Remember and tell your mother, too," continued Mrs. Shepard, "that it

won't do to make too much of Ruth: she's got too many high notions now. You see, she's lived in the city, and been to city schools, and she's got some lofty ideas in her head: she'd like to believe that she is as good as other folks, if she is poor and dependent. I've done what I could to put her down; but she's too high-spirited for her station in life, by a good deal, yet. However, when she gets out to work, she'll find her right place pretty soon, I guess. The only thing I wish is that she could get farther away from her uncle. I'm in hopes, if she gets a place, the family will want to carry her back to the city with them."

"I'll tell mother all you say," returned Johnny gravely. And then, as Mrs. Shepard was about to leave the room, he added,—

"I think I would like to go outside and wait, where I can see the surf; and perhaps the girls would like to go too. My sister and I have not been much used to seeing the surf."

"I never saw it in my life before," added Sue, slipping her hand in Johnny's, while he walked towards the door, as if in fear that this imperative-looking woman would close the door and imprison them in the dark room, where, in spite of the crack in the shutter, they had but a dim view of some stiff chairs, a black sofa, some grim vases on the mantel with dried grasses in them, and a table against the wall, upon which were a few forlornly solitary-looking books, piled in exact order, like prisoners in rows, as they were.

"Yes: it's ever so much pleasanter out of doors," said Julia frankly; and the children were fairly outside the door before Mrs. Shepard could reply.

"Well, you can stay out in the hot sun, if you want to; though I should think you would rather be in this cool room, away from the sun and flies."

The children went out on the doorstep, and basked happily in the sunshine, which was so repugnant to Mrs. Shepard's taste, while that lady went back into the parlor, and closed the shutter.

"Suppose we go and tell Mr. Shepard about Ruth's going home with us," remarked Johnny: "his wife didn't say any thing about telling him, but he might like to know."

The girls having assented to this, Johnny proposed that they should get into the dog-cart, and drive up to the vegetable garden, so as to leave the pony in the shade of the trees by the wood until Ruth made her appearance. So the girls got into the cart, and drove slowly towards Mr. Shepard, while Johnny walked by their side, having left his bicycle near the doorstep. Mr. Shepard stopped hoeing when he saw them coming, and came up close to the stone wall, which was between him and the road, to speak with them.

"How do you do, Julia?" he said. "I see you have got some new company this summer."

"Yes: they live in Mr. Le Bras' cottage; they are his brother's children."

"Oh, yes, I know now! Ruth was a-tellin' me about the boy: his name is John, and he came to the house with Felix the other night. You'd ought to have staid till I got home, young man: I shouldn't 'a' let you gone off in all that rain, or I'd a carried you home in my team. But Ruth she's sort of 'fraid o' doin' somethin wrong, and so she didn't keep you till I got there."

"It was just as well; because we had quite an adventure, on account of trying to find our own way in the dark."

Johnny got up on the wall, and began to tell Mr. Shepard about their sleeping in their own barn; while Sue drove over in the shade, and, with Julia's assistance, hitched the pony to a little sapling which grew near.

Mr. Shepard laughed very heartily at Johnny's account.

"Well, that beat all!" he said, as the girls came over and joined the group.

"So this is your sister, is it, John?"

"Yes, sir, this is Sue. She came over to ask a favor of you and Mrs. Shepard."

"She won't have to ask but once of me, then; I'm mighty fond of little gals: you see, all my children was boys. I allers did want a gal awfully; but I never had none till my poor sister died, and then Ruth came to live along with me."

Here a rather troubled expression flitted across Mr. Shepard's face.

"I came over about Ruth," said Sue, climbing up on the wall, and sitting down on a large stone at the top, close by Mr. Shepard's elbow. "I wanted to ask if she could come to our house, to dinner, and stay till towards night, when my mother will bring her home in the carriage."

"Is your mother in want of a nus girl?" inquired Mr. Shepard, looking still soberer than before.

"Oh, no!" replied Sue: "we just want Ruth to come for company, so's we can have a real good time together."

"Well!" said Mr. Shepard, taking off his hat, wiping his forehead with a large cotton handkerchief, and looking greatly relieved. "Does your mother know about it?"

"Certainly," replied Johnny: "she sent the invitation; Felix and I told her about Ruth, and she wants to get acquainted with her."

"Your mother must be a partic'arly nice woman," returned Mr. Shepard. "I'd be glad enough to have Ruth go: she don't have any too good times here at home." And then he added, in an explanatory manner, "You see, their ain't no children right round here, an' my wife she ain't over-fond of young folks; and I'm rather an old playfellow for Ruth myself, though I try to do the best I can. I'd be right glad to have her go along with you: though I don't know what her aunt'll say; she's a leetle notional at times."

"Oh! she says she can go," replied Johnny, "and that she might get ready."

"*Did* she? Well, now, that's a wonder! I'm mighty glad on it! Ruth hain't

got nuthin' but a caliky dress to wear. I'd 'a' got her somethin' a leetle better myself, to wear when she went away; but my wife didn't think best, and I dunno much myself about girls' rigs."

"The blue calico will be very pretty, I am sure," said Sue. "I want to see it very much, because she made it herself."

"There it is agin," said Mr. Shepard. "I don't think myself that a gal like that is old enough to make her own dresses; but my wife she cut it out, and set her about it. I don't know how it's come out, though I shouldn't wonder if the sewin' was better than the cuttin'. Ruth's a powerful smart girl, *I* think: she's handy with every thing she undertakes. I shouldn't wonder if she could 'a' cut that 'ere dress better than her aunt did, but 'twont do to say so. I was awful anxious that Martha should take it to a dressmaker."

Just then Julia exclaimed,—

"There she is now, blue dress and all!"

Ruth was just coming out of the house; and her aunt was talking to her, as if giving her some very decided directions. The children could hear Ruth's last words, as she walked away from the house, which were, "Yes, ma'am, I'll be sure and remember."

"Let's go and meet her," said Sue, slipping from the wall, and walking down the road. Johnny and Julia followed. They met Ruth about half way.

"I'm ever so glad to see you again, Ruth," said Johnny: "this is a neighbor of ours, Julia Peterson; and this is my sister Sue."

"I'm so glad you can go," said Sue, taking Ruth's hand, and walking along by her. "I think your new dress is real pretty. You must be awful proud that you made it all yourself."

Although Sue was wholly unconscious of the fact, she could not have said any thing more comforting to poor Ruth, who had noticed, with true feminine observation, as soon as she saw the girls, how prettily they were dressed. Sue wore a handsome red Mother Hubbard, trimmed with white, and Julia a richly embroidered white dress. Ruth's dark blue calico was made very plain; there was not even a tuck or ruffle on it: but as she was a very sweet-looking girl, with bright eyes and deep dimples, and had a refined, lady-like manner, she looked better in the plain dress than would have been the case with a girl of less pleasing appearance. Her hair was braided, and tied with a bit of blue ribbon; and she wore a cheap but becoming sun-hat, plainly trimmed with blue.

The children all walked back to where Mr. Shepard was standing.

"I'm glad enough you can go, Ruth," said her uncle: "I hope you will have a raal good time."

"Thank you," said Ruth, getting up on the wall to bid him good-by. She put her arms around his neck, and kissed him. He gave her a good hug, and then

looked furtively towards the house, as if he were afraid his wife would see them; but, fortunately, Mrs. Shepard was not in sight, although she came into the parlor a few moments afterward, and peered out from between the shutters.

"You'll be a good girl, I know," he said: "be as perlite as you know how."

"I'm afraid I sha'n't know how very well," replied Ruth, a little anxiously.

"I'll resk you! I'll resk you!" said Mr. Shepard heartily. "I'd come and git you, but this young man says his mother is to bring you home."

Johnny had gone across the road, and brought the dog-cart, which was now waiting for its occupants.

"You get in first, Ruth," said Sue politely.

As Sue seated herself in the middle, and took up the reins, she said, "Good-by, Mr. Shepard: we'll take good care of Ruth, and send her home all safe."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Shepard, brushing his hand hastily across his eyes. "Now, you have as good a time as ever you can, Ruth: you don't git sich a chance every day, you know."

[image]

"Ruth looked back and smiled at him."

Ruth looked back and smiled at him as the dog-cart moved away. "Don't you worry," she returned. Evidently there was a good understanding between Ruth and her uncle, in spite of the redoubtable Mrs. Shepard.

When they reached the turn in the road, Johnny, who had run ahead for his bicycle, joined them.

"You forgot to go back for Felix," said Sue.

"There wasn't time to go back, because we didn't have to wait for Ruth. I don't believe his hour is up yet."

"No," said Julia, looking at a dainty little gold watch: "it isn't quite a quarter-past nine; it lacks ten minutes."

Ruth felt so much awed at first, by being in such fine company, that she said very little, scarcely more than answering the questions addressed to her. But Sue and Johnny paid so much attention to her, that she soon felt more at her ease; although she was quite shy of Julia, whose manner was not quite as cordial and unconstrained as that of her companions. The truth was, Julia was considerably puzzled at the attention which Johnny and Sue paid to the lighthouse keeper's niece, and this not the less from her mother having remarked, when she asked leave to go with them on the errand, "What can Mrs. Le Bras be thinking of, to want to invite that poor country girl to spend the day with her children? But

since she has, and the Le Bras are such fine people, I suppose you can go, though I do think it is queer of her."

When they reached the wharf on the way back, the boys had disappeared from the pier. The pavilion, however, was quite filled with children and their nurses, and groups of boys and girls were to be seen here and there along the shore.

"I don't see Jack anywhere," remarked Sue.

"Like enough, he is one of those boys way down there on the point," said Johnny. "It's almost bathing-time now: I should like to see all the folks in bathing. We might come down about eleven."

"Yes, let's!" replied Julia: "it's great fun. Let's come down in our bathing-suits, and go in too: it's ever so much more fun where there are a lot."

"We haven't any bathing-suits yet," said Sue: "mother's going into town in a day or two to get us some, and then we can have great times. You must come over and bathe with us, Ruth. Have you a bathing-suit?"

"No; but I sometimes put on an old dress, and go a little way into the surf with my uncle."

"I should think you would be afraid," said Johnny, "on account of the undertow."

"But my uncle is a very good swimmer, and he only takes me in a very little way. I hold tight on to his hand. Sometimes the surf knocks me down, but uncle Ethan pulls me right up again."

"I'm going to begin to learn to swim, first thing, as soon as I get my bathing-suit," said Johnny. "Felix can swim, and he and Oliver are to show me how."

"I don't see why mamma did not think of the bathing-dresses before we left home," said Sue.

"Why, don't you remember? Felix told her they had a larger variety down this way. You see, they don't keep bathing-clothes so much in inland towns. I doubt if we could have got what we wanted at home, without having them made."

They soon came in sight of the Peterson cottage. Mrs. Peterson was sitting on the veranda with some fancy-work. She was a handsome, finely dressed woman, with a slightly haughty air. She and Mrs. Le Bras had exchanged calls, and the children had been over several times to visit Julia. When she saw the dog-cart coming, she looked quite curiously at Ruth, and then turned towards a lady visitor, who came out of the door at that instant, and said something with a smile. Of course, the children did not hear what she said; but it was, "Don't that country girl, in her dark calico, look odd with Julia and Sue? I wonder what Mrs. Le Bras invited her for!"

"Have you seen Felix, mother?" asked Julia.

"I saw him going down the road with Jack Billings a while ago."

"Jack Billings! Jack didn't touch my kitten, did he?"

"I think not. They have not been around our house. He and Felix were out at the barn, I think. Jack had not been up here more than fifteen minutes or so. I heard him call out to Felix, as he went into the yard, that he wanted him to go down to the Point fishing, with him and some other boys."

Julia laughed merrily. "Well!" she said, "Felix did get mad with me in earnest!"

"You should say vexed, not 'mad,'" corrected her mother; and the children rode on to the next cottage.

When Mrs. Le Bras saw them coming, she came out of the door, and down the steps, to shake hands with Ruth, and tell her she was glad to see her.

"And now, my dears," said Mrs. Le Bras, "you had better go right in out of the hot sun, for it is getting to be a very warm day. You will find some lemonade in the dining-room. You can play in the parlor or dining-room, or you can go up in Johnny's or Sue's room. I am busy in my room painting this morning; but by and by, when I get through for to-day, I will call you in to see how far I have got with my picture."

"What are you painting?" inquired Johnny, wheeling his bicycle up against the end of the veranda.

"I am painting that pretty little bay across from here, with the fishing and sail boats anchored in it, and the blue hills behind, and the sky with the gulls overhead. I think I will make your father a birthday present of the sketch if I can get it done in time: you know his birthday comes the fifteenth of August."

"Oh! I 'most forgot!" said Sue. "I must be thinking what I will get for him."

"And I too," said Johnny. "He likes something we make better than any thing we can buy. If I can get a piece of nice wood, I will whittle a paper-cutter of my own design, and get mother to show me how to paint something on it."

Mrs. Le Bras took Ruth's hand, and led her into the house, talking to her very pleasantly. She inquired about her uncle and aunt, and asked her how she liked living by the sea. Ruth replied in an intelligent, lady-like manner, although a little bashfully.

Johnny took the dog-cart to the barn, and told Oliver he would unharness the pony. But Oliver said he would see to it, as he was not busy.

"So Felix went off with Jack Billings fishing?" said Johnny.

"Yes," replied Oliver, "and I was glad enough to see them go. They were round fooling a while, as if they were up to some mischief or other. I was afraid they would disturb those settin' hens: I heard them making a great cackling. They seem to be all right, though. I guess the boys were playing 'stumps' in the barn: they were racing and jumping a good deal. Felix was in for one of his high times. You see, your father's gone off, and he'll be likely to take advantage. He

appeared more like himself as he used to be than I've seen him afore, sence he's ben here this summer. I tell you, he was a high one last year! His own folks couldn't do nothin' at all with him; and he was mighty sassy to them, and to Mary and me, you'd better believe, when he was crossed in any thing, and when he wasn't crossed, as well. Your father and mother have got the upper hand of him somehow, and I'm mighty glad on it."

"Where has my father gone?"

"He's gone off with Mr. Frothingham, to sail in his yacht. Mr. Frothingham came down in his fast team this morning, and wanted your father to go with him."

"I thought father told him he couldn't go just now."

"Well, he said jest for a day, you know; and your mother said your father could go for a day jest as well as not, and so he did. They're coming home to-night."

"Where did the yacht start from?"

"Mr. Frothingham keeps it at the Harbor: that's a mile or so this side of town. You'll have to go down and see the Harbor, Johnny; it's a mighty fine place; no end of yachts and sail-boats and steamboats and schooners and barges, and all sech craft, passing along by."

"Yes: Felix told me about it. Couldn't you take us down in the buggy or carriage some day?"

"Sartin! sartin! Any time your folks say."

Johnny then went in to join the girls.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DAY.

The children amused themselves happily in various ways until nearly noon, Julia remaining; as she, too, had been invited to dinner. Mrs. Le Bras had called them in to see her painting, and also read them a story from a paper which had arrived by the morning's mail. Julia at length proposed that they should go over and sit in the west piazza of her house, which was shaded by large vines, and was cool in the middle of the day. Mrs. Peterson and her friend were in the parlor, which opened upon this piazza by two large windows reaching to the floor; so that, when the windows were open at the bottom, a person could step through into the piazza. The windows were open, but the blinds were partly closed. There

were armchairs and rustic seats upon the piazza; and, after her visitors were seated, Julia said she would go and get her kitten.

Ruth had been made to feel so much at home at the Le Bras cottage, that she was now quite at her ease: she had even forgotten for the time that she was not dressed as well as her companions, or that her aunt had made her promise she would find an opportunity to go down to the cottages, and see if any one wanted a nurse-girl, before the day was over.

Just after Julia had gone, Mrs. Peterson stepped out into the piazza, and spoke to the children. Sue introduced Ruth, and told Mrs. Peterson what a nice time they were having.

"I suppose you will want to come over and see the children quite often, now," remarked Mrs. Peterson to Ruth.

"I should like to, if I could," replied Ruth hesitatingly, and looking a little troubled; "but I don't know as my aunt will think best. It is possible I may get a place down at one of the cottages, to take care of children. I must go down there and see before I go home."

"May I go with you?" asked Sue.

"Yes: I would like to have you, if your mother is willing."

"Are you acquainted with any other nurse-girls, Sue?" inquired Mrs. Peterson.

"No, ma'am: I have noticed some of them when we have ridden past the cottages, but I didn't see any who were at all like Ruth."

"How do you know they were not like Ruth?"

"Because they laughed loud, and acted rough, and looked you right in the face, in a kind of unpleasant way," replied Sue, who, although she did not know exactly why she was not prepossessed by the nurse-girls she had seen around the cottages, was resolved to give as good a reason as she could.

"I suppose they are nice girls enough, in their way," said Mrs. Peterson; "but of course they don't expect to associate with other young persons about here. I suppose you know, Ruth, that, if you are a nurse-girl, you can only go with your own class: and, besides, you will have no time to yourself; you will have to be with the children you take care of, day and night.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ruth, coloring; "I know that; but I think it will be pleasanter than being where there are no children. I had younger brothers and sisters at home, and I used to help take care of them. I liked it very much. I've missed them a good deal."

"How came you to be separated from your brothers and sisters?"

"My father was dead, and their father was my step-father. After our mother died, my stepfather was married again, and my step-mother thought it was enough to have my step-father's children. So my uncle came and took me, be-

cause I hadn't any own father and mother."

"Oh! that was it? That was very mixed up. How old were you when your mother married again?"

"Six years old. And my father died when I was a year old. He used to live a little way from here: he was a farmer."

"And what is your step-father's business?"

"He keeps a grocery-store in town."

Just then Julia came back with a very red face and flashing eyes.

"I can't find my kitten anywhere!" she exclaimed, in an indignant tone, "and I don't believe but what Felix Le Bras and Jack Billings have done something with her! I believe they've carried her off! She always comes when I call her the least little bit; but I've called and called, ever so far from the house, too, and I haven't heard a single mew!"

"Perhaps she has wandered off farther than usual, and will be back pretty soon," said Mrs. Peterson soothingly. "I am sure I should have noticed if the boys had a cat about them, when they went past, down the road. They walked close by the piazza, where I was sitting and appeared perfectly innocent and unconcerned."

"I don't care! She's gone! And, if they didn't take her, who has?" returned Julia, sitting down disconsolately in a large rocker, and rocking violently back and forth, in an unabated state of excitement.

At that moment Johnny, who was sitting on the railing at the end of the piazza, holding to the corner post, exclaimed,—

"There comes Felix now! Let's ask him about it."

Julia sprang up, and ran around into the front piazza. Sue followed her closely. Ruth came and stood by Johnny's side, who said to her, "I wonder if it is possible Felix has had any thing to do with the kitten's being missing! If he has, I am afraid there will be another penalty to pay."

"What is a penalty?" asked Ruth.

"Why, if any of us do any thing wrong, my father has some punishment for us, which he calls a penalty."

Felix was a little way down the road. Julia called out,—

"Felix Le Bras, what have you done with my kitten?"

"I haven't done any thing with your kitten," replied Felix. But since he laughed as he spoke, his denial did not have the force that it might have had if he had looked sober and in earnest.

"Why, what's the matter about your kitten? Isn't she all right? The last time I saw her, she was right up here by the house," he continued.

"Didn't Jack carry her off?" asked Julia, looking perplexed.

"No, of course he didn't! We went fishing. Do you suppose we wanted a

cat for bait? Look there!"

As he spoke, Felix swung forward a very respectable string of blackfish, with a long eel hanging from their midst. He then ran forward, brandishing the fish and the swinging eel, coming right up on the steps where the girls were standing. Julia and Sue screamed, ran back, and got behind Johnny, who was laughing in spite of his efforts to look dignified.

"Don't you accuse me of carrying off your kitten!" shouted Felix, swinging the eel towards Julia. "I've had enough of your sauce before now, Miss Julia Peterson."

Felix had not noticed Mrs. Peterson until now, when she came forward out of the shady western piazza, saying,—

"No more rudeness, Felix! Go away with your eel!—Do you really know nothing about Julia's kitten?"

"No, ma'am," replied Felix, trying to look more sober and gentlemanly: "what should I know about her kitten?—How do you do, Ruth?—Come along to the house, Johnny, and help me skin these things in time to have them cooked for dinner."

Johnny very willingly followed Felix, taking out and opening his jack-knife as he went. The girls brought up the rear, keeping out of the sweep of Felix's eel; for he was still swinging his arm vigorously, although with apparent carelessness. The carelessness was a pretence, however; for once, when Julia came a little nearer, the tail of the eel swung against her ankle, much to her horror.

"I tell you! but this eel is a slippery fellow! and if he didn't hold on to the hook! I had to pull it out of his mouth by main force, holding him down with my foot. Jack showed me how."

The girls shuddered; but Johnny said, "That's the reason I don't like to catch eels: it is almost impossible to get the hook out of their mouths any other way. I've caught them in the river, down by my grandfather's."

Soon after the fish were dressed, the dinner-bell rang. Mrs. Le Bras left the table after the first course of the dessert; but the children sat for some time over the nuts and candy, chatting merrily. After dinner they went out on the veranda, where the awning had been drawn to keep out the rays of the sun. There was a cool breeze from the water; and the waves curled merrily upon the beach, with a sound not unlike laughter, as they dashed here and there against the white bowlders.

Pierre, who had been writing some law-papers for Mr. Le Bras, in his room, all the morning, was reclining in the hammock when they came out. He offered to give up the hammock, but the children preferred the great comfortable piazza-chairs. Pierre had a book in his hand, but he did not appear to be reading very attentively.

"Shall we disturb your reading, Pierre?" asked Johnny.

"Oh, no! I am not reading: I am only playing at reading. In fact, I am too tired to read," replied Pierre, closing his book: "I think I had rather hear you children talk."

"I miss my laboratory very much," remarked Johnny: "I think I will never go away from home again without bringing my 'Play-Book of Science,' and some materials for making experiments. If I had some of my apparatus and chemicals here, I could amuse and interest the girls very much for a while this afternoon."

"Oh, I wish you had!" said Julia. "I love to see experiments dearly: I've been to some lectures where they had them, with my cousin Ernest, who is at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy."

"Is that so?" said Johnny. "I should like to know your cousin very much. Is he coming to see you this summer?"

"No: he has gone up into the mountains with his folks."

"What is your 'Play-Book of Science'?" inquired Pierre.

"You wouldn't think it much of a play-book if you could see it; it is one of the deepest books I have; and the experiments are most of them so elaborate that I haven't been able to try them yet, and can't until I get a good deal older. It is a book my father had when he was a boy, and goes into philosophy and chemistry pretty thoroughly. It is very interesting, and has four hundred and seventy pictures illustrating the experiments and principles. There are over four hundred pages of pretty fine print."

"Who is the author of it?"

"Professor Pepper."

"Oh, yes! An English professor. I know. It must be an excellent work."

"And I have the 'Play-Book of Metals,' by the same author."

"Who are the publishers of the books?"

"Routledge & Sons, London."

"I should like to see your laboratory, Johnny," said Julia. "I went into a very large laboratory with Ernest, once: it was full of bottles and all sorts of queer things for performing experiments."

"Johnny's would make you laugh, then," said Felix. "It's a little room; and all his bottles are vials, and they're in a small closet."

"But he's learned a lot up in that laboratory," said Sue. "And he can perform ever so many pretty experiments. You can make fire burn under water, can't you, Johnny?"

"Yes: I learned that out of the 'Play-Book.'"

"I don't see how you can make any thing burn under water," remarked Ruth; "for water puts out fire."

"Can't you tell, Felix?" asked Johnny.

"How can I tell?"

"You remember about the gunpowder burning shut up in the holes the men drilled?"

"Yes. That was because fire is produced by the oxygen of the air uniting with the carbon and hydrogen in other substances; and although the air is shut out in the drill-hole, there is oxygen in the nitre, which unites with the sulphur and charcoal."

"Bravo, Felix!" exclaimed Pierre: "you may be a scholar yet! I didn't think Johnny had got you as far as that."

"Oh, yes! What with Johnny and you and uncle Frank, I'm getting quite learned, I guess. Can't you begin to call me professor, girls?"

"Not till you know more than that," said Sue; "for I know that."

"Felix has got the idea about the fire under water, I guess," said Johnny. "You see, I mix some nitrate of potash, powdered charcoal, sulphur, and nitrate of strontium, and put it into a long narrow paper case, tightly closed with gum. I set it on fire at the bottom, and sink it in the water by a piece of lead hung to it."

"And sometimes the fire is red," said Sue.

"Yes; but I have a different mixture for the red fire. You see, Ruth, the reason water puts out fire is because it shuts out the oxygen by shutting out the air. If you can furnish oxygen to a combustible material under water, you can burn it under water. As I put something in my mixture to furnish oxygen, I have a fire without any trouble. But I have seen a larger laboratory than the one you saw, Julia."

"Where?"

"Oh! I've seen one in everyplace I ever was in.—That's a riddle for you. See who'll guess it first."

"No, you haven't seen one in every place you were ever in; for you haven't seen one here at the beach?" replied Julia.

"Yes, I have."

"It's some nonsense," said Felix. "We'll give it up. There's no fun in trying to guess riddles that have a catch in them: you never can guess them."

"I can see a part of a great laboratory from where I am sitting," returned Johnny, who was sitting on the doorstep. "Or, at least, I can see a part of one of its distilleries."

Pierre began to smile.

"I can't see any of its great retorts," continued Johnny, "nor the furnaces under them, nor the gas burned as it comes out. But I can see a good many of the contrivances for storing up heat so that it can be kept cool in a very useful, beautiful form until the heat is needed, when it can very easily be brought out again in flames. And I can see some more of the stored heat that has gone through

a second process, by which it serves the purpose of slow combustion, which gives heat and force without any light."

Pierre began to laugh. "Can't you guess the riddle now?" he said.

But the children still looked puzzled.

"Oh! I haven't been trying to guess," said Felix: "I think riddles are more trouble than they are worth."

"There is a good deal of the slow combustion going on in this veranda," continued Johnny, "and some of the stored-up force; though the machines might be made a good deal more active, if it were not just after dinner-time, when the fuel that's been put in is in a pretty compact form, and hasn't begun to be distributed much. In an hour or two the machines may get quite antic."

"He means us, by the machines, don't he?" said Julia.

"But what do you mean by the great retorts?" asked Felix.

"And the heat stored up in a cool form?" added Ruth.

"And the big distillery?" queried Sue.

"I should think you would know about the big distilleries, yourself, Sue. Come and sit here by me, and you can see quite a piece of one of them."

Sue came and sat down by Johnny.

"Now look right ahead."

"I don't see any thing but the water, and a blue strip of land beyond."

"And which would the distillery have in it? land or water?"

"Why, water.—He means the sea."

"I mean the Atlantic Ocean for one of the distilleries, a part of which I see from here."

"What do you call that a distillery for?" asked Felix.

"Why, distilling is obtaining a liquor in a pure form, by vaporizing it, and then cooling the vapor back into liquid form. Vapor is pure liquid: no mineral substances can be taken up in it. I have a little apparatus at home for distilling water. I can take well-water, which has mineral substances in it, and obtain the water quite free from any thing else. That is what is going on from the oceans, and, in a smaller way, from the rivers, lakes, and ponds. The heat of the sun causes the water, which, you know, here at the ocean is very salt, and full of other impurities, to rise in pure vapor, and form clouds overhead. The winds carry the clouds over the land: they become condensed by cooling, and fall in rain. The rain, which is pure water, except for the little particles of various things floating in the air which it brings down with it, soaks into the ground, forming springs, and helps to swell the ponds and lakes and rivers, and so it gets mineral and other substances in it again, especially salt, which is found in small quantities in all spring-water, and this impure water is carried to the ocean again to be purified; that is, it is carried back to the great distillery, to be made into pure rain-water.

What I can't make out is, what is to keep the ocean from getting too salt by and by, since considerable salt is always coming into it from the rivers. What do you think about it, Pierre?"

"There are various ways by which the ocean gets rid of some of its salt, the most important of which is the making of salt, by men, out of salt water; and the natural manufacture, by the salt water lodging in the rocks, and then evaporating, and leaving the salt, which is collected in large quantities. There may be some way of its escaping, too, that has not been found out. I am pretty sure there is some natural provision by which the ocean can never become too salt, as long as the earth is intended for the home of man."

"I thought the reason why the ocean is salt, is because there is a great deal of salt in the bottom, which washes up into the water," remarked Ruth.

"That may be one reason," replied Johnny; "though the books don't say so. Don't you think, Pierre, that a good deal of the salt may have come from salt deposits under the oceans?"

"I don't see why not. There is a great amount of surface under the oceans, and it would be a wonder if there were not great deposits of salt there, as well as on the land; although they must be pretty well covered up by this time, by ocean deposits."

"But how about those retorts?" asked Felix, who had seen Johnny's experiment of making a little retort out of a clay pipe.

"I don't know what a retort is," remarked Julia.

"Nor I," said Ruth.

"A retort is a place where you heat any combustible very hot, without letting the air get to it. Of course, if there is no oxygen at hand, it can't burn; and so the heat merely causes the hydrogen to separate from the carbon, in the form of gas. They have large retorts at the gas-works, in which they heat soft coal excluded from the air; and, you know, the gas that is driven out is carried through pipes into the houses and stores, and then, when the gas is allowed to escape from one of the jets, they light it, and, because there is oxygen around, it burns steadily until you shut it off; that is, until you exclude the air."

"But how about your retorts in your big laboratory?" asked Felix.

"The largest that I have heard of," continued Johnny, "is around Pittsburg. That is in the soft-coal region. The heat in the earth has driven off the gas, or hydrogen, from the coal in the mines. Once, when they were boring a well, some of this pent-up gas, which was where they happened to be boring, burst out in a kind of explosion, tearing their boring apparatus all to pieces, and frightening the workmen pretty thoroughly. Afterwards the gas at this hole got on fire, and burned in a great big jet. But it was some time before the Pittsburg folks got it through their heads that nature had some monstrous big gas-works under them,

so that they had only to pipe the gas, and bring it into their houses and manufactories, to get rid of using the coal that made Pittsburg such a black, smoky city. But they found it out after a while; and now they have not only natural-gas lights, but gas-fires in their manufactories, so that the atmosphere is as pure in Pittsburg as in any other manufacturing city."

"Then, the coal from which the gas came must be coke," said Felix, "something like that folks buy at the gas-works, after they have got the gas out?"

"Yes: it is the carbon of coal without the hydrogen, and so it does not burn with a flame; the flame of a fire is the burning of the hydrogen which escapes from the coal or wood when it is heated, and its burning, as it rises, makes the flames that leap up and curve about so in a fire. The anthracite coal is coal which has had most of the hydrogen driven out by heat."

"I wish you would tell us now," said Ruth, "about the stored-up heat in a cool form. I've been wondering about that most of all."

"You know plants can't grow without sunlight, Ruth?"

"Yes; that is, I know that if they don't have sunlight, they will grow very white, as they do when they are in a cellar."

"If the cellar were perfectly cold and dark, they would not grow at all; but they grow, as you have seen them, because there is some sunlight and sunheat, even in a cellar. The heat of the sun causes the plants to grow by taking in carbon from the air, and hydrogen from the water in the earth, and in rain and dew, and so the carbon and hydrogen are gradually stored up in the plants and trees; of course, there is the largest quantity in trees, because they grow large and solid. And it has been proved that you can get just as much heat by burning these things afterwards, that is, making the carbon and hydrogen unite with the oxygen from which they had been taken away, as there was heat of the sun expended in the process of their growing, or gathering up carbon and hydrogen."

"I remember about your telling that before, at the doctor's when I hurt my head; but I don't see how they ever proved it," said Felix.

"You could understand by studying it up. I have books that tell how it was proved. So, you see, it amounts to this,—that the heat from the sun is stored up some way, in the things that have grown out of the earth; and the very amount of heat stored, without a particle of waste, can be got out of the combustible a thousand or more years after it was bottled up in that way."

"Not a thousand years!" exclaimed Julia. "Trees don't live to be a thousand years old."

"Yes,—the big trees of California," said Ruth.

"That's so," said Johnny; "but I was thinking of the coal mines which are old, buried forests packed hard under ground, where the stored heat has been preserved so long, and will be preserved for no one knows how many hundreds

and thousands of years to come."

"But it will get used up sometime, and all the forests get cut off: I've heard my father say so," said Felix.

"I suppose so; but by that time we shall have found out how to burn water."

"To burn water!" exclaimed all but Pierre.

"Yes. They can burn water now, only the process is too expensive; but by that time they will have found some very cheap way. That is what the scientific men are pretty certain of. Water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen; and, you see, hydrogen is very inflammable, being what we burn for gas, and that which burns in a fire to make the flame, while oxygen is the very gas it must have in order to burn."

"Then, I don't see why water isn't very inflammable indeed," said Felix wonderingly. "I wonder the oceans and rivers and lakes haven't burned up and set all the rest of the world on fire."

"Why, you see, the hydrogen in water won't unite with the oxygen in the air, because it has all the oxygen it wants already. It has got to be separated from the oxygen it has, before it will be ready to take in oxygen, and so cause fire."

"Oh!" said Felix. "But I shouldn't think it would be so hard to get it away from its oxygen."

"It is, though," said Johnny; "for hydrogen and oxygen have a very great liking, or affinity, for each other."

"I should think, then," said Felix musingly, "if water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, that, when hydrogen combines with oxygen in the burning of gas or a common fire, they would form water."

"So they do," said Johnny.

"Oh, no, they don't!" exclaimed Julia.

"Yes; although you do not notice it, because the water is in the form of a fine vapor which passes off through the air. But I could prove to you, if you were in my laboratory, that the flame of even a little taper produces water. I have performed that experiment a good many times."

"Yes, he has," said Sue; "I've seen him: the water settles on the glass, just as if you had breathed on it."

"And it can be done so that the drops will trickle down the sides of the receiver," said Johnny.

"But how about the slow combustion going on in this veranda, Johnny?" asked Sue.

"Slow combustion goes on in animals. They eat the plants in which the sun has stored up heat, or other animals whose bodies have been formed out of the stored heat in plants, and the carbon and hydrogen go into their blood, and are carried by the blood to the lungs, where they come in contact with the oxygen of

the air, under a moderate heat, to make more heat, by uniting with the oxygen to form carbonic-acid gas, which is breathed out into the air to help furnish carbon for the plants."

"But there are no animals in this veranda, except a few flies," said Julia.

"Oh, yes!" said Sue. "There's you and I, and Johnny and Felix, and Ruth and Pierre!"

"I am not an animal!" exclaimed Julia indignantly. "Am I, Johnny?"

"The part of us that dies is animal," replied Johnny, "just as much as Clyde or these flies are animals."

"No," persisted Julia: "we are folks."

"Our bodies are the highest kind of animals," said Johnny, smiling. "You and Ruth are very good-looking animals."

"That's a pretty compliment!" exclaimed Julia. "Now I have been called an animal, I have a mind to go right home. At any rate, I am going home to see if I can find my kitten. If she is coming back at all, I am sure she has come by this time."

"Let me go with you," said Felix mischievously.

"No, you don't! But Sue can go."

"You come, too, Ruth," said Sue.

"No, thank you," replied Ruth. "I think I ought to be going down to the cottages by this time: I will ask your mother to excuse me a little while, while I go to inquire if any one wants to hire a children's maid."

"I think I'll go up with Ruth to see mamma, then," said Sue, "for I am to go down to the cottages with Ruth."

"Why, they'll think you want to hire out, too, Sue," replied Julia.

"I don't care if they do. Come, Ruth."

Sue took Ruth's hand, and they went upstairs, while Julia ran home to find the kitten. By this time, Pierre had fallen asleep in the hammock.

"I guess, while the girls are gone, I'll go out and pick some huckleberries for supper, father is so fond of them," said Johnny; "and Katie says we haven't more than half enough. She wanted us all to pick some; but it was too warm after dinner, and I don't believe the girls will be back in time. It is getting cool now, because there is such a breeze."

"I'll bet there'll be a storm before long," replied Felix, looking at the sky. "But it's too stupid picking berries! Can't we do something else?"

"Perhaps you can, but I promised Katie," replied Johnny, going to the kitchen for a tin pail. As Felix did not want to be left alone, and could not think of any thing better to do, he followed Johnny to the huckleberry pasture behind the house, with a tin cup in his hand. "It is easier to pick in a cup than in a pail," he said.

"Why?" asked Johnny.

"Because it fills up sooner, and that is encouraging."

Pretty soon the boys saw Oliver harnessing the dog-cart; and, a little after, Julia came out into the pasture with a pail, saying she could not find the kitten, and she fully believed Jack had carried it off, whether Felix knew about it or not.

"He hasn't done any such thing!" returned Felix: "he couldn't have taken it without my seeing it, and I am positively certain he had no kitten with him when we went down the road."

The dog-cart was brought around to the door, and Sue and Ruth drove down to the row of cottages. When they reached the first cottage, Ruth got out, and inquired at the door if they would like to hire a nurse-girl. Sue drove to the pavilion, and then, having hitched the pony, joined Ruth in the tour of inquiry. In the whole row of cottages, they found only one where a girl was wanted: this was a neat yellow cottage with red blinds, which was set quite a way back from the beach. There were a number of children playing about the piazzas. They seemed fretful and quarrelsome; and when Ruth asked one of the little girls what her name was, she replied, "None of your business!" The lady of the house was a short, fleshy woman, with a good many rings on her fingers. She looked at Ruth coolly from head to foot, asking her a good many questions, especially in regard to her references.

"My uncle keeps the lighthouse, ma'am, and he'll come down and tell you about me."

"But I don't know any thing about the lighthouse keeper. And if he is your uncle, of course he will recommend you."

"My mother will tell you what a nice girl she is," said Sue.

"And who is your mother?"

"She's Mrs. Le Bras."

"That lives in Mr. Louis Le Bras' cottage this season?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Very well, that will do: I will try to come up and see Mrs. Le Bras, to-morrow or next day."

After the cottages had all been visited, and they were walking back to the dog-cart, Sue said,—

"I did not like that woman with the rings at all."

"I didn't think the children were well behaved, either," replied Ruth soberly; "but then, I don't suppose there could be a place just right, perhaps, and they are the only family that want a girl: and if I change my mind about wanting to hire out, I am afraid my aunt won't like it at all; though my uncle will be glad."

"I wouldn't go there, anyhow," said Sue; "folks are moving out and in these cottages almost every week, Oliver says, and there may be some nice family who

will want a girl before long. But I think it will be nicer to stay with your uncle, and then we can visit back and forth, and have good times. If you get hired, they won't let you visit, or any one come to see you."

"I'm afraid my aunt won't let me visit, or have any one come to see me, either," replied Ruth, wiping a tear from her eye: "she wouldn't have let me come over here to-day, if she hadn't thought that maybe it would help me get a place to work."

"I don't think she is nice at all!" exclaimed Sue.

Ruth made no reply.

"Why! how awful dark and windy it's getting!" said Sue: "I guess we'll have to hurry home, or we'll get caught in the rain."

Ruth had been so taken up with sober thoughts, that she had not noticed the change in the weather; but she and Sue now hastened their steps, and were soon driving home as fast as the pony seemed willing to take them, which was at a rather moderate trot.

They had gone but a little distance, before there was a rumbling of thunder, and some large drops flew in their faces.

"I'm awful 'fraid we can't get home before it comes right down; and I'm kind of 'fraid of thunder, aren't you?" said Sue. "I do wish I'd brought that whip!"

"I am not afraid of thunder or lightning," replied Ruth encouragingly. "My uncle and I sometimes go up into the lighthouse to see the lightning: it is better than fireworks."

There was a team driving very fast behind them. Sue turned to one side to give it plenty of room.

"Hallo, youngsters!" said a familiar voice.

"Why, papa!" exclaimed Sue.

The carriage with the two gentlemen stopped.

"Hold on, Sue!" said Mr. Le Bras.

Sue stopped.

"They must get in with us, and let the pony shift for himself; since he will never get there before the shower," said a hearty voice that Sue did not recognize. She looked up just as the light buggy stopped at the side of the dog-cart, and saw a large, fine-looking gentleman in the buggy with her father. He was holding the reins. He and Mr. Le Bras quite filled up the narrow seat of the light vehicle. "Hand 'em over," continued the gentleman, as Mr. Le Bras alighted.

Mr. Le Bras helped Ruth out first, and put her in the buggy. The stout gentleman took her on his knees, and gave her a hug.

"Well, my dear!" said he, "we'll save you from a wetting, if possible." Mr. Le Bras put Sue in, and, after tying the reins over the pony's back, slapped him, and told him to hurry up. The pony jogged on at a very little faster pace; while Mr. Le

Bras got into the buggy, and took Sue in his lap. Mr. Frothingham started the fast horse. They left the pony behind them. The drops came thicker and faster, a flash of lightning half blinded them; but they reached the house just as the storm came on in its fury, with thunder and lightning, and pelting rain. The pony was far behind, coolly making his way at his ordinary jog-trot, like a sedate philosopher. Oliver took Mr. Frothingham's team to the barn, and gave the horse some oats. Mr. Le Bras ushered his guest into the parlor. Mr. Frothingham followed him, leading Ruth and Sue by the hand.

"So you are the lighthouse keeper's niece?" he said to Ruth, as he seated himself in the great arm-chair, which Mr. Le Bras drew forward for him, and took a girl on each knee: "why, I've played with him many a time, when we were barefooted boys together."

"You!" exclaimed Ruth.

"You don't mean that you were ever a bare-footed boy, and lived about here?" exclaimed Sue, equally astonished.

"Why not, now?" replied Mr. Frothingham laughing; while Mr. Le Bras went up-stairs to ask his wife to come down and see their guest.

"Because," said Sue, "you're all dressed up, and wear a diamond pin. And aren't you the man that lives up in the big cottage, and that Felix says is a millionnaire, with more money than he knows what to do with?"

"That may all be true, my dear: but you know we live in America, where a barefooted boy may have as good a chance as any man, and perhaps better; because, you see, if I hadn't been a barefooted boy, who knew how to work and how to save, as very few do know how except poor men's children, I might never have been able to wear a diamond pin,—though that isn't of much consequence,—or build a cottage by the grand old sea, and have time to come and spend a summer in enjoying nature, when I am getting to be too old and heavy to want to work as hard as a young man can."

When Mrs. Le Bras came down, she, too, was surprised to learn that Mr. Frothingham had been born in that neighborhood, and had lived there until he was almost a young man.

"Certainly," said Mr. Frothingham. "I was born in a little brown farmhouse over towards the quarry: my father was the minister of the church over on the hill. He had a very small salary, and the farm helped support us."

"The white meeting-house with green blinds?" asked Felix; for he and Johnny had come in to see Mr. Frothingham.

"The very same, my boy: only it has been repainted and repaired inside, since my day. This little girl's grandfather was a near neighbor of ours, and one of my father's best parishioners. He was a very honest, kind-hearted, straightforward man; and his wife was a very dear friend of my mother's. Ethan was

the oldest of the family, and worked hard, from the time he was big enough to handle a hoe; he had the hardest time of any of the children, and didn't get the schooling the others did; but that was partly because he was so ambitious about working, that he would not stop to go to school. It was a mistake, but he meant it all right; and he's helped his folks, and been an industrious, saving man. As for this little girl's mother,—and she looks just like her,—how well I remember Lucy! she was always one of the best scholars in school: we were in the same class. I saw her nearly every day of my life, and never too often, until I went to the city. When I came back, and found she was married to a nice young farmer here, I was a good deal taken back, for a while.—You see, it was my love for the old scenes that made me build a cottage here. When a man gets along in life, he likes to come back to the place where he was born: no other place can be quite so dear. I hoped once to have my children spend half of every year where I passed my childhood; but they are both gone. Mary, a girl of about Ruth's size, died over a year ago, and my wife hasn't been like herself since. Our boy died before the cottage was finished, and Mary only spent one season here."

"I am so sorry for you and your wife," said Mrs. Le Bras: "I don't know what I should do without my children."

"I have been telling Mr. Frothingham what I should do," remarked Mr. Le Bras.

"Yes," said Mr. Frothingham; "but, as I said in reply, there are some objections."

At that moment, the tea-bell rang; and, as it was still raining, Mr. Frothingham was persuaded to go out to tea with them.

"How came you home so early, father?" asked Johnny. "Mother thought you wouldn't be back until in the evening."

"We saw the squall coming up," replied Mr. Le Bras; "and I told Mr. Frothingham, as your mother was so timid, I thought, as we were not far out, we had better put in before the storm."

"I am so thankful you did," said Mrs. Le Bras: "I should have been worried; I have heard of so many accidents to yachts lately."

"Mine is not one of that kind, and I have a very expert man to sail it," replied Mr. Frothingham; "but I never like to have a lady unhappy if I can help it, and so I made for land as soon as your husband told me how easily you are frightened."

It stopped raining about the time tea was over, but still looked dark and lowering. Mrs. Le Bras said she must take Ruth home, according to her promise; or, if the gentlemen thought it would rain again, she would send her with Oliver, and call on her uncle and aunt some pleasant day herself.

"Why, I can take the child home, with my fast horse, without danger of getting caught in the next shower," replied Mr. Frothingham. "I would like to see

Ethan too: I haven't been over to the lighthouse yet this season, for a wonder, or I should have known of his good luck in getting possession of Lucy's girl."

So it was concluded that Ruth should go with Mr. Frothingham. Oliver brought the team around; and after the children had said good-by, and that Ruth must come again soon, Mr. Frothingham put her in the buggy, got in himself, and drove off, taking the road across to the shore, to be ahead of the rain that seemed threatening. He talked sociably and kindly and interestingly all the way; and Ruth almost forgot it was a great man by her side instead of a boy of about her own age, he laughed so heartily, and took a child's view of things so easily. The fact was, Mr. Frothingham was one of those men who never wholly outgrow their childhood: he could feel like a boy after he was a middle-aged man.

When they reached the lighthouse, Mr. Shepard, who had seen them coming, was standing on the doorstep to welcome them.

"How do you do, Ethan?" said Mr. Frothingham, grasping Mr. Shepard's hand warmly.

"How d'y' do, Henry?" replied Mr. Shepard as heartily; "so it's you that have brought home that gal of mine! Glad enough to see you."

Mr. Shepard led the way into the parlor, and threw open all the window-blinds in a hurry.

"I can't see what wimmin want to keep out all the daylight for," he said; "but that's Martha's way.—You go tell yer aunt there's a friend of mine here, Ruth, an' I'd like to introduce her."

Ruth went to tell her aunt, and Mr. Shepard continued,—

"I b'lieve you ha'n't seen my new wife yet?"

"No. I hope you've drawn a prize in the lottery, Ethan."

"Wall, I don't know what I've drawn; somethin', that's sure." Here Mr. Shepard looked ominously sober. "The wust thing I've found out yet is that she's plaguey jealous."

"Jealous!" exclaimed Mr. Frothingham, in astonishment. "Why, it can't be possible, Ethan. You are not the kind of a man to give a woman the slightest excuse for jealousy."

"Wall, you see how't is, Henry: she's jealous of that pretty little niece of mine."

"Jealous of that dear little girl!" exclaimed Mr. Frothingham, in astonishment.

"Well, yes. I s'pose it's kind o' nat'ral, perhaps, bein' as she's jest married, or not onto a year yet, that she might want to be the only person of consequence 'round: that's what they tell me. But as my fust wife wasn't like that, I wasn't a-lookin' for it in another woman."

"I see!" replied Mr. Frothingham gravely: "she don't treat Ruth badly, does

she?"

"Well, no; she don't do that exactly; she knows 'twouldn't be safe; but there's ways of making a child mighty on comfortable, I find, without out and out abusin' her."

"Exactly."

"You see, it's plain enough to Ruth that she don't want her here, and she isn't pleasant with her like; and so the gal is lonely and homesick. There was a lot of children at home,—and Lucy was mighty pleasant, you know."

"Yes, yes! Lucy was a gem!"

"Well, losing her mother and all, and it bein' sech a change here with Martha, it's putty hard on her; and she's took it inter her head, and my wife she's pressed the matter, that she'd ruther go and take care of children in some pleasant family than live here at the lighthouse. I thought as how you'd find out pretty soon, an' I might as well tell you fust as last what it means. You know well enough that it an't like me to let my own sister's child, and sech a sister as Lucy was, go out to work if I could help it; but I ha'n't no home but this to give her, and if she'd ruther go somewheres else,—and I can't blame her none,—why, I don't want to stand in her way; and so I haven't said she couldn't go, if she can find a good place; though I do feel mighty bad about it, all 'round."

"This is very serious, Ethan. I'm sorry enough for you. We must see what can be done. There's always more than one way out of a difficulty, if we set to work to find it."

"I thought, the minute I saw you coming a-bringing Ruth, that you were the very man to go to for advice. If she must go out to work, perhaps you'd know of some good family where she'd be kind o' treated like one of the family, and not put upon. She's a mighty smart gal to work, neat and orderly, jest like her mother, for all the world, and she's got her nice pretty ways about her; she's handy with a needle too; and sech a hand for books and papers! She's a mighty smart scholar, so they say, those that knew her in town."

Just then Mrs. Shepard came in, with her best dress on, to see the great millionnaire, whom her husband had the honor to be acquainted with. She appeared at her very best, seeming quite amiable, and did not even remind her husband that he had let all the flies into the room, and it would take her half a day to get them out again. Mr. Frothingham was very polite to her. She thought him a very charming gentleman indeed. As he rose to go, he said,—

"I must say good-by to Ruth, of course: we are old friends now."

"Oh! she's got on her common dress, and won't want to come in," replied Mrs. Shepard. "I'll tell her you left a good-by."

"I never leave my good-bys, with children of her age, anywhere but on their lips, if I can help it," replied Mr. Frothingham. "I've had children of my own, Mrs.

Shepard, and I'm very fond of all children for their sakes, if for no other reason; though I think I'm naturally fond of young folks."

Mr. Shepard had left the room as soon as Mr. Frothingham asked for Ruth; and he now entered, leading her by the hard.

"Here she is, Henry," he said. "Isn't she lots like Lucy now?"

"That she is," replied Mr. Frothingham, kissing her. "Good-by, my little friend. I sha'n't let you forget me, though; for I shall be over to the lighthouse pretty often, and I'm going to bring my wife with me next time. She is very fond of little girls."

Before Mrs. Shepard could recover from her astonishment at this demonstration regarding Ruth, Mr. Frothingham was in his buggy, and driving homewards very fast, over the road by which Felix and Johnny had come to the lighthouse that evening, which was the nearest way to the great cottage. The sky was very dark, and there were more mutterings of thunder.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOING TO THE HARBOR.

Mr. Le Bras told Pierre that a friend of Mr. Frothingham, who was a guest at the large hotel at the Harbor, had gone out with them in the yacht, and had stated, incidentally, that he was anxious to find some good teacher of German to instruct his son in that language; since the young man was to travel in Germany in the fall, and it would be an advantage to know something about the language to begin with. He said he had spoken of Pierre, and recommended him; and the gentleman was anxious that he should come down to the hotel the next day, and hold an interview with himself and his son. Pierre was much pleased: he understood the German language as well as he understood English, and this would give him an opportunity to earn something during vacation. Mr. Le Bras said they would go down to the Harbor, then, in the morning, and Mrs. Le Bras and the children could go too, if they wished. Mrs. Le Bras replied that she had other plans for the next morning, and the children could ask Julia in her place, if they liked. The invitation was, accordingly, given to Julia, much to her delight. She said she liked to go to the hotel, it was such a gay place, and her mother always let her wear her best clothes when she went there.

They started the next morning about ten. Mr. Le Bras said they would not

be home to dinner, but would dine at the hotel, so as to spend the afternoon, and give the children a good chance to see all the sights at the Harbor. He should go into town on business in the afternoon, and if the children and Pierre preferred to go with him rather than remain at the Harbor, they could do so.

Julia was dressed very handsomely, and wore a diamond ring, which shone brightly through her delicate, colored mitts.

"I wish Ruth was with us too," said Sue, as the horses pranced off down the shell road.

"What! in that blue calico?" replied Julia, laughing.

Sue, thus reminded, thought, herself, the blue calico would look rather odd in the fine carriage, by the side of their best clothes; and yet, somehow, it didn't seem as though it ought to, since the blue calico was the best dress Ruth had, and it was not her fault that she could not dress as well as they did.

"She's a real nice girl, anyhow," said Sue, "and just as good as we are,—if not better."

"It don't make any difference about her being good," returned Felix: "rich folks are rich folks, and poor folks are poor folks, and they can't go together."

"Yes, they can," returned Sue: "we went together yesterday, and had a real good time."

"I mean they can't go together and take dinner at a big hotel: they can't go together where folks have to be dressed up and look smart."

"I think it's too bad, anyhow," said Sue emphatically.

"So do I!" said Johnny. "I guess that's the reason folks don't like to be poor: they can't have as good times as rich folks, and they have to be looked down upon. I shouldn't like to be poor."

"I am poor, and yet I have a pretty good time, Johnny," remarked Pierre.

"And you and I are not rich, my son, and yet we manage to be pretty cheerful," added Mr. Le Bras.

"But we're not so very poor," replied Johnny: "Pierre dresses well, and so do we, and no one would think of calling us poor."

"Then, it is about as good as if we were rich," said Mr. Le Bras; "and perhaps it is better, though we are not apt to think so. It is my opinion that Pierre enjoys that new suit of his far more for having had to work hard in my office to earn it; and I don't enjoy seeing you and Sue in your best clothes any the less, because I have had to do some writing and talking in my office, or some speech-making in court, to purchase them. I cannot have just the kind of enjoyment Mr. Frothingham has in his fine yacht; but perhaps I manage to have just as good a time some other way, even when I do not have the advantage of your uncle's cottage by the sea. You and I have had pretty good times, before this summer, Johnny."

"Oh, yes!" said Johnny. "I think we have grand times at home."

"And often with nothing more costly than a book out of a free library. Don't go to having the dreary thought that persons who are not rich cannot enjoy themselves; for if that were so, the great portion of the people in the world would be miserable, and that would be a sad thing to think of. I shouldn't wonder if Ruth were enjoying herself in some way over at the lighthouse, as much as we are here in the carriage."

"I don't believe she is," said Sue; "because her mother is dead, and her aunt don't like to have her stay there."

"But that isn't because she is poor. If her own mother were there, she might be happy."

"Oh, yes! I could be real happy there, myself, seeing the waves, and hearing them clash, if you and mamma and Johnny were there; and it wouldn't make any difference if I had on my very worst dress."

"Wouldn't you be just a little happier if you had on a diamond ring like Julia's?" asked Felix quizzically.

"Perhaps I should for a little while; but I would rather papa should have a diamond pin like Mr. Frothingham's. Didn't it shine beautifully?"

"A diamond is nothing but carbon," remarked Johnny; "and charcoal is carbon too. I will give papa a piece of charcoal to wear."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Felix: "that's a yarn! A diamond is just as different from charcoal as possible!"

"How?" asked Johnny.

"Why, it's white, and charcoal is black; it's transparent, and charcoal isn't; it won't rub off, and charcoal will; it won't burn up like charcoal, and it's worth no end of times more."

"But they are both carbon just the same; and those lozenges you are eating are principally carbon, too, although they are a good deal whiter than charcoal. You haven't any idea how much charcoal you are eating, when you eat sugar or candy. There isn't any particular difference between the whitest of sugar and charcoal, except that the particles are so arranged as to reflect or absorb light differently. I can take a handful of white sugar, and, by putting in something to change the arrangement of the particles, make it look as much like charcoal as it is, just as black as your boot, and spread out into a great deal larger space than it occupied before."

"Yes, he can," said Sue: "I've seen him do it."

"Well, I'd like to see him do it, before I believe it."

"I'll do it when we get home, to-night, if you will give me five cents, and papa will get me some acid to do it with, when he goes into town. The kind of acid I want will cost five cents."

"All right! here's your five cents," replied Felix, taking the amount from his

pocket-book.

"After you have seen it proved that sugar is like charcoal, perhaps you can believe more easily that a diamond is. The particles of carbon in a diamond are packed very closely together, and in such a way as to reflect the rays of light beautifully, and separate them like a prism, when it is cut right. It is so hard, that it is not easy to burn it,—that is, to separate the particles by heat, and make them combine with the oxygen in the air,—but it will burn up if subjected to very strong heat indeed. There's no danger of your diamond burning up, though, Julia, even though you should drop it into the fire by accident; for a fire in a stove wouldn't be hot enough."

"I'm glad of that," replied Julia.

"I don't see as chemistry does so very much good," remarked Felix: "it only tells you about things; it don't make any thing."

"O Felix!" exclaimed Johnny: "there are hardly any of the arts that can be carried on without chemicals, or things chemists have learned how to make; and some of the most useful discoveries in the world have been made by chemists."

"Tell him about the way they learned how to make Bessemer steel out of common iron, as an example, Johnny," said Pierre.

"Well. You see, Felix, they can't make Bessemer steel out of iron that has much phosphorus in it; and most of the iron in the world has a good deal of phosphorus in it; and about all in our country and England has. So the English had to buy the pure iron in Spain, or some other country, and bring it over at a great cost, to make Bessemer steel of."

"Why didn't they take the phosphorus out of the iron?"

"Ah! that's just it! They didn't know how. They studied and studied to do that very thing; for if they could find an easy way to get the phosphorus out, they could make railway steel out of their own iron, and stop buying of Europe. Mr. Thomas, a young English chemist, did not believe what other folks said, who had tried experiments to get phosphorus out of iron: they said it could not be driven out by heat. So he and a friend of his set to work, with a little kettle, to try again. When iron ore is melted, the phosphorus has such an affinity for iron, that it will leave the stone, and go into the iron; or if there is any in the coal or limestone used, it will leave either of them to get into the iron. But Mr. Thomas and his friend found by experiment, that although the phosphorus had a greater affinity for iron than any thing else up to a very high temperature, yet, if the iron was heated up to twenty-five hundred degrees, it would leave the iron to go into limestone; and you must keep it at that heat until the limestone with the phosphorus in it was drawn off from the iron, or the phosphorus will go right back to the iron again. So, by a patent process which Mr. Thomas and Mr. Gilchrist invented, one of the principal things about which is the putting of

a quantity of limestone into the furnace with the iron ore, as a bait to attract the phosphorus when it is heated to twenty-five hundred degrees, they can get pure iron in England out of very common ore, and so sell us railroad-steel a good deal cheaper than we can make it; and England does not have to send to Spain and other countries now, as it used to, for iron that has no phosphorus in it."

"That is a pretty good story, Prof. Tell us some more chemistry stories."

"No," said Mr. Le Bras: "we can't have Johnny teaching all the way to the Harbor. And you, young man, must begin to look up information in books, as Johnny has, without always troubling some one to tell you; and then you can begin to inform others of some things, and not always take the place of a learner. Pierre, you must begin to put this young man into a solid course of reading, where he will be gaining some information of value by his own efforts. Isn't he out of stories yet?—that is, don't he read any thing else?"

"I was intending to ask you pretty soon," replied Pierre, "if I hadn't better go into town and see if I can find some book of information. I have begun to have him read items of importance in the papers, but there is no suitable book at the cottage."

"Get him a book to-day, any thing you please, and I will foot the bill."

"Don't get me any thing awful dry, will you, Pierre?" said Felix. "If you do, I shall just read it without knowing a word I have read."

"I'll see to that. Perhaps I shall have to send to New York for what I want. But I think I can fix you, sir. I don't mean that you shall forget any thing you read that is worth remembering, even if I have to catechise you every day about it."

"Well, anyhow, I don't have to read but an hour a day," returned Felix; "and I guess I can stand it a while longer."

"That is all put on," said Pierre to Mr. Le Bras, in a low tone: "he is beginning to like his hour of reading in the morning; he told me so yesterday."

"And does he keep on improving?"

"Oh, yes! he is doing finely."

Before long, they reached the harbor, which was the broad mouth of a beautiful river. There was a white, sandy beach, with long rows of bathing-houses at one point, and a great shore-dinner room with pavilion. Farther down was a wharf, about which were sailboats and yachts, and a beautiful little steamer, that ran between the harbor and the town. A great hotel stood a little back from the shore, near which stood a number of pretty cottages for lodging some of the guests of the house. At intervals along the beach were handsome great cottages, as large as Mr. Frothingham's. There was also a lighthouse on the beach. At a little distance back of the lighthouse was a pretty grove with seats, swings, and revolving hobby-horses. The children spent the rest of the morning in the grove,

and along the shore. Then came the novel event of the day,—dinner in the great dining-room at the hotel, with colored waiters, and all the courses, from soup to nuts. The tables were filled with handsomely dressed, merry persons. The show and clatter, discussion of the bill of fare, and the courses with their long pauses between, made it easy to spend so much time at the table that a good part of the afternoon was gone before they left the dining-room; and so the children concluded they would not go into town that day.

As they were passing out through the hall, Johnny noticed that a good many men were sitting with newspapers in their hands. He stopped as they passed the desk, and asked of the clerk,—

"Does any boy sell papers here?"

"No," replied the clerk.

"Where do all these gentlemen get their papers?"

"Some of them come by mail, and some get them when they go into town."

As they were going down the steps toward the wharf, to see Mr. Le Bras and Pierre off for town,—since they had decided to go in the steamer, and leave the carriage for Oliver to take the children for a drive along the beach,—Johnny said,—

"There are no papers brought here to the hotel: I have a mind to go over to town mornings, and get some papers and bring them up; if I could sell a good many, I could make considerable money, and have a good time, by coming to the town and Harbor every day."

"But you might not sell enough to make it pay," replied his father.

"I can afford to try it one day. I feel rather badly about not earning any spending-money this summer, and so I should like to try."

"But how could you get into town every day?"

"Why, Pierre will come over mornings to teach that young man, won't he?"

"Yes; that is decided: but he only comes as far as the Harbor."

"I can go to town and back in the steamer."

"But that will cost you twenty cents a day."

"Yes; but I expect to earn more than that; and then, I shall get my money's worth in the sail; I expect to spend some of the money I earn, in having a good time."

"Very well: you can try the experiment, if you have any money to risk in the enterprise."

"I brought two dollars with me of money I earned myself, and so I think I will try it."

"What's the use of taking all that bother for some money?" said Felix. "Won't you give him all the money he wants, uncle Frank?"

"I cannot very well afford to give a boy all the money he wants," replied Mr.

Le Bras; "and, besides, I think it is a very bad plan."

"I like money better that I've earned myself, and I like what I buy with it better than I do the things bought with money other persons have earned," said Johnny. "Besides, I belong to The Independents, who don't spend money themselves that they have not earned."

"But you have to: you can't buy your own clothes."

"I don't spend the money for my clothes: my father buys those things for me. But I earn all my own spending-money, and have these two years."

"I'm glad I don't have to," said Felix.

"Ah! but you don't know what great fun it is."

As Mr. Le Bras and Pierre stepped on board the little steamer, Johnny handed his father the five cents Felix had given him, rolled up in a little slip of paper. "Please get me the acid, father," he said: "I've written the name of it on that slip of paper."

After the steamer had gone, the children remained some time on the pier, looking at the yachts, particularly Mr. Frothingham's, which was named "Grace," after his wife. It was the largest yacht there, and the handsomest. Then they went up into the grove to stay until it was cooler, after which Oliver was to take them to ride all about the Harbor, and down to see the fort, which was half-way between the harbor and the town.

As they were riding back from the fort, up the Harbor road, about five o'clock, a very handsome carriage came into the road at a turn just ahead of them, with a span of black horses wearing very handsome harness. On the back scat were a lady and a girl, and a gentleman sat opposite talking with them. The driver was in livery.

"Why! There's Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham! and—and Ruth, I do believe!" exclaimed Felix.

At that moment, Ruth observed the children, and said something to Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham, who turned and bowed. Mr. Frothingham spoke to the driver, who drove more slowly as he turned in the direction of the Harbor; so that Oliver speedily overtook him, and the two carriages were side by side.

"So you are alone by yourselves?" said Mr. Frothingham.

"Father and Pierre have gone into town," replied Johnny, "and we are riding until they come back. We came down this morning, and took dinner at the hotel."

"Ah!" said Mr. Frothingham: "that was a good idea. I think, Grace, we had better take Ruth to the hotel for an ice-cream. Suppose we all take some cream or ices?"

Mr. Frothingham then said, turning to the children, "Mrs. Frothingham and I have been over to the lighthouse to get Ruth: she is to make us a visit. We rode around here to give her a little drive before we went home. You must come

up to the house and see her this week: I expect she will be a little homesick at first, away from her uncle."

But Ruth did not look at all homesick yet; her eyes sparkled, and her cheeks were glowing; she looked so happy and so handsome, that even the plain dark-blue calico seemed very becoming.

When they reached the hotel, Mr. Frothingham insisted upon their all going in for ice-cream and cake and maccaroons.

Julia was rather horrified at first, at entering the big hotel dining-room, with its groups of richly dressed guests, accompanied by a girl in a calico dress; but seeing that the waiters treated Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham with great deference, and the gentlemen and ladies bowed very respectfully as they passed, she concluded that the honors of the occasion quite offset the disgrace, and enjoyed the entertainment very much. Ruth, in her pretty, modest way, seemed quite happy and animated, much more so than at the time she had spent the day at Mr. Le Bras', with, the going down to the cottages to find a place to work on her mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham and Ruth rode directly home after leaving the hotel; and as Mr. Le Bras and Pierre had not returned, Oliver drove the children up and down near the pier until they arrived. It appeared that Pierre, having come across an old grist-mill in the suburbs, as Mr. Le Bras and he were walking about the town, had wished to stop and sketch it, and Mr. Le Bras had waited for him; for the sketch was to be a present to Mrs. Le Bras, who might like to make a painting from it.

"I must begin to make some sketches too," said Johnny.

"So must I," said Sue.

"Why, you can't draw, can you?" replied Julia, who did not know how to use a pencil with any skill herself.

"Oh, yes!" said Sue. "At least, I can draw pictures from nature that are good enough for my sketch-book. I didn't bring my sketch-book, but I can paste the pictures in afterwards. Did you bring any paper and drawing-pencils, Johnny?"

"No; but mother has plenty she will lend us; she told me I need not pack any."

"Did you remember the acid, uncle Frank?" asked Felix.

"Yes," replied Mr. Le Bras, taking a little vial, wrapped in white paper, from his pocket, and handing it to Johnny. "The druggist labelled it 'Poison,' I noticed; so be careful of it."

"I know it is poison well enough without the label," replied Johnny. "I have learned what it is made of, how it is made, and all about it, from my chemistry."

When they reached home, Sue was telling her mother about Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham taking Ruth home for a visit, and how they all had ice-cream to-

gether at the hotel.

"Just think!" said Felix: "there was Ruth in that old calico dress."

"No Felix: it is a new calico," interrupted Sue.

"Common calico, I mean; and there was every one else all dressed up. I should think Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham would have been ashamed of her."

"I respect them very much for not being ashamed of her," replied Mrs. Le Bras: "persons who are ashamed of other people for circumstances for which the persons who suffer most from them are not to blame, ought to be ashamed of themselves. I shall always be proud to say that I made the acquaintance here this summer of a millionnaire and his wife who were not spoiled by having a great amount of money, but were true gentleman and lady. No one can be a true gentleman or lady who is not kind-hearted, and free from foolish pride and assumption. Ruth seems to be as nice a little girl as I ever saw, and it is nothing to her discredit that she cannot dress finely."

While they were at supper, Johnny poured some water into a tumbler, and added so much sugar that it was soon quite a sirup.

"I like sugar and water: I guess I'll have some too," remarked Felix, putting a little water into his tumbler, and drawing the sugar-bowl towards him.

"Johnny isn't going to eat that, Felix," said Sue.

"What is he going to do with it, then?"

"You wait and see," replied Johnny. "I want the sugar to get well dissolved by the time supper is over, and so I mixed it now."

After supper, Johnny took the vial from his pocket, and asked Kate if she would be kind enough to bring him a common teaspoon. When the spoon was brought, Johnny handed the vial to Sue. Now that the paper was removed, the vial was seen to contain some nearly white fluid.

"You pour it in gently while I stir," said Johnny.

Sue took out the cork, and began to pour the fluid slowly into the tumbler, while Johnny stirred the sweetened water, etc., briskly. Presently the contents of the tumbler grew very black, and began to solidify, rising rapidly in the tumbler, while what Felix called "smoke" issued from it.

"Put your hand on the tumbler, Felix," said Johnny.

Felix did so, but drew it back quickly. "It burns," said he.

"Yes," said Johnny: "chemical union causes heat, and there are two substances uniting here. You know the uniting of carbon or hydrogen with oxygen produces heat, and it's so with many other substances."

"It's going to run over!" said Sue.

Johnny slipped a saucer under the tumbler; and the black mass overflowed, half filling the saucer also.

"Now, you see," continued Johnny, "the particles of matter have changed

very much; for one thing, it is plain enough that they are farther apart; the acid and the sirup would not have half filled the tumbler with their particles as near together as they were to begin with; but now they fill the tumbler and part of the saucer. Who says that there isn't charcoal for you? Just think, Felix! if you had eaten that sirup, you would have eaten so much charcoal: it would probably be more than you could burn up in your lungs to-day or to-morrow, with all the rest of the articles having carbon in them that you have eaten, and so you would have laid it up in extra fat on your body to use some other time, unless you keep on taking in more fuel than you need all the time; and, in that case, it would stay as stored fuel in the shape of fat, I suppose, unless the blood managed to carry off some of it to the lungs to be burned as waste matter. I don't exactly know about that: I haven't got very far in physiology yet."

"It's stopped smoking now," said Felix, taking up some of the black mass in his fingers. "I suppose it isn't good to eat with that poison acid in it."

"And it don't look very appetizing, either," replied Johnny. "But a person who had the right kind of apparatus, and knew how, could get all the sugar I put in there back again, so that it would be just as good to eat as it was before. I suppose that smoke was a gas escaping. I haven't studied into this experiment as I ought; but I shouldn't wonder if the oxygen in the water united with the acid, and that set the hydrogen in the water free, so that the 'smoke' was hydrogen gas. But I am not certain. I'll find out exactly how it is when I get back where my books are. Or, like enough, Pierre will tell us all about it."

"Well! This does look amazingly like charcoal," said Felix, "only it is sort of sticky. I guess we had better put it away till it dries."

"I don't believe it will dry," replied Johnny; "because that acid has such an affinity for water that it will collect moisture. It will stay just about as it is now; and, after you have looked at it enough, I had better throw it in the fire, where it will be out of the way: mother don't like to have any thing with poison in it about."

CHAPTER XIV.

ODDS AND ENDS.

The time flew very fast and happily by the sea. Johnny and Felix went to the Harbor every morning directly after breakfast, with Pierre, the reading-hour be-

ing postponed until their return. Johnny had great luck with his papers from the very start; and his little pocket-book grew so small for his money, in a few days, that he had to transfer a portion of it to another receptacle in his trunk. Felix accompanied him to the Harbor and town "for the fun of it," as he said, but he soon began to want to sell something himself; and so Johnny proposed that he should buy candy in town at the wholesale, and retail it at the Harbor; since candy could be bought there only at the shore-dinner room, where there was a very poor assortment. Felix was considering the subject, when something happened, about a week after they began their morning-trips to the Harbor, which threw him into disgrace, and prevented the immediate execution of the scheme.

About a week from the day on which Ruth had visited at the cottage, Oliver went up on the hay-mow to pitch down some of the straw which had been placed there, and which was the same that was on the floor the night the boys slept out. As the barn was used only in summer, and there was plenty of pasture about, very little hay was stored in the barn. The straw had been brought for the stables. So it happened that Oliver was seldom on this second floor of the barn. While he was throwing down the straw that afternoon, and Mr. Le Bras was standing in the barn-door giving him some directions, Oliver heard a very strange sound off in one corner. "There's a queer noise up here," said he: "I should think there was some live thing about somewheres."

"What does it sound like?" inquired Mr. Le Bras.

"That's more'n I can tell," replied Oliver. "It 'pears to be over here in the corner."

Oliver at once began to explore in the direction from which the sound proceeded. "Golly!" he exclaimed, in a tone that excited Mr. Le Bras' curiosity so much that he ascended to the mow. Oliver was just removing a stone from the top of a large box in the corner. Having taken off the stone, he removed the cover of the box, which had been placed on in such a way as to leave an opening at the end about an inch and a half wide. He then drew the box forward, and disclosed therein, to Mr. Le Bras' astonished view, an emaciated kitten, lying apparently helpless, uttering weak, pitiful sounds, hardly distinguishable as the voice of a cat.

Mr. Le Bras sprang to the door, and called, "Felix! Johnny!" while Oliver took the kitten out, and laid it upon some hay on the barn-floor, where it lay quite motionless, still making the weak, mournful cry.

Johnny, Felix, and Sue were picking huckleberries in the pasture: so the boys heard Mr. Le Bras at once, and came running to the barn. "Look here," said Mr. Le Bras, pointing to the sad sight. "Can either of you explain this?"

Both Johnny and Felix were horrified, but of course Felix alone looked guilty; and, although Mr. Le Bras had called Johnny as well as Felix, he had

no suspicion that Johnny knew any thing about the imprisonment of the kitten.

"Why—I—I"—replied Felix, looking very much confused, and very much ashamed, and very sorry—"I knew about her being shut up, and I meant to—to have let her out that very night; but every thing happened about then, and—and we've been to the Harbor every day, and I haven't come across Jack since, and so I—I forgot all about it. I'm awful sorry, uncle Frank: I never once thought of having her stay there; I got sort of put out with Julia, and I thought I'd like to tease her a little; and so, when Jack spoke of doing something with the kitten, I just helped him for fun, and I proposed shutting her up, instead of drowning her, as he wanted to."

"We shall have to hold another court, to-day, Felix," said Mr. Le Bras gravely: "didn't you say you knew nothing of what had become of the kitten?—Johnny, run to the house at once, and get a saucer of milk."

"I said," replied Felix, looking still more ashamed, "that I knew nothing about Julia's kitten; and when she asked me if I knew where her kitten was, I said 'No;' because this was not her kitten at all, but Jack's."

"This is very much like the other case, in some aspects," replied Mr. Le Bras gravely,—"another plain instance of prevarication. I had hoped, Felix, that after our previous talk in regard to the real nature of truth and falsehood, you would avoid prevarication as much as you would avoid a direct falsehood."

Felix hung his head, and made no reply.

Sue, who had remained picking berries, on seeing Johnny come out of the house with a saucer of milk in his hand, called out, "Have you found a cat, Johnny?"

"Yes," called back Johnny: "we've found Julia's kitten!"

Sue at once put down her pail, and, without coming to the barn first, ran directly across the pathway through the strip of woods, to the back part of the next cottage, and rushed into the first door she came to, calling out, "Where's Julia? They've found her kitten!"

So, while Sue waited at the door, the girl went to tell Julia the good news; and a moment afterwards, Julia appeared, in a high state of excitement, exclaiming, "Where is it?"

"In the barn, I guess," said Sue: "that's where Johnny was carrying the milk."

Julia at once ran towards the barn, as fast as she could go; and Sue followed her. When they entered the barn, Johnny was stroking the kitten, and trying to get her to drink some of the milk in the saucer, which was placed close by her mouth; while the kitten made no effort to drink, but only continued the faint, pitiful cries. Mr. Le Bras, Oliver, and Felix were standing near,—Felix with his hands behind him, and a very sober, perplexed look upon his face.

As soon as Julia and Sue saw the poor, emaciated object, Julia screamed,

and Sue turned away and began to cry. Then Julia began to cry bitterly, and exclaimed,—

"Oh, dear! my beautiful little kitten! She's dying! She's been dreadfully treated! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do!"

Mrs. Le Bras, who was sitting in the veranda, heard the wailing, and ran out to the barn in a great fright. She was followed by Mary and Kate. When the full group were collected about the kitten, its cries were quite drowned in the chorus of lamentation.

"I shall have to take the part of a physician for this patient," said Mr. Le Bras finally: "I prescribe perfect quiet, to begin with. We must leave the kitten wholly alone, for at least an hour: it will be much more likely to notice the milk, and recover appetite for it, if its attention is not distracted elsewhere. Come, let us all go; and you, Oliver, shut the barn-door after us, and fasten it. Felix can go to his room, and stay until supper-time. After supper is over, he can go to the parlor with me, and we will hold court."

Julia then ran home, without saying another word; she ran into the room where her mother was sitting, threw herself on the floor by her side, buried her face in her lap, and began to cry quite hysterically; so that Mrs. Peterson would have been at a sad loss to know the cause, if Sue had not followed close behind Julia.

"Why, the kitten's found, 'most dead and starved," said Sue, who was still wiping her eyes. "It's just as little as nothing, except its head, and that looks awfully big,—I guess because it's about all that's left; and it's crying and crying, and can't drink the milk; and Felix must be to blame about it, 'cause father's going to hold court with him after supper; and I never saw Felix look half so sober before, so I expect he's awfully to blame, somehow."

"I knew he and Jack did it," sobbed Julia; "and he went and lied about it! If that kitten dies, I'll never speak to him again as long as I live! I don't believe I'll speak to him anyhow! He is one of the hatefulest boys that ever lived! I thought he was going to be better than he was last year; but this is just as mean,—and meaner, too, than the things he used to do last year. I hate boys, anyway!—all except Johnny."

Felix came down to supper with a very long face. The meal proceeded with unusual gravity and silence all around. As yet, the kitten had not touched the milk, and her death was expected at any time. Sue had reported Julia to have gone to bed early with a headache. After supper, Felix followed his uncle into the parlor. When the testimony in the case was all in, and Felix had made his defence, Mr. Le Bras proceeded with his argument for the opposite side, and for truth and right-doing in general, and then, as judge, pronounced the extent of Felix's guilt, and proceeded to the sentence.

"Now, Felix," said he, "if it were Johnny who were deserving punishment, and we were at home, I should, very likely, forbid his reading or studying for a certain number of days, which would be a great punishment for him; but, in your case, it seems to me that study is a punishment, and yet it is something for your good. I always endeavor, in punishing my children, to deny them something, or have them do something, which will be of some use to them besides the punishment. When I tell Johnny he must not read for a week, I do it partly because I know a pause in his reading, and more exercise and open air in consequence, will be for his good. So, in my previous sentence regarding you, I proposed that you should read an hour a day for the summer, because it would be a punishment in the first place, and yet would improve you very much, and give you a habit which would soon be a great pleasure as well as profit to you."

"Yes," replied Felix. "I rather anticipate my hour's reading with Pierre now, and I shouldn't like to give it up: but then, I get tired by the end of the hour, and I shouldn't like to have any more put on, if I can help it; because there are such a lot of other things that I want to do."

"Yes: I think an hour's reading is sufficient, especially in vacation. And I am hesitating about giving you any more fixed confinement. Still, as you do not go to school steadily, or study very hard the rest of the year, there is less objection than there would otherwise be. On the whole, I think I will offer you your choice between two kinds of punishment, this time. You can spend a half-hour a day in the practice of letter-writing, in which you say you are so deficient that you cannot write a letter to your father and mother,—although Johnny and Sue have already sent two,—or you can remain away from the Harbor three weeks. You can take your half-hour a day for writing, at any time upon which you and Pierre can agree. But you will probably prefer merely the deprivation of the morning-trips to the Harbor."

"How long shall I have to spend a half-hour a day studying letter-writing?"

"I think four weeks will answer. That will be twelve hours in all, which will be quite a punishment, and also be long enough to learn how to write a letter neatly and correctly."

"Then, I shall prefer the half-hour a day. I wouldn't give up going to the Harbor for a good deal, because I am to try and see if I can begin to earn some money to-morrow: I shouldn't like to give that up. If Pierre is willing, I'll take my half-hour before breakfast, and have it over with; for I always have a little while, between the time I get up, and breakfast-time, that I don't exactly know what to do with."

"Very well. But there is one thing more: you must go over to see Julia to-morrow, explain the matter fully, tell her how sorry you are, and ask her forgiveness."

"That will be the hardest of all," replied Felix, making a wry face; "because I don't believe she will forgive me, and I know she won't if the kitten isn't better. I am awful sorry, uncle Frank: I wouldn't have really hurt the kitten for the world; and I've cried some myself at thinking how miserable it looks, and what a hard time it's had, and how it may die."

"I don't think you are cruel or hard-hearted, Felix: your trouble is thoughtlessness; but, you see, thoughtlessness may amount to the same thing sometimes, in its effects, as real cruelty. I have known thoughtless persons who have even been the cause of the death of their dearest friends; so we will be thankful that, in this case, it is only a kitten who has had to suffer severely. Yet we should be very thoughtful, even of dumb animals; for they cannot think for themselves, and are peculiarly dependent upon us."

"I am awful sorry, truly," replied Felix, looking down gravely: "I will try to be more thoughtful, uncle Frank. But then, if you knew how much I've improved this summer, I think you would be some encouraged."

"I am a good deal encouraged, my dear boy, I assure you," replied Mr. Le Bras, putting his arm around Felix. "I expect great things of you, my boy. There's the making of a noble man in you; and, in many ways, I am proud of you already."

"I'm awful glad I've been with you and auntie and Johnny and Sue this summer," replied Felix, brushing a tear from his eye. "I suppose I'd have gone right on being horrible, if it hadn't been for that. But, somehow, I didn't know how to be any better,—or, anyway, I couldn't be."

At that moment, there was a soft rap at the door.

"Who is it?" asked Mr. Le Bras.

"It's me," said Sue. "Mother just sent me to say Oliver has come in, and says the kitten has drank up the milk, and so he guesses she'll begin to be all right by to-morrow; and I'm going right over to tell Julia, so she won't feel so bad."

"I guess I'm glad!" exclaimed Felix. And then his uncle opened the door, and told him the court was adjourned *sine die*, and he could go and arrange with Pierre about the half-hour.

So, the next day, Felix went to the Harbor as usual, and began his trade in candy, with very good success. The kitten had drank its milk all right for breakfast, and was able to stand up. Felix brought home a box of caramels for Julia, and took them over with him when he went, after dinner, to make his confession, and ask forgiveness. Julia could not withstand his humble manner and the box of caramels. She forgave him very prettily; although she added, that she did not know whether she could have forgiven him or not, if the kitten had died. Felix told her Jack said he didn't want the kitten himself; in fact, his mother did not like cats, and had said she was glad it had gone, and that she would not have it brought back; but yet he thought Julia deserved some punishment for carrying it

off, and so had proposed, at first, to tie a stone to the kitten's neck, and drown it, when they went fishing. But Felix had objected to this plan, decidedly, and had compromised by proposing to shut the kitten up, fully intending to let it out that night or the next morning, and, if he kept it imprisoned over night, to carry it something to eat.

The next day the kitten could walk around, although very feebly. She was still kept in the barn, because that was a convenient place for her progress to be watched by all interested. The children made frequent visits to inquire after her health, and were assured each time, by her more cheerful and stronger "Mew!" that she was better.

That afternoon, as the children were in the veranda, Felix and Johnny sitting together in the hammock reading the "St. Nicholas" and "Wide Awake," which had just arrived, and Julia and Sue playing with their dolls, Mr. Frothingham's carriage came in sight, up the shell road, immediately drawing their attention from their books and dolls.

"There is a little girl with them," said Julia, "but it isn't Ruth. What a pretty girl she is, and how beautifully she is dressed! She doesn't look much like Ruth, does she?"

"I guess it's some of their relations, come to visit with Ruth," replied Sue.

"Poh!" said Felix: "no city girl would be sent for to visit with Ruth, it isn't likely! I guess it's some one from the Harbor, that they are carrying home. I've seen a girl at the Harbor, who lives in one of those big cottages, that looks just like her."

"I think it is Ruth herself," said Johnny; "only her hair is loose, and waved, and banged, and she's got different clothes on."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Julia, in disdain.

"Johnny thinks he can see better with his spectacles than folks can who don't have to wear any," remarked Felix, laughing.

"I really believe it is Ruth," said Sue breathlessly.

"Yes," added Johnny: "she's smiling, and waving her hand to us; and don't you see she's got Ruth's way of sitting up straight, and holding back her head?"

Felix whistled, which was his ordinary way of expressing great astonishment. "If that don't beat all!" he exclaimed.

Then they all ran down the steps, and stood, an expectant and curious group, awaiting the nearer approach of the carriage; while Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras, who had been sitting in the balcony, came down-stairs, and stood out on the veranda, with smiling faces, ready to welcome the occupants of the carriage.

There was no longer any doubt that the fine young lady in the carriage was Ruth, though she did look so radiantly stylish and handsome.

"Of course, dress makes a great difference in persons' looks; but I never

saw a more striking example," remarked Mrs. Le Bras.

"Ruth was a very sweet-looking girl in her plain clothes, though," replied Mr. Le Bras: "I rather expected something of this kind, when she should be dressed more like other children."

"Why! did you know they were going to dress her up?" asked Felix.

"I thought it probable," replied Mr. Le Bras.

"But she'll feel all the worse when she has to put on her calico dress, and go home," said Julia.

The carriage was now too near for further remarks. The driver drove up to the door, and stopped; while Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras came out, and shook hands, and asked Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham and Ruth to come in.

"We came down to get the children," said Mr. Frothingham. "We want them to come and take tea with Ruth, and then drive over with us to see the fireworks at the Harbor. We will bring them back in good season this evening.

"They will be very happy to go," replied Mrs. Le Bras.

Mr. and Mrs. Le Bras urged their callers to come in, and stay until the children were ready. As Julia was included in the invitation, she ran home to ask her mother if she could go, while Felix, Sue, and Johnny went to get ready; Mrs. Le Bras having called Kate to help Sue to dress.

Ruth was dressed in white, and wore a broad hat of fine straw, trimmed with a long cream-colored plume and satin ribbon. She was just as modest, unassuming, and at her ease, as she had been in her blue calico, and, as Julia told her mother, "didn't seem to mind being dressed up." The fact was, the poor child was thinking so much of how nice it was not to be at the lighthouse with her aunt, that she had little thought for the other advantages of her situation, to begin with.

When the company were seated in the parlor, Mr. Le Bras said,—

"I judge you had good success in your interview with Mr. Shepard."

"Yes," replied Mr. Frothingham: "all things considered, bad as he felt to part with his little niece, he decided that it was for the best all around, under the circumstances. He will be able to see her often, and watch her growth and progress. We are to go through the legal forms as soon as possible, so that her future will be assured in case of my death."

Ruth was so horrified at Mr. Frothingham's speaking of dying, that she came up to him, put her arm around his neck, and said, with tears in her eyes, "You aren't sick, are you?"

"Why, no, indeed!" replied Mr. Frothingham, taking her on his knee, and laughing heartily. "Do I look like it? But I might get upset in my yacht, you know, or run over by the cars; and so, you see, I ought to be just as particular how I leave my affairs, little girl, as though I wasn't one of the healthiest persons in the world."

Mrs. Frothingham, who was sitting by the side of Mrs. Le Bras, said, "Did you ever see any thing like the way that dear child has come to us, as if she was sent from Heaven, when we were mourning the loss of our own little girl of just about her age? When my husband came home that night, and told how strongly your husband had advised him to adopt a child, I felt, as he did, that it was a pretty risky matter; for we have some friends who adopted a boy from an orphan asylum a number of years ago, and he is turning out a very wild young man, almost breaking their hearts. And then, only a few days afterwards, while we were thinking the matter over, we found that this child, belonging to a nice family, whom my husband's folks thought so much of years ago, was to be sent out to work, because her aunt did not want her in the way; and, just to think! she is the daughter of the very girl of whom I have heard Henry speak admiringly so often, as his schoolmate and the nicest girl in the village. He says Ruth looks just like her. The child and he take to each other so, and she and I take to each other just the same! It almost seems like having my own little girl back. Do you see how perfectly Mary's clothes fit her? There was not a single alteration needed. And do you see how happy Henry is? He is so fond of children, especially little girls! I thought it would break his heart when Mary died, and his being so lonely has worried me more than my own loneliness."

After Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham and the children had disappeared up the road, looking back, and waving their handkerchiefs, Mr. Le Bras said,—

"What a contrast Mrs. Frothingham is to Mrs. Shepard! Mrs. Shepard is so afraid her husband will like any one except herself, that she has acted in a manner which must always cause her husband to distrust her, if not positively dislike her; while Mrs. Frothingham, by being so glad to have her husband have some child to love, and so ready to love the same child herself, and be the happier for her presence, is increasing her husband's affection and admiration for herself."

"Jealousy is such a mean trait!" replied Mrs. Le Bras; "but it carries its own punishment with it, like most other selfish traits. If Mrs. Shepard had only been wise and kind-hearted enough to have kept Ruth, and treated her as she would an own daughter, how happy she and Mr. Shepard and Ruth might have been!"

"Perhaps it is just as well, for all except Mrs. Shepard," replied Mr. Le Bras; "for it has secured a much happier life for Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham, who were suffering so keenly for the loss of their children; and Mr. Shepard cannot but be proud of the bright prospects before his little niece."

"I don't think any thing can make up for domestic discomfort," replied Mrs. Le Bras; "and I am afraid they never can be really happy at the lighthouse, with the memory of the way Mrs. Shepard treated Ruth always before her and her husband."

"And between them," said Mr. Le Bras; "but the best thing has been done

that could be done, under the circumstances. Let us be thankful that so much happiness has come to three persons at least."

Before long Johnny and Felix carried on so much business at the hotel and cottages at the Harbor, that they were called "The Young Merchants." Johnny had orders for almost every kind of a paper that could be had in town, and Felix for all sorts of fine candy. They found enough to do just to fill their orders, and so did not have to run any risks on their own account. Felix's great perplexity was what to do with his money; since he had spending-money enough, that his father had given him before he left. This difficulty he laid before his uncle. Mr. Le Bras proposed that he should buy some books, as those seemed to be the only things he lacked; saying that, if the books were bought with money Felix had earned himself, he would be the more likely to read them carefully, again and again, and prize them highly. In the course of time, he could add to his collection from his regular spending-money, unless he preferred to earn them in some way, until he had as large a library of his own as Johnny had, or larger. As Felix was beginning to like reading very much, he was pleased with this proposal, and began to lay out his earnings in books, taking Pierre's and Johnny's advice as to what books to purchase, in order to be sure that they would be not only interesting, but instructive, and such as he would not be likely to outgrow soon.

They generally got back from the Harbor in time for the morning-bath at the beach. Sometimes they went up to Mr. Frothingham's to bathe; because he was teaching Ruth to swim, and had promised to teach Julia and Sue at the same time; and the boys liked to dive from the wharf, for Johnny had learned to swim some, under Oliver's instructions. Pierre, too, was learning to swim; but he usually went off with some young men, with whom he had become acquainted at the Harbor, where he was a great favorite.

The sail-boat was in frequent requisition, and the boys often took the girls out in the row-boat; although Mrs. Le Bras would not allow them to go out of sight of Oliver, who was always somewhere upon the beach to watch them. This precaution was taken principally on account of Felix's thoughtlessness when he had one of his merry or mischievous fits, and because the row-boat was not flat-bottomed, and so would turn over more readily if it were swayed to one side.

Mr. Frothingham sometimes took them all out in his yacht, and at such times they often had what Felix called "big fishing;" that is, they caught bluefish, codfish, and mackerel, which could not be caught near the shore. On one of these occasions, Mr. Le Bras, greatly to his astonishment, drew up a large lobster, which was caught to his hook by one of its claws. He wondered greatly how it could have happened, and finally concluded that the lobster had been dropped from some boat. But when, shortly afterwards, he had the still more singular fortune to draw up a wicker flask, which he had seen on board the yacht in their own

lunch-basket, he demanded an explanation of both these mysterious occurrences, upon which Felix exclaimed merrily,—

"Didn't I tell you I'd pay you off about Clyde?"

Felix had attached the lobster and the flask to Mr. Le Bras' hook, by drawing up his line when his attention was diverted in another direction. The lobster was one which had been brought for bait, and which Felix had begged of Mr. Frothingham, as Mr. Le Bras had not noticed it.

Mr. Le Bras was obliged to return to his office after a few weeks; but he came to the cottage every Saturday, remaining until Monday, and sometimes into the middle of the week. Pierre staid all the time, as he had agreed to give the young man at the Harbor lessons daily for the summer.

Sundays they generally went to the church in the village, but sometimes they drove into town. Once they attended service in the summer-chapel at the Harbor.

Ruth was very happy in her new home, and made such improvement, that, in a short time, no one would have suspected she had not always had the same advantages she was now enjoying. Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham were more and more fond of her; but they were too sensible to spoil her, and took great pains to encourage her in being sensible and self-reliant. Mrs. Frothingham was teaching her to cook, and do other kinds of housework, just as she had taught her own little girl; and Mr. Frothingham not only taught her to swim, but to ride on horseback, and promised to get her a tricycle when they returned to the city. As Mr. Frothingham's city-house was in the same place where Mr. Frank Le Bras lived, Johnny and Sue had the pleasure of knowing that their acquaintance with Ruth would continue. Mr. Frothingham would not return to the city, however, until October; while Johnny and Sue and their mother were to go home in September.

And so the happy summer sped. September came, and with it Mr. Louis Le Bras and his wife, who arrived at the cottage on the tenth. Mrs. Le Bras had improved greatly in health, and was very grateful to her brother-in-law and his wife for having enabled her to leave, by taking charge of Felix. When she and her husband saw how much Felix had improved in his manners, and appearance in general, they were still more grateful for the pains that had been taken with him. His letters had, however, somewhat prepared them for the change, as they were such great contrasts to the letters he had been accustomed to write; although it was very seldom that he had been induced to write a letter, until his uncle and Pierre took the matter in hand. When Felix showed them the library he was buying, with money he earned himself, they could hardly believe their eyes and ears, especially when they saw the books were not simple story-books, like those Felix had been accustomed to look over so carelessly, and stumble over in the reading, but substantial works containing useful information, several of them

being "Science Primers," written by famous professors. But their astonishment was not at an end; for Felix further informed them that he had read all these books aloud to Pierre, and could understand and pronounce every word in them. After this, Mr. Le Bras told his brother and his wife how all this wonderful change had come about in so brief a time, and advised his brother to continue similar methods with Felix by hiring Pierre, who fully understood how to manage and interest such a boy, for his tutor for the next year. Mr. Louis Le Bras said he should be only too glad to engage Pierre, and would give him a good price for his valuable service.

Johnny and Sue and their father and mother remained at the cottage about a week after the arrival of the owner, and then Mr. Le Bras said he could not leave his office for another day; and Mrs. Le Bras said, if that was the case, she could not stay longer either, as she had remained more on her husband's account than her own, because he had been so much in need of just such an outing as he had had this summer.

Felix looked very solemn when the day came for his uncle and aunt and Johnny and Sue to return home, and was only consoled by the fact that Pierre, of whom he had grown very fond, was to stay with him right along. It was agreed, too, that Johnny and Sue might come to New York and spend the winter holidays, as their first visit from home without their father and mother. Mr. Louis Le Bras and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham and Ruth, accompanied them to the station. When the cars started, Felix quite broke down: he took out his handkerchief, and wiped his eyes very hard. Turning to Pierre, who was holding his hand, he said, "It seems to me as if the sun hasn't half shone to-day, and now it's almost as dark as night;" and then, as the train disappeared, he wept outright.

Yet the sun was shining brightly all the time.

Johnny and Sue, too, found a similar use for their handkerchiefs.

"I hope you are not so very sorry to return to your own home, children," said their mother.

"No," replied Johnny, trying hard not to snuff any more. "I am glad to go home, though the beach was so grand: but I was awful sorry to have to leave Felix; I wish we could always live together!"

"So do I," said Sue: "I love him dearly!"

"For my part," said Mr. Le Bras, "I feel wonderfully happy at the way it has all turned out. I always thought I would like to have you and Felix love each other as his father and I love one another, but I was afraid it never could come about. Just to think, Johnny, how you wanted to get away from him, and we couldn't blame you either, and how the sky-room was contrived as a refuge!

"And Johnny let him right into it, first thing," said Sue.

"But I am glad we discovered the room, father," replied Johnny.

"Certainly! It is a great acquisition: it opens a new world. I haven't told you how I have spent almost all my evenings, alone at home, up there. We can't part with that glorious view when the cold weather comes. I intend to have some men come, right off, and put a partition where the curtains are, and then have it plastered and papered. We will set up one of our spare stoves by November; and you can fill a large box, outside the partition, with coal, as you get time,—which will be good exercise for you,—and keep it filled. Then, any Saturday you choose, or any other day, when any of us feel like going up there to enjoy the view, we can build a fire, even in mid-winter, and, lo! we are as good as out of doors, without the discomforts."

"What a grand place to see a winter storm from!" exclaimed Johnny, in delight.

"And to see the snow or ice all over the trees!" added Sue.

"This is a good illustration," remarked Mrs. Le Bras, "of how some of the things which we dread most turn out to be among the most fortunate incidents that come to us. To think how we all dreaded Felix's visit! and now let us see how many nice things it has brought us."

"A whole summer at the seaside, in a beautiful cottage, with lots of pleasant acquaintances and good times," said Johnny.

"And your bicycle, and all the fun you have had with it, and the dog-cart for me," said Sue.

"And the sky-room," added Johnny.

"And getting acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Frothingham and Ruth, for always," said Sue.

"And Felix's improvement," said Mr. Le Bras.

"And Pierre's having such a good place," said Mrs. Le Bras.

"And Ruth's being adopted," said Johnny; "for you know, Mr. Frothingham said it would never have come into his head, if you had not advised it so strongly."

"And your aunt Mary's getting better," said Mrs. Le Bras.

"And a check for a thousand dollars, my dear," said Mr. Le Bras, taking a slip of paper from his pocket-book, and handing it to her. "Louis fairly insisted upon my taking this; and when I saw it would make him feel very badly if I refused, I consented; though it secretly annoyed me greatly, to take pay for doing a favor to my own brother, and benefiting my own nephew. Still, Louis has money enough, and he might as well throw it away in this way as any other, I suppose."

Mrs. Le Bras looked at the check in blank astonishment.

"You see, poor Louis was almost beside himself with delight over Felix's improvement: he said he should never have known how to bring it about himself; and, in fact, he didn't so much as suppose the boy had it in him to try to be a scholar, or behave as well as some boys did, and he had always said he would

give a thousand dollars to have Felix taught to behave himself decently. So I must take the money, or grieve him; and there it is."

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