BERTIE AND THE GARDENERS; OR, THE WAY TO BE HAPPY

Madeline Leslie

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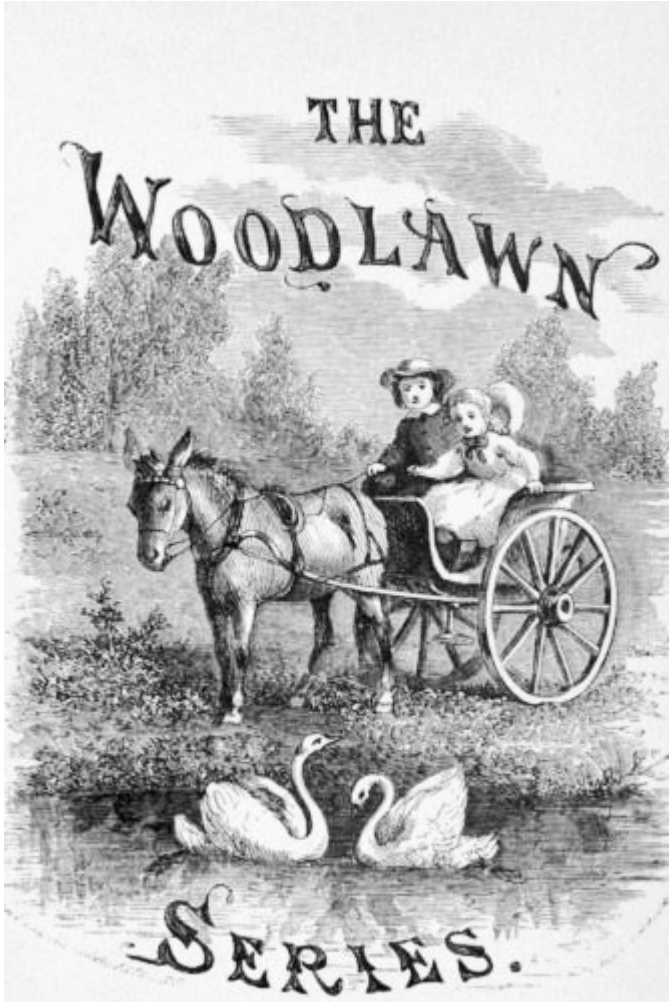
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BERTIE AND THE GARDENERS; OR, THE WAY TO BE HAPPY ***



THE WOODLAWN SERIES.

Bertie and the Gardeners:

OR,

THE WAY TO BE HAPPY.

BY

Mrs MADELINE LESLIE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT HATTIE'S LIBRARY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS," ETC.

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Winnie catching the Snow-flakes.
Vol. VI., p. 103

TO

HARRY, NELLIE, AND WILLIE SAMPSON;

ALSO,

To the Memory of their Deceased Brothers and Sister,

BERTIE, FRANKEY AND EMMA,

THESE LITTLE BOOKS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

If the perusal prompt them and other readers to imitate
the virtues of our hero in his efforts to *be* good, and
to *do* good, the wishes of the author
will be realized.

BERTIE; OR, THE WOODLAWN SERIES.

BY MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

16 mo. 6 vols., Illustrated.

I. Bertie's Home.
II. Bertie and the Carpenters.
III. Bertie and the Masons.
IV. Bertie and the Plumbers.
V. Bertie and the Painters.
VI. Bertie and the Gardeners.

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Bertie and the Gardeners.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW FARMER.



he new house at Woodlawn was nearly completed; and Mr. Curtis now set to work in earnest, clearing the grounds of the rubbish, in order to make the terraces and lay out his avenue in front.

Those who have read the other books about Bertie, will know that two wide avenues, enclosed by handsome iron gates, had been already made; one winding along on the shores of Lake Shawsheen, the other entering from a higher point which led through a grove toward

the house where the enchanting view of lawn and water burst at once on the vision.

But in the vicinity of the house, no grading had been done, on account of the vast amount of bricks, lime, mortar-bins, wood and chips lying scattered in every direction.

The house, elegant in proportion and finish, stood about a hundred rods in front of a high, grassy mound, upon the top of which a cluster of chestnut-trees cast a pleasant shade.

The rich, green turf on the lawn which sloped to the lake, was dotted with magnificent old trees undisturbed for a century. Back of the house, or rather beyond the barn, was another swell or mound, which like the first, was so regular in its form as almost to excite the belief that it was artificial. Indeed, from the fact that two tomahawks were found buried in the spot where the barn stood, Mr. Curtis inferred that it might have been used for the grand council of the Indian tribe, and that here they buried all hostilities.

"Certainly," Mrs. Curtis remarked, "this was a pleasant view to take of it," and as there was no one to dispute the fact, the larger mound was called "Peace Mountain."

Mr. Curtis, or the Squire, as the Oxford villagers called him, was now in his element. Every pleasant morning he might be seen, his wife leaning on his arm, walking over the premises,

planning the improvements to be made, and often Bertie and Winifred accompanied them.

When the weather was not so clear, the gentleman and his son hurried from one part of the grounds to the other, directing Tom Grant, or measuring with a ten-foot pole.

There was a nice sunny plat containing sixteen acres back of Peace Mountain, which had been ploughed earlier in the season, to be in readiness next year for a garden and orchard. Besides this there were to be heart-shaped and diamond-shaped figures and circlets cut in the lawn, near the house, for flowers of every hue.

It was now October, and the most must be made of the fine weather. Ploughing and preparing the ground for agricultural purposes, was what the farmers in the neighborhood were accustomed to, and therefore help was easily to be obtained.

Through the summer, Mr. Curtis had borne in mind that he should need a skilful farmer to till his land, one who understood the science as well as the art of farming to the best advantage. He greatly approved Thomas Grant's industry, and the zeal he manifested in all that concerned his master's interests; but he feared the man was so attached to the old ways of managing land, that he would be unwilling to avail himself of the improved implements of agriculture, or the new-fangled notions, as he called mowing-machines, horse-rakes, sowing-machines, etc., etc.

But one noon, while his oxen were eating their dinner, Mr. Curtis found him sitting under the shade of a tree, examining with great interest the latest report of the State Agricultural Society.

Turning to a picture of a Devon cow, he exclaimed:

"Well, Squire, if Adam carried such cows as that with him when he went outside of Eden, I think he might have set up another paradise To my thinking, Squire, nothing can beat that cow."

Mr. Curtis threw himself on the grass, wishing to test Tom's ideas of farming; and after conversing half an hour, resolved to hire him for his farmer.

But still it was necessary for the gentleman to employ a gardener, one who loved flowers and had a taste for landscape gardening.

"I must advertise, Cecilia," he said one day to his wife; "I want exactly the right kind of a man for there is a great opportunity to improve and beautify the place."

While his papa and mamma were talking, Bertie sat on a cricket before a wooden chair which he had borrowed of Mrs. Taylor from the kitchen. Winnie was by his side, and he was teaching her to make a penny spin around so that it looked like a ball.

CHAPTER II.

THE SICK WORKMAN.



either Mr. nor Mrs. Curtis noticed that their son listened to the conversation; but he did, and remembered it.

The next day he harnessed Whitefoot into his donkey carriage as soon as he had read his chapter, with his mamma, and drove away with all speed to Woodlawn.

Mr. Fuller and most of the workmen had left; but Joe Allen and his father were busy in the conservatory which they were just finishing. It was a beautiful building, the centre much higher than the rest, to be filled with climbing roses, vines, etc.; the sides sloped off until they were only high enough to allow free entrance at the doors. It was finished in a highly ornamental manner, and in the distance resembled a heathen pagoda.

This was Joe's first effort at architecture; and he was proud of it. When he left Oxford he was going directly to Mr. Bryant's with whom his kind friend Mr. Curtis had made arrangements for him to study and perfect himself in his chosen pursuit.

Joe was not at work when Bertie found him; he was giving directions to the man who had brought a load of marble blocks for the walks.

The little fellow found he would be busy for some time; so he sauntered on to the back of the building till he came to the painter Mr. Dodge, who was engaged in setting some panes of glass which had been broken. He smiled directly when he saw Bertie, but he did not speak, and presently the child noticed he was very pale.

Occasionally he put his handkerchief to his mouth; and the little fellow was frightened when he saw that it was spotted with blood.

"Oh, dear!" he exclaimed, "you are sick. You must go home, and send for the Doctor."

"I confess I don't feel like moving a mountain this morning," answered Dodge, with a sickly laugh; "I'm on my last job at painting. Did you know it?"

"What do you mean?"

"I wasn't brought up to be a painter; and it doesn't agree with me."

"What did you do before?"

"Oh, I turned my hand to anything! I took up painting because it paid best at the time, and I had my mother and sister to support."

"What shall you do then?"

"I don't know." He laid down his putty knife and leaned back, wiping his mouth again.

"I know you're sick," Bertie urged anxiously, "and I'm going to call my papa."

"No, don't! I've had such turns before; but they do make me weak as a baby."

But the child was alarmed, and had already gone. When he returned the painter had risen and was slowly walking toward the house on his

way to his boarding place.

"My son," said Mr. Curtis, "call Whitefoot and harness him into the carriage as quick as you can."

"Sit down on the boards, Dodge, until he brings the donkey round. Bertie tells me you think painting disagrees with you."

"Yes, sir, I am sure it does. I half promised my mother never to do another day's work at it; but when Torrey was hurt I couldn't refuse Mr. Fuller; he's been a good friend to me in times past."

"What would you choose for an employment?"

"Out— door work, sir, was what I was brought up to. I shall try to get something at that. There's nothing more healthy for the lungs than being over horses and cattle."

The gentleman noticed that the effort of talking seemed to give the man pain, and instantly checked him from saying more.

"You must stop at once," he urged in a firm voice. "Such warnings as that," pointing to the blood-stained handkerchief, "are not to be trifled with. I shall send a physician to see you; and I will talk with you again."

At noon Mr. Curtis found that the woman who boarded Mr. Dodge couldn't keep him while he was sick; and arrangements were made at once

to remove him to the chamber in Mrs. Taylor's farm-house which Patrick Riley had left.

The next day he was so much worse that his mother was sent for; and thus an acquaintance commenced which continued for life.



CHAPTER III.

THE MERRY GARDENER.



rs. Dodge was the widow of a clergyman. At her husband's death she was left destitute; and until Albert was able to labor for her support, she kept school, filling up every moment out of school hours, in sewing for the slop-shops.

In this way she injured her health, and her son insisted she should hire a couple of rooms, take his sister from an uncle's where she was not happy, and keep house for him.

Her health was now entirely restored, and she had resolved to advertise for a situation as housekeeper, and thus relieve her son of the burden of her own and her daughter's support.

The longer Mrs. Curtis knew Mrs. Dodge, the better she was convinced that she was exactly the person to relieve her of her household care.

They sent to the city for Nelly the daughter, and found she was old enough to be of service as a chamber girl. Nancy was to retain her old place as nurse, so that only a cook was needed to make the corps complete.

It was not long before Albert was able to return to the city. He was delighted that his mother and sister were provided for, and kept Mr. and Mrs. Taylor laughing from morning till night; and yet Mr. Curtis suspected there was something on his mind that troubled him.

The night before he was to leave he requested an interview with the Squire, when with some embarrassment he said:

"Bertie told me to-day that you were looking for a gardener. If I can fit myself for the business by next spring, will you let me try it?"

"Do you know any thing about flowers?"

"I worked one winter for a gentleman who cultivated flowers and fruit for sale. He had violets and carnation-pinks and roses, and in other houses he had strawberries and mushrooms, and lettuce. I think as far as I went I learned the business thoroughly."

"Capital! and do you understand about laying out grounds? I mean small plats for flowers."

"I can't say, sir, how I should please you or the lady; but I could draw you a plan of what I've been wanting to see in front of the house. Perhaps you could judge something by that."

Mr. Curtis sat thinking for a time, and then Albert said with his old, merry twinkle:

"I'd like first rate to work for you, Squire; and I suppose mother would like to have me where she can look after me a little. I needn't promise, I'd try to do my best, for you know that already. I'd work for considerable less wages for the sake of being near Bertie."

"But your Mission School! what will become of that?"

Albert's face grew serious. "That's the only thing I regret, in leaving the city," he said. "There's so much to be done for the poor children wandering about the streets, I am sorry to leave my school; but the doctor says my life depends on quitting my present business."

As Mr. Curtis still seemed absorbed in thought, the young man added presently: "If you give me any encouragement I shall go back to Hantz where I once worked. Before you would need me in the spring I could learn something if I tried."

"Does Bertie know of your wish?"

"No, sir, I was afraid you'd consent to try me just to please him; and I want you to feel yourself that I'm worth trying."

This was said with a laugh.

"Well," answered the gentleman, "I'll think of it, and possibly I may give you an answer in the morning. But, as you are going to leave the city, you mustn't give up trying to do good. Workmen are needed in the country as well as the city."

It was Mr. Curtis' intention to move into his new house the first week in November. Upholsterers were already engaged inside in fitting carpets, and making ready for the furniture to be removed from their city home.

Mrs. Dodge, therefore, was going to give up her rooms, sell her plain furniture, and be ready to return as soon as possible. She knew nothing of

her son's application to Mr. Curtis and felt considerable anxiety on his account. Her delight, therefore, may be imagined when after they were seated in the cars on their return to the city he informed her that the Squire had engaged him for a gardener, and thus they would all be together once more.



CHAPTER IV.

VISITORS TO WOODLAWN.



suppose some of my young readers will be glad to know that Torrey recovered entirely from his accident, and had returned to his painting in the city. Perhaps there was no one of the workmen, aside from the Allens, who parted with Bertie with so much regret as he did, for there was no one who owed him so much for his kindness.

When the little fellow called to bid him good-by and to send a book by Mrs. Torrey to Edgar, the man caught his hand, exclaiming:

"I'm getting to like all children for your sake. At any rate nobody will ever hear me say again that children are a bother."

"Tell Edgar, please," urged the boy, "that I'm so glad to hear he is patient; and that the doctors think there is hope he will be well. Papa says he can stay there as long as he wishes, without any pay. I mean to ask Miss Lerow to go with me and

see him when I'm in the city next time."

Mrs. Torrey promised to go to the girls' ward the first time she visited Edgar and ask for Susy Hunt and the tame linnet. The bird had arrived safely at the Hospital and proved a great amusement to the patients. Miss Lerow wrote a short note in answer, which I shall copy.

"DEAR BERTIE:—This morning when I carried the cage into Mrs. Ayer's ward there was great rejoicing. Susy and Marianne, that bright eyed girl you spoke to near the door, laughed aloud and clapped their hands, and exclaimed:

"'Bertie didn't forget. He did send his bird. Oh, Miss Lerow will you please thank him, and say we like it ever so much!'

"Mrs. Ayers says, 'Tell that blessed little boy I'll take the best care of his linnet. Tell him the cage is hung on the hook where all the children can see it; and the pretty creature is chirping as merrily as if it had always been here.'

"So, my dear little friend, you will be pleased that your self-denying act has given pleasure to so many suffering children, and that they think of you with gratitude. Your friend,

"CARRIE LEROW.'

One pleasant afternoon Bertie and his sister were riding through the street, when a handsome carriage came slowly toward them.

"There's Whitefoot, and that dear little boy Mr. Carpenter told us about," exclaimed a young girl, who was no other than Emma Blagden.

The donkey trotted on until the two carriages met, when a pleasant voice called out:

"Stop a minute, please. Is your name Herbert Curtis?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"How do you do, Whitefoot?" exclaimed the young girl, springing to the ground and throwing her arms around the donkey's neck.

"Oh, you stupid creature not to know your old mistress!" she went on, as the animal took no notice of her caresses.

"I'm very glad to see you," Bertie began, his eyes sparkling with pleasure. "Will you please go and see mamma?"

"Have you moved into the new house yet," inquired the lady who had asked them to stop.

"No, ma'am. Mamma is over there though; and she would be very glad to see you, and thank you for sending me the bird."

"Oh, yes!" cried Emma. "Where is the linnet? I dare say she'd know me."

"I'm sorry; but I lent my bird to a little girl in the hospital. It does amuse the children there so much to watch it."

"Did you tire of it, then?"

"Oh, no, indeed! I like it dearly; but they have to be in their cots, you know; and it makes them feel better to have something to look at."

"Shall we waive ceremony and call at Woodlawn?" asked the lady of her husband.

"Just as you say," answered the gentleman smiling.

"Well, Bertie, if you think your mamma is not too much engaged, we will call for a few moments. You may drive Whitefoot on, and we will follow."

"Oh, mamma! Mr. Carpenter didn't tell half the beauties of the scenery," exclaimed Emma, gazing from the carriage window; "and we thought that he exaggerated. Only look at the water glistening through the trees; and then the reflection of that weeping willow in the lake is so perfect."

Bertie drove quickly to the front door, and lifting Winnie from her seat, ran into the house to announce the visitors.

It was a pleasant call, though a short one, the only seats being the stairs. Then Bertie persuaded his sister to stay with Nancy, who was washing windows; and he took mamma in his

donkey carriage and accompanied their new friends over the nicely gravelled road to the lake.

There were a pair of swans, now, which had grown so tame that they would sail up close to the shore and pick up the crumbs the children threw to them.



CHAPTER V.

THE SORROWING FATHER.



n another volume of this series, I have told you about Mr. Cahart who brought the stone steps from the granite quarry. He had a son who gave him great trouble, and whom he promised that that he would send to Oxford for Bertie to take to his mamma, hoping she would do him good.

Every day for a long time the little fellow expected the boy would come up the avenue at Woodlawn. But nothing had ever been seen or heard from him; and now more than a month had passed.

One lovely afternoon during the pleasant season called the Indian summer, Mr. Curtis invited his wife, Bertie and Winnie to ride with him to the quarry where he wished to pay the balance of his bill, part of which Bertie had paid Mr. Cahart.

The lady gladly consented and told Nancy to

dress the children as soon as possible.

The country never had looked so delightful to Mrs. Curtis as now that the fields were dressed in their gay, autumn attire. Their road lay through rich woods of maple, birch and oak, brilliant in their red and yellow hues.

Mrs. Curtis could scarcely express her delight.

"Oh, there is a branch so perfect! I must have that!" or, "Lawrence, it's too bad to trouble you again; but it does seem wicked to pass so many beauties. They would look so lovely in our new house."

And Lawrence, the most indulgent of husbands, would check up his gay horses, and spring from the carriage and break off branch after branch as she directed.

Herbert had inherited all his mother's love for the beauties of nature, as well as her enthusiasm. His cheeks glowed and his blue eyes sparkled as she piled her treasures in his lap, charging him to guard them with care.

At length they reached the town and drove at once to the hotel, where Mr. Curtis left them, promising to return in fifteen or twenty minutes.

The air was so fine that Mrs. Curtis preferred to sit in the carriage, which she could easily do as the hostler stood at the horses' heads.

The children were chatting gayly when a loud geeing was heard; and presently an ox-team was

seen slowly approaching from the direction of the granite quarry.

"Oh, mamma!" said Bertie greatly excited, "there's Mr. Cahart. I do hope he will stop and speak to me. I want to know why his son did not come to Woodlawn as he promised."

The child leaned as far as he could from the carriage, hoping to attract attention; but the man did not once glance toward him. His face looked very sober, as if his heart were sore.

Just as the great load of granite was opposite the carriage Bertie shouted in an excited tone:

"Mr. Cahart! Oh, Mr. Cahart! Please stop! I want to see you!"

Mrs. Curtis was surprised at the effect of her son's voice on the man. He started, gazed about him, and then spying the little fellow in the carriage, came quickly toward them, seizing the small hand Bertie so cordially held out, and exclaiming with great energy:

"Aye, aye, boy, I'm powerful glad to see you!"

"This is my mamma," explained Bertie. "We came to pay Mr. Fuller's bill, and I hoped I should see you somewhere; but why didn't you let your son come to see us?"

Mr. Cahart's face worked convulsively. For a moment he seemed unable to articulate one word; but presently recovering himself he said,

with a gasp:

"I've never set eyes on that boy since."

"Why, I'm so sorry, where is he?"

"Run off."

"Oh, dear! how could he do so?"

"Did you never find where he had gone?" inquired Mrs. Curtis in a deeply sympathizing tone.

"I followed him to the city, ma'am, found he'd sailed the morning before, in company with one of his mates, the worst boy in town."

The last words were accompanied by a groan.

"Where was the vessel bound?" asked the lady.

"For the West Indies, ma'am. She's due next week; but I'm afeard that during the voyage my boy has learned nothing but wickedness in company with those rough, swearing sailors."

Mrs. Curtis thought this so probable that she could not think of a word to comfort the poor father's heart, and Bertie could only gaze sorrowfully in his face.

The man turned away, and made a step towards his oxen, but then came back and said abruptly:

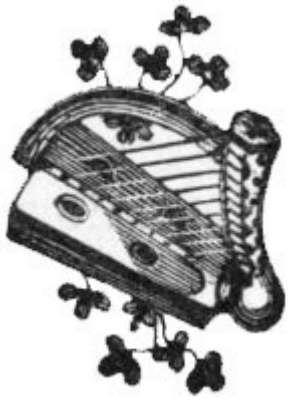
"I never shall forget your boy, ma'am. His words led me to the Bible. Bad as wife and I have taken on since our only child ran away from us, we

should have been a great deal worse but for the words of comfort we found in God's book."

"I am truly rejoiced to hear you say that," exclaimed Mrs. Curtis, warmly. "If you have learned to pray, you will find comfort in leaving your child in the hands of the almighty Friend whose eye has followed him in all his wanderings. Remember the heart of our Saviour yearns over the creatures for whom he has shed his blood."

"Thank you, ma'am," faltered the man, his eyes growing dim. "I wish wife could have heard you talk; but I shall tell her every word I can remember. I don't mind saying to you, that wife and I were never so nigh each other as since we began to pray. There used to be high words between us, I accusing her of humoring the boy; and she calling me a hard old tyrant. But each of us sees now that we were both in the wrong. If we'd taught him the Bible from the first, he would have stuck to it. There's the promise, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

At this moment Mr. Curtis was seen hurrying toward them; and Mr. Cahart with a "God bless your boy, ma'am," turned abruptly away.



CHAPTER VI.

CLEARING THE CREEK.



lbert Dodge, the new gardener passed ten days while he was recruiting his health, in visiting gardens and green houses, trying to improve his taste and gain all the information in his power. He had agreed with Mr. Curtis to return to Oxford as soon as the family were settled at Woodlawn and remain as long as the weather would allow out-door work. When the frost forbade further improvements, he was to leave and spend three months in the employ of Hantz, the celebrated florist.

But one morning the very last of October, as Mr. Curtis was sauntering along near the lake, absorbed in a project he had just formed, the daily coach stopped before the gate, and who should spring from it but Albert Dodge.

This young man, as I have already described, had such a merry face that few could meet him without a warmth in the region of the heart. Certainly his new master could not, and advancing cordially he held out his hand, exclaiming:

"I was just thinking of you, and wishing you were at hand to help me plan a little. I want to do something with this brook."

"I came on purpose to offer a suggestion, sir. I've been here and there on an exploring tour; and I am happy to say I have found no place which has so many natural advantages as *ours*."

He laid some stress on the word; his eye twinkling, and then added:

"It is my intention to make myself so important to you, that you will never part with me. I already feel almost as much interest in Woodlawn as if the deeds stood registered in the name of Albert Dodge."

"I'm glad of it," answered the Squire, laughing, "and to prove my confidence in your ability, I will ask you what I shall do with this little creek; it spreads itself out very awkwardly just at this point where it ought to be most graceful."

"I have it, sir," said Dodge after a careful survey. "I should clear the stream which runs muddy in this place by throwing pebbles to the bottom; widen it twenty feet more; make a pretty little egg-shaped island in the centre, upon which I should plant a few shrubs and perhaps a weeping willow, which would thrive admirably in this wet soil."

"Good! good! It shall be done! When shall you be ready to go to work?"

"To-day, if Grant can come with his oxen. I can postpone one visit I wish to make till winter."

The next morning Bertie came riding to the spot on Whitefoot's back. Buck and Bright were there, the wagon backed down to the very edge of the water, while Star and Spot were dragging off a load of mud scraped or scooped up from the bed of the shallow brook.

"Where is papa?" inquired Bertie, after he had sat awhile watching the operations.

"Gone with the new gardener to buy some trees," answered Tom, laughing. "The Squire's up to all sorts of improvements. Shouldn't wonder a mite if he should take down yonder mountain to give him a view of the city."

"I think this will be very pretty when it's done," remarked the child. "How long did they say they should be gone?"

"Didn't say in my hearing. Bertie I wish you'd ask the Squire if he'd like a load of beach pebbles, 'cause if he does, I'll bring him a load to-morrow morning. Those are the kind to make this water run clear."

"Oh, there they are!" shouted the boy, trotting off to meet them. "Have you bought the trees, Papa?"

"Yes, and brought them home, don't you see them?"

"What, those little things?"

"Willows grow very fast, my son. They will thrive better than if they were larger."

"But, papa, how can we get to the island? Shall we have a bridge?"

"You must ask Dodge, Bertie. He is the author of this plan."

"I'll tell you what would be better than a bridge," explained Dodge, laughing. "You must learn to row a boat; and then you can land at any place, you know. But our island is more for ornament than for profit. We don't expect to have a settlement there."

"Why wouldn't it be pretty to have a little house for the swans on it? Joe Allen told me they could be taught to come on shore for their feed."

"We will consider that proposal, my dear, when the island is in existence," answered papa; "in the meantime you may think of a pretty name for it."



CHAPTER VII.

PAT'S VISIT HOME.



hope my readers have become so much interested in Pat Riley that they will be as glad to hear from him as Bertie was.

We left him, as you know, in Mrs. Taylor's back chamber, making tops for the children. In a few days he was able to go down stairs. The first use he made of his liberty was to make a reel for Mrs. Taylor to wind her yarn on.

Wishing to keep the boy employed, the good woman had borrowed a reel of a neighbor, and set him to work winding thread. The contrivance greatly delighted him. He examined it with the utmost care, pushing it up and down, to fit it for a larger or smaller skein, much to the amusement of the good woman.

"Did you never see one before?" she asked, smiling.

"No, ma'am, but it's very nice."

No more was said on the subject, and she never noticed that he examined it again; but the third day after he was released from the chamber he followed her one day into the pantry, and presented her a new one made by his own hands.

"You won't have to borrow again," he said, his face all in a glow of pleasure. "I'm going to try it now. I saved one skein on purpose."

Mrs. Taylor carried it out and exhibited it in triumph to the family.

"Did you do it all yourself?" asked Mr. Curtis, smiling his approbation.

"Yes, sir; but I had seen the one up stairs. I made more holes though, 'cause that was too large for some skeins and not large enough for others."

"You are a genius, Pat. I have no doubt you'll succeed, now that you've resolved to try your best."

The day before he left for the school, Pat asked Mrs. Taylor's permission to go and bid his father good-by. It was some weeks since the old man had been there, though he promised to come in a day or two. The good woman consented, though she told him the air was rather chilly for a boy who had been so sick.

On his way he passed the spot where Bertie had first talked with him. He stopped and sat on the top of the stone wall, where he had listened to

the first kind words he ever remembered to have heard addressed to him. I trust no little boy or girl who reads this will think the worse of him, when I tell them that his breast began to heave, and the tears gushed to his eyes.

"I wouldn't be 'thieving Pat' again," he said, doubling his fist, "no, not for—not for—" At this moment his eye rested on the handsome new edifice at Woodlawn; and he added with an impressive gesture, "no, not for the Squire's new house. I'd rather starve again and have mammy push me down stairs or anything rather than go sneaking round hiding behind the walls, and feeling so ashamed to look any body in the face. No, no, I'll stick to the new Patrick, as Mrs. Taylor tells about, let what will come, I'll never lie to Bertie, and go back to my old ways."

He felt stronger and better after this resolve, and walked on rapidly until he reached the tree into which he had climbed to watch for Bertie. The sight of his old home just beyond, had excited him a good deal; and he laughed at the recollections of his fear that the Squire had sent Joe Allen to take him to jail.

Then he stepped up to the door and looked within. All seemed deserted. A few half-burnt brands had broken and fallen apart on the wide, old-fashioned hearth, the low wooden chair usually occupied by his father was vacant; a piece of crust, mouldy with age, lay on the table, and a broken pipe beside it.

Pat stood a moment gazing around, his face growing every moment more sad, then suddenly ran up the old creaking stairs to his own chamber.

"She's done it. I knew she would," he exclaimed, angrily. "She always did everything she could to spite me!"

He picked from the dirty floor two or three tail feathers of a tiny yellow bird which he had saved from the jaws of a cat, though not until it had received it's death wound; and which after a fashion of his own he had stuffed.

This, almost his only treasure, his drunken step-mother had deliberately pulled to pieces, scattering the feathers on the floor.

One tiny feather he put into his pocket as a memorial of the life which had forever passed, and then hurried away from scenes which recalled such bitter memories.

"Dad is gone," he exclaimed aloud, walking a short distance from the house, then turning back for another last gaze; "and perhaps I shall never see him again."



CHAPTER VIII.

LETTER FROM PAT.



efore this he had been glad to meet no one; but now he felt a keen desire to ascertain where his father had gone; and resolved to return by the way of Tom Grant's, though a flurry of snow filled the air, and inquire whether Mr. Riley had been seen of late. Mrs. Grant, Tom's mother, was getting dinner, while Jerry was at work cutting wood in the back yard. The old lady knew how hard Pat had tried to reform, and greeted him in a most cordial manner.

"Why, Patrick!" she exclaimed, catching hold of his arm, "Come right in out of the snow. So yer going off to school, I hear my son say, well it's a lucky chance for ye, and I wish ye well. Sit right down now. Thomas will be at home soon, and

he'll be glad to see ye."

"I must be going in a minute," Pat answered, "twirling his hat, I only wanted to know when you've seen Daddy. I've been to the old place, and there's no sign of anybody living in it."

"Haven't ye heard? Well, I s'pose ye haven't. Yer daddy's cleared out, bag and baggage. I don't s'pose he had to hire much of a team, either, to carry off what was left at the old place; but he took his pipe and a change of clothes; and I don't believe there is enough left in the shanty, to make it dangerous to leave the door open o' nights. Folks as heard him talk, do say he was clear discouraged with yer mammy's drinking and quarrelling; and he's gin her up entirely. But I can't tell nothing how that is."

"Do you know where he's gone?" asked Pat.

"La, no; I don't s'pose he knew hisself. He had a stick over his shoulder, and his bundle hung on the end on't, and that's all I can tell ye."

The boy turned without a word, and walked away. He knew now why his father came to the farm again so soon after his first visit; and why he consented so easily that the Squire should send him to school. He had resolved to quit his old home forever.

All this he told Mrs. Taylor that night, and ended with a sigh.

"I don't suppose he and I shall ever see each

other again. He wasn't so bad till mammy came."



About a week after he reached the school, his teacher wrote Mr. Curtis,

> "Patrick Riley arrived here a few days after the term commenced, and has

conducted himself in such a manner as to win the approbation of all his teachers. I agree with you, that he will make a smart man; and from present appearances, I hope also, a useful one. I mentioned to him that I intended to write you, and was gratified to notice that he is not destitute of gratitude for all you have done to improve his condition. He requested me to express his thanks, also to your son, who he says first awoke in him a desire to become an honest boy, and likewise to Mrs. Taylor. Patrick is taking hold of his lessons with a will, and hopes to write you soon.

"Respectfully yours,

"JOHNA
HAVEN.'

This letter was read with great interest by all the family; but there was no one who rejoiced so much at Pat's good conduct as Bertie.

Mrs. Curtis was greatly affected the night following to hear the little boy thank God for helping Pat to be good and obey the commandments.

About a fortnight later, Whitefoot stopped at the village post office, and Bertie jumped from his carriage and ran in with a package of letters for the mail.

"Look here!" exclaimed the girl, who delivered letters. "Is this for you?"

The child glanced at it, laughing and blushing. It was a curious shaped epistle, almost square, without an envelope, the name being a rough imitation of printing, and spelled Birty Kertis, Oxford; care Squier Kertis.

"I think it must be intended for you," said the girl, with an arch glance. "It is post-marked Lexington."

"Oh, yes, it's mine!" exclaimed the boy. "It's from Pat Riley, I guess he wrote it himself."

It was indeed from Patrick. I do not think my readers could decipher it, if I copied the curious spelling, I shall, therefore, give it as Mrs. Curtis, after considerable study, read it to Bertie.

> "DEAR FRIEND:—There's a big boy here as knows how to write tip-top. I and Tip (that's his name) are the most popular boys in school. He's agreed to write this letter for me, 'cause I want ye to know how I'm getting on; and there's something I want to tell ye awful bad, 'cause I know ye'll like it. You was the first one that ever spoke encouraging to me, and I'll never forget it of ye as long as I know myself, nor then either. I'm going to try and be a Squire like your pa; and then I'll take all the little thieving fellows I can find, and help 'em to be good. Rich folks

don't know how hard 'tis for poor ones to keep from stealin' when their stomach is as flimpsy as a rag. I know how to pity 'em, for when mammy locked me up till I'd agree to steal again, there was such a gnawing and gnawing, that I should have give in, if it hadn't been for you.

"Every time, I'd say to myself, I can't stand it no longer; then I'd see you a-sitting in your donkey carriage, looking at me with such sorry eyes.

"But that isn't what I was going to tell yer; and Tip is getting tired writing such a lot of stuff. I've begun to be a soldier, I don't wear any uniform except a little blue star on my coat; but everybody knows by this, that I'm trying to fight against all my old habits. It's hard work I tell you. 'Tisn't as if I was at Mrs. Taylor's, with everybody helping me, and nothing to make me cross. There's lots of bad boys here, who won't join the company of soldiers, and they do everything they can to hinder and bother us. I'm most afraid to tell yer one thing, for fear ye'll think Tip and I are better than we are. We've begun to pray God to help us, and it does come a sight easier to do as we oughter.

"If ever ye see anything of my poor old father, I'd like him to know that I pray for him whenever I do for myself. I

shouldn't wonder if I should get so I could forgive mammy sometime. Perhaps she didn't know any better.

"Your true friend,

"PATRIC RILEY."



CHAPTER IX.

BERTIE'S SPELLING MATCH.



arly in November, Mr. Curtis removed his family to Woodlawn; and Bertie commenced attending school. It was too far for him to walk, and now he found Whitefoot a greater convenience than ever. Close by the schoolhouse lived a farmer by the name of Camp, who readily agreed with Mr. Curtis to allow the donkey to stand in his barn during school hours.

Miss Esther Taylor, his former teacher, welcomed him back with great pleasure, for she had learned to love him like a brother. His health had now greatly improved by so much exercise in the open air, and he resolved to study hard through all the winter months.

I suppose there are many children more forward in their lessons than he was; but he had laid a good foundation for an education. He could read correctly, and with expression, and had begun Colburn's Mental Arithmetic. In geography he

had only learned the general divisions of the globe, and had begun to draw upon his slate, islands, lakes, capes, peninsulas, etc., which greatly helped him to understand the explanations in his book.

In spelling, Bertie was rather backward, not being quick to learn the sounds of which the word was composed.

Miss Taylor was resolved her pupils should excel in arithmetic and spelling. In order to excite their ambition she allowed them twice a week to have what is called a spelling-match.

Two boys or two girls among the best spellers were chosen alternately by vote of the scholars, and these called out from among their mates the names of those they wished on their side. Of course each one wished the best spellers, in order that his side might win the prize, and as poor Bertie generally failed, he was left out.

After this had occurred two or three times, the little fellow began to feel mortified; and one night said to his mamma,—

"Will you please buy me a satchel? I'm going to bring home my spelling-book every night; and I can't carry it very well on Whitefoot's back, without it's in a satchel."

Mrs. Curtis left the room, and presently returned with a small leather bag, to which a strap was attached.

"Will this do?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, mamma! that is just what I wanted."

After this, mamma, and papa, and Mrs. Dodge, and Nellie, and Bertie, and Nancy had a great many spelling-matches, the rule being that every one who pronounced the word must do so with the greatest distinctness, so that every letter as far as possible should be articulated.

Before the winter was past, Bertie's dislike to his spelling-book was wholly conquered, and he was called as often as any scholar to try for the prize in the spelling-match.

This was the first winter the children had ever passed in the country. When the snow began to fall, Winnie was delighted, and went out to catch the flakes on a piece of paper.

Their house was of a June temperature, while the new conservatory furnished bouquets and cut flowers in abundance.

It was not the intention of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis to keep aloof from the villagers. Indeed, by this time, the Oxford people well understood that the Squire and his wife were ready to befriend them whenever they were in distress.

The gentleman taught a class in the Sabbath School, composed of married ladies who had never before been members.

Mrs. Taylor, who was one of the class, often remarked she would arise long before light

rather than to lose the opportunity of hearing the Bible explained in the simple, practical way the Squire performed the service.

It was a happy day for the good pastor of Oxford when Mr. Curtis purchased his farm at Woodlawn. From their first introduction, the hearts of these truly Christian persons were drawn toward each other. They were working in the same cause to win souls to the Saviour whom they loved. One was rich, and the other comparatively poor; but both had consecrated themselves and all that they possessed, to the Saviour, who had bought them with his precious blood; and both desired so to live and to train their families, that when lying on the bed of death, they might say with Paul,—"I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."



CHAPTER X.

BERTIE'S PRESENTS.



hristmas Day dawned clear and cold. As soon as it was light enough to see across the chamber Bertie crept from his bed toward the window, where on one of the knobs belonging to the shutters, he could see a huge stocking tied by a string, and stuffed to its utmost capacity.

The little fellow laughed heartily as he felt of the stocking, to ascertain what was within it. Then he jumped on a chair, trying to take the sock down, but with a sudden thought,—

"Winnie would like to see me take the things out," he leaped into bed again, and began in his childish way to guess what presents he had received, and who they were from.

"I wonder whether I shall have a new Bible," he said half aloud, "I had a Bible last year from

mamma; but no, I don't think she'll give me another, because she said she hoped that one would last me for a long time."

Presently he heard some little feet pattering along the hall, and then Winnie's bright face peeped into the room.

"Dit up, Bertie," she said, laughing, and showing all her white teeth. "Dit up, and have a merry Tismus."

"Oh, Winnie darling, I hope you'll have many merry Christmases! Now let's go and see papa and mamma, and then when Nancy has dressed you, I'll show you my presents."

"Law!" exclaimed Nancy, raising her hands, "you don't mean to say you haven't taken down your stocking. What would Saint Nick say?"

"I know who Saint Nick is," Bertie answered, with a merry laugh. "It's mamma, I saw her last year come creeping softly into my room in the city, and hang it up. I'd rather have mamma than anybody, because she knows what I would like."

"Well, dear, hurry and dress. Your mamma isn't awake yet; and then you can show us your presents."

"Did you give me anything, nurse?"

"I! what a question!" she exclaimed, in pretended horror.

"But I think you did, because when I went to the

nursery of a sudden last night, you threw your apron over something you was working, and you looked ever so queer."

"Why, Bertie, I never thought you watched me so, I must be careful what I do. Well, supposing I did, what should you like best?"

"A ball for Winnie and I to play in the house with. One that would not break the windows, I mean."

Nurse laughed and looked wise, and then left the room. Soon after Bertie finished dressing, and ran to wish mamma and papa a "Merry Christmas."

"Well, my son, has St. Nick crept down your chimney?" asked papa directing an arch glance at his wife.

"My St. Nick has," was the boy's answer, as he kissed his mamma.

"What was in the stocking, then? I think it's very strange no one hung a stocking for me."

"What is that over yonder, Lawrence?" asked the lady, laughing.

"Ah, a stocking for me! that is more than I expected. Well, now I'm satisfied that's a joke; and I shall find nothing in it but paper."

"I'll run and get mine, and then we'll look over our presents together," said Bertie, in great glee.

Winnie now came in bringing a doll almost as large as herself. It was made of kid, with a porcelain face, and had dresses which could be taken off or put on at pleasure. This was given her by Mrs. Dodge and the clothes by Nelly.

With a loud shout Bertie pulled out a small box in which was a gingerbread man riding on a donkey. "I know where that came from very quick," he said. "It smells just like Mrs. Taylor's gingerbread. Oh, isn't it funny?"

"It is a very striking resemblance of you and Whitefoot," remarked papa, trying to look grave, at which everybody laughed heartily.

Next came a small package tied with red cord, which contained—what do you imagine? Why, a nightcap, with cook's compliments.

It was found to be a perfect fit, and mamma told him it would keep his hair from being so snarled in the morning.

A pretty ball, just such as Bertie had caught a glimpse of under Nancy's apron was next brought to view, which so much delighted him that he dropped the stocking and began to toss it at once.

There was a gift from Miss Lerow of a beautiful pair of reins, knit of bright worsted and ornamented with little bells. But what pleased him perhaps more than everything else, was a jack-knife from Edward Torrey with the words, "To the forgiving boy," marked on the inside of

the pasteboard box.

Old Mrs. Grant had not forgotten to add her gift, which was a pair of warm mittens, done up with a nice, knit comforter from Mary Jerrold Monsey.

Altogether it was a great success, and everybody felt very happy.



CHAPTER XI.

THE HEART AND HAND.



hy don't you open your stocking, papa?" inquired Bertie, when he saw the gentleman about to leave his chamber.

"I'll leave that to mamma," he said laughing.

"But really, Lawrence," she answered, "you might see for yourself. You'll regret it if you don't."

"Oh, of course, Cecilia, and spoil your joke!" He hesitated a moment but catching a glimpse of Bertie's anxious face, he turned back suddenly, and took down the stocking from the hook.

Putting his hand cautiously into the top, as if he were afraid of being bitten, at which the children shouted with laughter, he pulled forth a nicely rolled package, the outside of which he most carefully examined with his fingers.

"Very fine!" he exclaimed, with a quick glance at his wife. "It is a doughnut, I presume."

"Doughnuts are not to be despised when they are given to express affection," she answered, gravely.

"Well," he said, laying the package on his knees, "I'll see what else there is. I may find a solitary raisin enveloped in a pound or two of paper."

"Oh, papa, you're too funny!" shouted Bertie.

"Quick, Lawrence, the bell will ring for breakfast presently."

He drew cautiously from the stocking a small box, tied and sealed with wax.

"All very grand," he began, with a shrug of the shoulders, when his wife caught it from his hands.

"Open the other, first," she said.

He tore off the paper, and presently came to a note addressed to "Lawrence Curtis, Esq." in a beautifully neat hand. Opening it cautiously, he glanced at the bottom, and saw the names of his entire class, when his countenance changed at once.

"Really," he said, "I had no idea of this," reading aloud, "'Will our dear teacher please accept the enclosed slippers as a trifling token of our gratitude?'

"They are beautiful! very tasteful; exactly what I wanted! I must have them made up at once. Oh! here is the cash for that purpose! Well, my

friends, I'm very grateful. Now I'm encouraged to try again," taking up the box, and quizzically glancing into the blushing face before him.

It contained a watch-chain of exquisite workmanship, manufactured of hair and gold, attached to which was an ornament in the shape of a heart, and a key in the form of a hand.

"My heart and my hand are all I have to give," she whispered, kissing his forehead, while a tear glistened in her eye. "The chain was made from the hair you cut from my head when I was so very sick."

He raised the precious token to his lips, exclaiming with great tenderness, "I shall wear it as long as I live. What would the world be to me, Cecilia, without your heart and hand?"

There was a service in the church at ten, and at noon all the really aged people in the parish had been invited to a dinner at Woodlawn.

"I want to have a regular house-warming," Mr. Curtis had said to his wife. "I want to warm it with the good will of all our villagers." So it was decided that the old people should come to dinner, the married persons and children to tea, and the young people of both sexes in the evening.

I wish I could paint a picture of the happy faces that gathered around the festal board during that lovely Christmas Day. There was the good pastor and his family improving this pleasant occasion

to speak a word here and there as it was needed among their flock. There were Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, leading Susy who had just returned from the hospital. There was Thomas Grant, his face red as a beet, gallanting a very sensible looking girl who was soon to become his wife. There were swarms of laddies and lasses, kept in constant good humor by Albert Dodge, who had returned to Oxford for the occasion. There were groups of children headed by Bertie, playing all sorts of games, or gathering in a circle around the Squire, who told them funny stories.

"You have learned the secret of living," remarked the Pastor, when he came to take leave. "In promoting the happiness and welfare of those about us we ensure our own."

"That is the rule by which my wife is training our boy," answered the gentleman. "No other house-warming could have pleased us so well as this."

CHAPTER XII.

VIOLETS AND VIOLETTA.



hen spring came, Bertie went one morning into his mamma's chamber with a bunch of the earliest violets.

The curtains were dropped before the large bay window, and though it was not cold a pleasant fire crackled in the open grate.

"Why, mamma, are you sick?" Bertie asked, running quickly to the side of the bed.

"Have you seen papa?" said mamma, smiling. "He went out to tell you I have a present for you."

"No, mamma, I didn't see him."

She turned down the sheet and showed him a

tiny baby lying by her side, trying to suck its own little rosy finger.

Bertie was so astonished he could not speak.

"It's your little sister, my son, and if papa consents, you may call her Violetta in memory of these pretty flowers."

"Oh, mamma! I'm so glad! I love babies so dearly. Isn't she a darling?"

At this moment Mrs. Dodge came into the room. "Well, Bertie," she began, "your mamma has a pretty surprise for you. What do you think Winnie will say?"

"She'll think it's a doll, mamma. Oh, may I bring her in?"

He ran to the door, and met papa with Winnie in his arms.

Papa looked very smiling and happy as he walked to the side of the bed.

Baby had fallen asleep now, and was so quiet Bertie could hardly believe she was alive.

Winnie's eyes grew larger and larger as she gazed, until at last she gave a spring almost out of her papa's arms upon the bed.

Mamma screamed, and Mrs. Dodge came forward quickly; but papa had caught her again and held her firm.

"It's your little sister," he explained; "but you

must go now and stay with Nellie, for Nancy wants the new baby to sleep."

"Let me take it a minute. Please, mamma, I wont break it. I wont, certain," pleaded the child.

"Some day," said mamma, and then she turned so pale that Mrs. Dodge hurried them all out of the chamber before mamma could ask whether the little spring flower should be named Violetta.

With his treasures safe in the house, Mr. Curtis, with his gardener, went to work with renewed zeal to beautify his grounds. His heart was full of gratitude to the kind Being who had given him so many blessings; and his delight was to be of benefit to those around him. No one really in need was ever turned from his door; while many, like Susy Hunt and Edgar Torrey, received the benefit of his donations.

"The Squire's son will be the father over again," said Mr. Taylor to the clergyman, "there's nothing pleases him so much, as to give him a chance to make somebody happy."

"Yes," was the reply, "and I never see him without recalling to remembrance the words: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The fall previous all the rubbish about the place had been cleared away, the pieces of board and shavings, except what had been given to the poor, being carried to the shed adjoining the barn. The turf around the house had of course been a good deal cut up by the teams, and Mr.

Curtis resolved to have new sods immediately laid down, not only on the terraces, but as far as the turf was broken.

This was quite a curiosity to Bertie, who followed Albert to the field where the men were cutting out pieces of turf about one foot in width and two feet in length; then back again to see that they were laid smoothly upon the well prepared ground, and nicely hammered down with large flat, wooden mallets.

With his exercise in the open air, Albert had lost something of his flesh; but his spirits were never better; and in his management of men, Mr. Curtis thought he had never known his equal. His gay good humor seemed to inspire all in his employ with new life, while his firm, clear manner of giving orders convinced them that he intended to be obeyed.

It was often a severe trial to Bertie to leave for school just as the men were engaged in some job which he particularly wished to see; but mamma explained that if he wished to be a useful man he must lay in a stock of knowledge while he was young.

One morning Mr. Curtis proposed to go to a nursery of trees near the city for the purchase of currant, gooseberry, blackberry and other bushes, together with a variety of ornamental shrubs.

Bertie's curiosity was greatly excited to visit such

a place, which he fancied must be almost like Eden.

His mamma shook her head, saying:

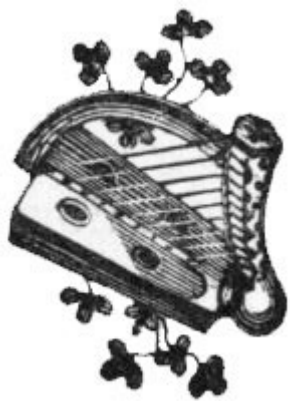
"You have had a long vacation, my dear. School is the first duty now."

The little fellow's lip quivered; and for a moment he looked quite vexed; but while his parents with anxious hearts waited to see whether he would submit cheerfully to parental authority, his brow cleared, and he exclaimed:

"You always do know best, mamma. I should admire to go; but I dare say papa will take me some time."

Papa smiled, but said nothing. Mamma drew her son to her side, and kissed her approval of his conduct.

In five minutes he was trotting Whitefoot out of the yard, his smiles as bright, and his brow serene as ever.



CHAPTER XIII.

BERTIE'S REWARD.



t noon, Bertie was obliged to hurry through his lunch, in order to be back in time for the afternoon session, which commenced at one o'clock, so that it often happened that he did not see his father till night.

When he came into the house, he was eager to tell his mamma that at last he had attained the honor of being at the head of the arithmetic class. He supposed of course his father had gone to the city, and did not therefore enquire for him. He only said:

"Please, mamma, don't tell papa when he comes home, because I want to tell him myself."

"No, I promise," answered mamma, smiling.

At the supper-table, his delight was great, therefore, when he found that instead of going to the city, Mr. Curtis had been to the town where the quarry of granite was.

"I concluded," said papa, with a curious smile, "that it would be a pleasure to go to the nursery in company with a boy who put aside his own wishes in order to please his mother. Dodge must get his ground ready, and wait till Saturday for his trees."

"Oh, papa! papa!!" shouted the boy, dancing with delight. "I mean to be always good, you and mamma are so very kind."

This was Thursday; on Saturday morning at an early hour the Squire and his son were on their way to the nursery.

They drove Duke in the carriage to the depot station, and left him in a stable close by, so that he would be ready as soon as they returned from the city. Bertie was in the gayest of spirits. He sat by the window, watching the farmers at work in the fields, ploughing, harrowing, or making furrows for putting the seed into their land. He enjoyed all this vastly, because he understood how it ought to be done.

He was so absorbed in watching these operations as they whizzed along past one farm and then another, that he quite forgot the pleasant errand on which he was bound. But suddenly he was recalled to the present by a plaintive voice

asking,—"Have a paper, sir? This morning's paper, sir, and all the telegram news."

Mr. Curtis was absorbed in thought, and took no notice of the newsboy; but there was something in the sad voice, which awoke Bertie's quick sympathies.

"Papa! papa!" he repeated, pulling his father's arm, "won't you please buy a paper? See how many the boy has left."

"I've too much on my mind to care for newspapers, dear."

Bertie raised himself till he could speak in his father's ear.

"Please, papa, see how sick he looks. Can't you buy one?"

The gentleman opened his pocket-book, and gave his son fifty cents.

"Use it as you please," he said, softly.

All this time the newsboy had been making change for a coarse, rough-looking man who sat opposite, who was obliged to squirt a whole mouthful of tobacco juice out of his mouth, before he could say,—

"Give me a Erald," and then another mouthful to add,—"Don't cheat, now, you young rascal."

When the right change had been given, and the man was settled to his paper, the newsboy

turned back to the boy whose eyes had expressed so much sympathy.

Bertie asked his papa if it would be too much trouble to change seats, and then he asked,—

"Do you sell many papers?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you do with the money?"

"I give it to mother. It doesn't half support us, though, and now she's going to die."

As the newsboy said this, a great sob seemed to choke him. Mr. Curtis, whose eyes were fixed full on his face, saw the little fellow resolutely suppress his emotion, and his sympathies were enlisted at once.

"Where does your mother live?" he inquired.

"Close by the depot in the city."

"Go and sell all the papers you can, and then come back here."

"Yes, sir," with a grateful glance at Bertie.

The cars, however, had run into the depot, and the passengers were beginning to alight, before they saw anything more of the newsboy. Bertie was begging his father to wait a little longer, when some one touched his arm; and there was the boy struggling up from behind.

"I've sold 'em all," he began, eagerly.

"Show me where your mother lives," Mr. Curtis said, when they stepped to the platform.

"Yes, sir."

These were all the words spoken, but a beautiful ray of gratitude shot from the poor boy's eyes.



CHAPTER XIV.

BERTIE AND THE NEWSBOY.



few steps brought them to an old block, where their young guide stopped.

"May I run in and tell mother you're coming. She's so very sick, sir."

"Yes, but be as quick as you can. I must catch the next train to E——"

Before they had time to miss him, the boy returned, his face very, very sad.

Bertie instinctively caught his hand, as they followed him to the humble chamber.

A woman lay there in the last stages of consumption. On a table near her was a cup, a tumbler, and a spoon, all empty.

"You are in distress," said Mr. Curtis, in a soothing tone; "tell me what you need."

"Nothing for myself. I shall soon be where want

and sorrow shall never enter; but it is hard to leave my boy alone."

"Is he your only child?"

"The only one left of five. He will soon be an orphan."

Mr. Curtis stood a moment gazing about as if trying to judge from the surroundings something of the character of the inmates, when he caught a glimpse of Bertie.

The boy's eyes were fixed on his face with such an eager, wistful gaze, as if he wondered his father did not offer relief, that he resolved at once to befriend the orphan.

"You say," he began, "that you hope soon to be in heaven. Cannot you cast your care for your child on your heavenly Father?"

"I have tried to; but sometimes my faith is weak. He has been taught his duty to God. I"—

A fit of coughing interrupted her, after which, Mr. Curtis hastened to say:

"I will be a friend to your boy. I must leave you now; but here is a sum of money, you will need for immediate wants. I will try and call again before night. In the meantime, what is your name?"

"Martha Washburn."

They hurried away, reached the cars just in time,

found exactly what they wished, smoke trees, tartarian honeysuckles, azalias, etc., etc., ordered them to be ready for Mr. Grant's team Monday noon, and then went back to the city.

Bertie enjoyed everything. The long rows of trees, the neat lines of bushes; but his heart was full of Jimmy Washburn. His little hand nestled itself into his father's, and every chance he had to speak, he repeated,—

"Oh, papa! I do love you. I do thank you so much. How glad that poor woman looked when you told her you would take care of her boy."

Mr. Curtis told his wife afterward that he kept thinking, as he saw Bertie's flushed, eager face, of the text, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," and prayed that God might keep his heart like that of his pure-minded boy.

Before he left the city, he made arrangements for Jamie's admission to a mission school, where he would be well educated, and then sent to a home in the great West. Then they hurried to Woodlawn to receive a warm welcome from mamma, Winnie, and a smile from little Violetta.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST CHAPTER.



y young reader, I hope ere this you have come to love our little Bertie, and are sorry that this is the last chapter of the last volume about him and his sister Winnie.

I love Bertie dearly, and should like to tell you much more about him; but in the short space that is left I can only relate a few words of his after life.

Suppose I were to say that he became a liar, a thief and a Sabbath-breaker, would you believe

me? You could not, because you have seen that he loved God and feared sin. You know how he grieved when he disobeyed his parents; and how earnestly he confessed his fault to his heavenly Father. You know how he tried to conquer his impatience, and to be a dutiful, loving child. You know how earnestly he endeavored to win every one around him to be good; and how anxious he was to make others happy. Have I convinced you that in order to be happy yourself, you must make others so? If I have, I shall be well paid for writing the history of Bertie and his friends.

Perhaps you will remember that he was not over fond of study when he first began to attend school; but when his mamma explained to him that in order to become a useful member of society, as his father was, he must learn to read, write and spell, which were the first steps toward acquiring a good education, he made it a duty to learn every lesson thoroughly, so that by the time he was sixteen years old he was prepared to enter college.

In the meanwhile Winnie had come into her teens, and little Violetta was no longer the baby; for there were a pair of beautiful twin brothers at Woodlawn, "as near alike," Mrs. Dodge declared, "as two peas in a pod."

In the quiet, country town of Oxford Mrs. Curtis had gained health and strength. Of course, with so many little ones, her family cares had greatly increased, but with faithful Nancy in the nursery, she found time for visiting the poor and

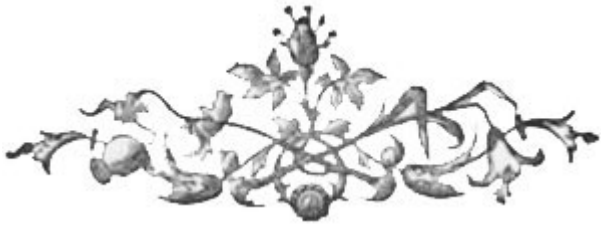
distressed, all of whom felt well assured that no one in need of help would be refused aid from the kind family at Woodlawn.

On a cold, windy December night, the inhabitants of Oxford were startled by cries of "Fire! fire!" What was their horror to see the flames coming from the large barn over the lake. With one accord men, women and children rushed from all parts of the town to offer aid in extinguishing the fire. It was, indeed, not the barn, but only an immense stack of hay behind it. Mr. Curtis, with the aid of his men, soon succeeded in extinguishing the flames; but the neighbors, once aroused, could not be persuaded that all the dear family were safe, until they had caught a glimpse of every member.

Mr. and Mrs. Curtis were deeply affected at the kind solicitude manifested for their safety; and when they tried, with tearful eyes, to express it, Mr. Taylor answered for the rest:

"Don't talk of thanking us for wanting to preserve one of God's greatest blessings to us. Oxford would be a sorry place enough without our dear ones at Woodlawn. No, my friends, we all feel that you belong to us, from the Squire down to the tiny babes in the cradle. We're thankful you didn't need our aid to-night to put out the fire; yet if you ever do, there isn't a man, woman or child in Oxford, but would be proud to render it, for there isn't one who hasn't received some good at your hands."

When the hearty speech was ended, Bertie went around among the people, shaking hands and thanking them earnestly for their kindness; and then they quietly returned to their homes.



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