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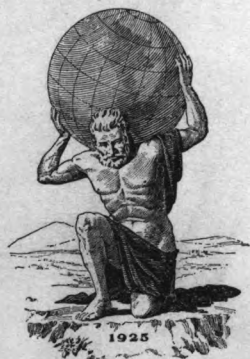
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OR, THE  
VICTIM OF MATERNAL INDULGENCE.

EDITED BY D. P. KIDDER.

New-York:  
PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,  
FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST  
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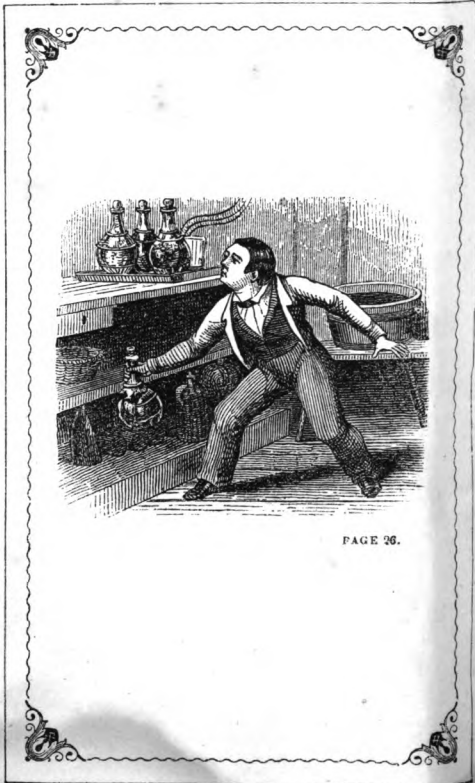


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CHAPTER I.

THE BOY IN THE DOOR-YARD—HIS REGARD FOR HIS  
MOTHER'S ORDERS—HIS COURSE AT SCHOOL—THE  
WAY TO SPEAK OF OUR NEIGHBORS.

"WHAT boy is that in the door-yard?"  
said Mrs. Marvin to her son Joseph, as  
the family were seating themselves at the  
dinner table.

"It is Hiram Beardslee," said Joseph.  
"He is going with us to Oak Hill this  
afternoon."

"Does his mother know he is going?"  
"I do not know, ma'am: I guess not,  
for we didn't talk of going until the boys  
went out to play, and he has not been  
home since."

"He is going without his dinner, then."  
"Yes, ma'am; he often goes without his  
dinner. He says he doesn't get hungry."

"Boys who go without their mother's permission," said Mr. James, the hired man, "ought to go without their dinner. I would not go with such a boy, if I were you: he don't seem to have the least idea of minding his mother."

"I didn't ask him to go. He would come with me. He is always hanging on to somebody."

"I went over to Mr. Beardslee's the other day to borrow his log-chain, and I told her that Mr. Brooks' sheep were in the rye field. She told Hiram to run and drive them out; but he never moved any more than if she had'nt spoken to him."

"What did you do to him?" said Joseph.

"I didn't do anything to him; but I told him that if he didn't drive them out forthwith, I would make him dance like an eel in a spider the next time he came along here."

"Did he go?"

"Yes; he shoved off pretty soon after he caught my eye. The old lady didn't seem to like my doings very well; but I thought it wasn't best to have the grain destroyed."

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"Mrs. Beardslee seems determined to ruin her boy," said Mr. Marvin.

"It is a great pity; he seems to be a bright boy. He is quick to learn, is he not, Joseph?"

"Yes, sir, when he has a mind to study."

"Doesn't the schoolmaster make him study?"

"The new one does; but the old one didn't use to. He used to give him lessons to get, and Hiram told him his mother said he needn't get them. The master told him he must bring a note from his mother, and he did. Then the master said, 'If your mother wants you to be a dunce, you must be one: I can't help it.'"

"He turned him out of school though, didn't he?"

"That wasn't because he didn't study: indeed, he wasn't turned out at all: he disobeyed the rules, and got whipped; and when his mother came and talked to the master about it, he told her why he had whipped him, and that he had broken the rules again, and that he should also whip



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him the next day. Then she took him out of school."

"And a good riddance it was too," said James. "He wanted to come back again after awhile, and wanted to know if he could do so without being whipped; but the teacher told him that he had punished the boys who transgressed at the same time that he did, and that he must treat all alike. So he didn't come any more while Mr. Lowell kept school. Our new master makes him study."

"It is a great pity that his mother pursues the course she does with the boy," said Mr. Marvin.

"She allows him to have his own way too much, certainly," said Mrs. Marvin. She then changed the conversation, not wishing to say anything against her neighbor. She had this rule about speaking of the absent; namely, never to say anything to their disadvantage, unless she was plainly under obligation to do so. This rule kept her, of course, from saying anything false about her neighbors. But this was not all. Her ideas of right were not satisfied

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when she refrained from speaking falsehoods respecting them. She did not feel at liberty to speak evil of her neighbors, even when she confined herself to the strictest truth, unless there was a call of duty for her to do so. Reader, let this be your rule: never tell the truth to the disadvantage of your neighbor, unless you are under obligation to do so.

When they had dined, Mrs. Marvin said to Joseph, "Perhaps you had better take a piece of pie to Hiram; you will not get back before night."

"He don't deserve any," said Mr. James.

"That is true; but we all receive more than we deserve. If God were to give us the bounties of his providence only as we deserve them, we should not be as well off as we are."

Joseph gave Hiram the piece of pie, and they set out for the appointed place, whence they were to start for Oak Hill. Joseph had obtained permission to go. He would not have thought of going without it.

## CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITION TO OAK HILL—A GREAT DROUGHT—THE  
LOST WAISTCOAT—THE THUNDER CLOUD.

THE object of the boys in going to Oak Hill was to gather whortleberries. They grew there abundantly, and were now in season. There were nearly a dozen boys who went at this time. They were all children who were brought up to obey their parents, except Hiram. They did not think it any hardship to obey.

You could see, from their manner of treating Hiram, that they did not look upon him as an equal. They did not treat him unkindly; yet a stranger could have noticed something in the ways of the boys toward him, that would have led him to think that he did not exactly belong to the company. Reader, did you ever feel when among good boys, that you were not one of them—were not exactly at home, so to speak? To what was it owing? The good always feel at home with the good.

The boys reached the hill in safety, and

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began to fill their baskets and pails with berries. Pretty soon (as is usual on such occasions) one of the boys discovered that he was very thirsty. This led all the rest to make the same discovery. There was no water on the hill. There was none, so far as they knew, nearer than the stream which flowed, perhaps, a quarter of a mile from the base of the hill. After some time had been spent in consultation, they agreed to go there and drink. Some one suggested, that one or two should go and get water for the rest; but no one would agree to it. Another proposed that they should "tough it out," to use his expression, and not go till they had filled their baskets, so that they would not have to climb the hill again. Several objected to this, and declared that they should perish if they did not get some water soon. So they all set out for the stream.

They reached it; and most of them found, now that they stood on the banks of quite a large stream of water, that they were not as thirsty as they were when they stood on the hill. Some of them, finding the water

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warm, did not drink at all, though they were among those who thought they should perish if they did not have water soon. Little folks are very apt to be fanciful, and to take notions into their heads which have no business there. Now, if those boys had been playing about home, not one of them (very likely) would have thought about being thirsty. But, the notion once in their heads, nothing would do, but they must leave the berries and go to the water. In the same way, children sometimes take a fancy that they are hungry or thirsty after they are in bed, and think they cannot go to sleep till their hunger or thirst has been relieved. You must not give way to such fancies. If those boys had resolved that they would stay and fill their baskets while they were on the hill, they would not have suffered at all from thirst; and so, when you think you are thirsty after you have gone to bed, if you will resolve to bear it, and go to sleep without drinking, you will soon forget all about your thirst. You will thus save your friends a great deal of trouble.

When the boys stood on the banks of the stream, it was natural that they should think of going in swimming. It was proposed by some, and objected to by others.

"Do you have to ask permission every time you go into the water?" said one.

"No; but I asked permission to go on Oak Hill, and not to come here; and mother, I know, wouldn't like it, if I went into this deep water."

Here you see the spirit of true obedience. That boy felt bound to do as he thought his mother would wish him to do, if she were acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. How much happier children would be, if they would always study to do what their parents wish to have them do, instead of trying to see how much they can do, without going contrary to their express orders!

Hiram Beardslee decided at once upon going into the water, and began to undress himself. Probably he thought that some one would follow his example. But if he thought so, he was mistaken. He was not a boy whose example was likely to be

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followed ; or, rather, he was not one who was likely to have influence with other boys. He was accustomed to have his own way too much for that.

“ You had better not undress,” said Joseph to Hiram ; “ none of the boys are going in, and you will be left alone.”

“ You wait a minute—let me have one dive,” said Hiram.

“ I shall go when the rest do ; and they are going now.”

Accordingly they were soon under way. Hiram called to them to stop ; but they saw no reason why they should do so. He came out of the water as fast as he could, and began to put on his clothes. Before he was half dressed, the others were quite a distance from him. He began to be afraid they would get out of sight : so he gathered up the remainder of his clothes, and ran after them. When he overtook them, he rather ordered than asked them to stop, while he finished dressing ; but they paid no attention to him, but kept on their way, talking and laughing. He would stop and adjust a part of his dress,

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and then run and overtake them, and then stop a little while again. At last, when he supposed he was about dressed, he found his waistcoat was wanting. What had become of it? He had either left it by the banks of the stream, or had dropped it on the way.

"I have lost my jacket," he cried out.

"Well, then, go back and find it," said one.

"I can't go alone. Stop, and go back with me, some of you," said he, beginning to cry, as he saw they all continued to move forward.

Joseph stopped for a moment, and told him to go back; that he could easily find them, as they would be in plain sight on the hill.

"You go back with me," said Hiram.

"I shall do no such thing. I told you not to undress," said Joseph.

"I shan't go back, unless some one goes with me."

"Very well, do as you please."

"It will be lost."

"That is for you to see to. It will be your own fault."



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Joseph then hastened to overtake his companions, and they ascended the hill again, Hiram following at a little distance in their rear.

They had not been long on the hill before the appearances of a thunder shower were so threatening that they thought best to set out for home. The cloud "went around," as the phrase is; that is, did not discharge itself upon that part of the earth which seemed, at first view, to lie in its approaching path. The boys had, however, procured a tolerable supply of berries, and were not, upon the whole, sorry that they had come home in good season.

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CHAPTER III.

MRS. BEARDSLEE'S VISIT TO MRS. MARVIN.

JOSEPH was sitting near his mother, telling her, as he was wont, about the interesting things which had occurred during their visit to Oak Hill. As Hiram's conduct did not, in his view, come among the interesting things, he said nothing about

it. While he was thus pleasantly employed, Mrs. Beardslee came to the door. Her face was a little flushed, and her movements rather quick, and her whole air one of extra politeness.

"I am sorry," said she to Mrs. Marvin, "to make any complaint against your boy: I know how a mother feels when her boy is charged with having done wrong; but justice to my own child compels me to say that Joseph has treated him very badly. I presume he has been giving you *his* account of the matter."

"He has been telling me about their visit to Oak Hill; but he has not mentioned Hiram's name. What has Joseph been doing to Hiram?"

"I have not been doing anything to him," said Joseph.

"Be still, my son; I spoke to Mrs. Beardslee."

"He threw away his waistcoat. Hiram came without it, and crying, ready to break his heart."

"Why, mother, I never touched his waistcoat. He lost it himself; because he

would go into the water, when I told him not to," said Joseph, with an appearance of sincerity, which would have convinced any one that he said what was true. His mother was certain that he had spoken the truth; not because he was her child, but because she knew, from experience, that he was in the habit of doing so. Mrs. Beardslee could see that Mrs. Marvin credited the assertion of her own son.

"I suppose," said she, "you will believe me when I tell you that Hiram came home without his waistcoat."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Marvin.

"And is not that a proof that his statement is correct?"

"I do not see that it necessarily confirms all his story. You have heard your son's story; suppose you hear Joseph's, and then, perhaps, we can get at the truth. Children sometimes misrepresent things when they do not intend to deceive."

As Mrs. Beardslee kept silence, Mrs. Marvin told Joseph to give his account of the matter. He did so; and, of course, stated

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what is already known to the reader. Mrs. Beardslee still kept silence.

"I wish you had brought Hiram," said Mrs. Marvin, "with you, that we might compare their statements. If there be any material difference, the truth can be easily known by asking some of the boys who were in company with them."

"There will be no use in asking them," said Mrs. Beardslee, rising to go; "they will take your son's part, of course."

"Not if he has told an untruth; they can have no motive to uphold him in a lie."

"I believe all the boys in the place are banded together against my son. It is in vain to attempt to get justice done him." So saying, she left abruptly.

## CHAPTER IV.

HIRAM REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL—THE PIECE OF  
CAKE—A GREAT MISFORTUNE.

HIRAM was quite uncomfortable during his mother's call at Mrs. Marvin's. He had told his story (without any regard to truth, to be sure) in the expectation that she would say to him, "Never mind it, my dear;" and that that would be the end of it. He did not expect that she would take up his cause so warmly as to go to Mrs. Marvin's to make a complaint against Joseph. He was very much afraid that she would discover that he had told a falsehood; but he was not afraid that she would punish him, if she did find it out. He was sure that she would not do that. Why did he care, then? Because it would be more difficult for him to deceive her in future; and he found it convenient for his purposes to do so often. He watched her countenance as she returned, and soon saw that her fondness for him had not allowed her to believe that his statements were false.

"You shall not play with that deceitful boy any more," said she to her son, as soon as she had laid aside her bonnet.

"I don't mean to play with him any more, he used me so bad," said Hiram, affecting to cry.

"Never mind," said the fond and foolish mother; "don't cry. You have plenty of waistcoats, and can afford to lose one."

The next morning Hiram thought he should not like to go to school. The boys would laugh at him, he thought, for his loss, especially if they heard of his mother's visit to Mrs. Marvin. Nine o'clock came, but he did not go. About half-past nine his mother saw him whittling in the shade of a tree near the door. "Isn't it time for you to go to school?" said she.

"I don't know, ma'am," said he, without moving from his place.

Pretty soon she came to the door again: "It is almost ten o'clock; it is time you were at school."

"I don't want to go to school," said he.

"What is the reason?"

"I don't know; I don't want to go."

"Don't want to go to school! what a silly boy! Jump up, and run now; or school will be more than half out."

Still Hiram kept his seat.

"Come, run to school, that's a good boy; and I will give you a piece of cake when you come home."

"I don't want to go."

"I will tell your father, if you don't go right away; and then we will see what will take place."

Hiram kept on whittling his shingle. If he had really believed that his mother would keep her promise, and tell his father, he would have obeyed her; for his father was a man not to be trifled with. When anything worthy of stripes were reported to him respecting his son, the stripes were sure to follow.

Mrs. Beardslee came once more to the door; and seeing him still in his place, she beat a retreat, by saying, "It is so late now, that it is hardly worth while for you to go."

Pretty soon he shut up his knife, and

came into the house. "Mother, I want that piece of cake."

"What piece of cake?" said she.

"The piece which you promised me."

"I promised you some when you came home from school; but you didn't go. Boys who don't mind their mother, can't have any cake."

Hiram knew how to get the cake: by a little importunity, and a few promises, he secured it.

Toward noon, when his father was expected home to dinner, he began to beg her not to tell him that he had staid away from school. He had to rub his eyes a little longer than usual, and make stronger promises, before he succeeded; but he knew he should do so in the end.

Does any one say, I wish I could get along as easily with my mother as Hiram did with his? Do you think it would add to your happiness to have a mother who would indulge you in everything? Was Hiram as happy as those boys who were kept in subjection to their parents? Was he as happy as Joseph, who never thought



either of disobeying or of deceiving his mother? A greater misfortune can scarcely happen to a child than to have an over-indulgent mother. Such a woman is always a weak woman; she can never be the wise guide of his youth. You will be, more and more, convinced of this, as you learn more of the history of Hiram.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE BROKEN DECANTER—THE FATHER DECEIVED—  
A SECOND VISIT TO THE DECANTER, AND THE CON-  
SEQUENCES.

ONE day, as Mrs. Beardslee was coming into the house, she heard a noise as if occasioned by the breaking of glass. She found Hiram coming away from the cupboard.

“What have you been doing?”

“Nothing.”

“I know better. Tell mother what you have been doing?”

Hiram answered by pointing at the cupboard. She opened the door and saw

that the neck of the decanter, which contained brandy, was broken. This, you will remember, was before temperance times. Hiram thought he would take a little brandy while his mother was gone out. He did so, and held the bottle in his hand, as he heard her returning footsteps. He hastily endeavored to put it in its place, and to close the door; but, in his haste, he struck the top of it against the shelf, above the one on which it stood, and broke it. He closed the door, and thought he would not say anything about it. When it should be discovered, he determined to deny all knowledge of it. His confused looks betrayed him, and led his mother to find out what he had been doing.

"What will father say?" was the first remark on the sight of the broken decanter.

"Need he know it?" said Hiram.

"He can't help knowing it. He always takes some brandy at night, and must, of course, see that the decanter is broken."

Hiram began to cry; partly in fear of what his father would do to him, and partly

to induce his mother to devise some method to screen him by concealing his act from his father. She could not bear to hear him cry ; so she told him she would go to the store, and see if she could not get a decanter just like the one that was broken. " Will you be a very good boy, and always mind mother, if I will ? "

Hiram was ready to promise, and gave his mother a very warm embrace ; not because his feelings of affection led him to do so, but because he knew it was the way to induce her to deceive his father for him.

She went to the store ; but did not find a bottle sufficiently like the one broken to deceive her husband. She purchased one, however, and poured the brandy into it, and placed it in the cupboard.

At night, when Mr. Beardslee came home and went to the closet, Mrs. B. followed him. He observed that the bottle had been changed, and looked toward his wife. She anticipated any question by saying, " I was thinking, the other day, how long that decanter had lasted ; it hit

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up against the shelf, so," imitating the act by which it was broken. Mr. Beardslee muttered something about carelessness, took his draught of brandy, and was then ready for his supper.

Mrs. Beardslee did not tell him that she broke the decanter herself. She only said, "It hit up against the shelf, so;" but she intended to make the impression upon her husband's mind that the vessel was in her own hand when it was broken. She was thus as really guilty of falsehood as if she had told him, in so many words, that she broke it herself. Her intention was to deceive him; and the guilt of an action lies in the intention with which it is performed.

Does the reader say, I should think that Hiram would be very obedient to his mother, because she was so good to him? It was not goodness, but cruelty, with which she treated him. She taught him deceit in the most forcible way, by her own example. It was not strange that he had no regard for the truth, when he could see his mother practice deception. But one

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may say, perhaps, that she had a kind motive. But no kind feeling can excuse a wrong action. We must not do evil that good may come.

"You must never go near the brandy bottle again," said Mrs. Beardslee.

"No, ma'am; I will not."

"I am going over to Mr. Snow's; do you wish to go with me?"

"No, ma'am." He had heard the boys laugh about his "hanging on to his mother's apron-strings," as they called it. So he would not go.

"You will be lonesome here; you had better go with mother, hadn't you, dear?"

"I don't want to."

"But mother wants to have you go."

"I'll go some other time. I want to whittle now."

After a little more coaxing, the mother yielded the point, and set off alone.

She had scarcely left the house, before Hiram got up and walked through most of the rooms in the house, to see what he could find for his amusement, or what advantage he could take of his mother's

absence. He came to the closet in which the liquor was kept. He thought he would take some sweetened brandy and water. So he poured out some of the liquor into a glass, and put some sugar in it, and added some water. He made it very sweet, and, by that means, was able to drink it. The taste of brandy he did not like. No one ever liked it at first. Nature has put within us a dislike to most injurious food and drinks; and we have to overcome that natural dislike, before we can bring ourselves to love those things.

Hiram soon began to feel the effects of the brandy he had taken. There was a ringing in his ears, and his head began to swim. He tried to walk straight across the floor, but could not. He became sensible that he was drunk. He knew that if his father found him in that condition, he would punish him; for though he took brandy every day, he held a drunkard in real abhorrence. He felt that his senses were fast leaving him. He had just enough command of his limbs left to crawl up stairs, and get under his bed. There he

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lay in a deep sleep or stupor, when his mother came home. She did not stay long, for she felt anxious about him. When she came in, she called his name, but heard no answer. The doors were all open, so she thought he must be about the house. She went to the cupboard, and saw that the brandy bottle had been moved, and that sugar had been spilled on the shelf. She found the glass in which he had prepared his intoxicating draught. She now felt very anxious about him. She was afraid he had taken enough to render him drunk, and in that state had wandered off to some of the neighbors. Again she called him aloud, but heard no answer. Then she saw his hat, and concluded that he must be about the house. She went into his chamber, and there saw one of his feet projecting from beneath the bed. She spoke to him, but he did not answer. She drew him out from beneath the bed. She could not awaken him. He was in a kind of stupor. She was very much alarmed. She did not know but that he was dying. She took him up in her lap, and began to

take off his clothes, that she might put him in bed. While she was thus employed, his stomach threw off its contents. He then awoke, so that she had no great difficulty in getting him into bed.

When they were seated at the supper table, Mr. Beardslee asked where Hiram was.

"He is not very well," said Mrs. B., "and has gone to bed."

"What seems to be the matter with him?"

"He is sick at the stomach; he is better now, and has gone to sleep."

Nothing more was said about him; and Mrs. B. supposed she should be able to conceal his wicked act from his (as she thought) too strict father. In this she was mistaken. Mr. Beardslee, although he was absorbed in business, and was never at home, except in the evening, had some regard for his child, as what parent has not?

"I will go and look at Hiram before I go to bed," said he. "Is there a light in the room?"



"I would'nt disturb him ; he is asleep : he will be well in the morning," said Mrs. B., wishing, if possible, to prevent her husband from going to the bedside of her son.

"It won't disturb him to look at him," said Mr. B. ; and he took a candle, and went to the chamber. Mrs. B. followed him, with a quick-beating heart. Hiram was asleep ; but the fumes of alcohol were plainly evident to the sense of smell.

"This boy has been drinking," said he. "I thought somebody had been at the decanter."

"Are you sure ?" said Mrs. B., snuffing and scenting, as if to convince herself that there was any smell of alcohol in the room.

"Have you been out this afternoon ?"

"I went over to Mr. Snow's, after he came home from school."

"He staid at home ?"

"Yes."

"He must be severely punished. If he begins to drink now, he will die a drunkard before he gets to be a man."

Mrs. Beardslee began to weep ; but whe-

ther it was in view of the prospect that Hiram was to be punished, or that he would die a drunkard, is not known.

The next morning Hiram came down to breakfast, looking rather forlorn. His father looked at him with a sharp eye, which brought the blood to his cheek, and the tears to his mother's eye. After breakfast, Mr. B. went to a cherry-tree near, and cut a thrifty sprout for a whip. Mrs. B. saw what he was doing, and went out to him, and asked him, if he did not think it would do to let him go for this once without whipping him, as it was the first time?

"No," said Mr. Beardslee, in a very decided tone; "it must be the last time, or he is a ruined boy."

He called Hiram, and wore up the whip about his legs. Mrs. Beardslee retired to her bedroom, and wept during the operation.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE TRUANT'S UNHAPPY DAY—ITS CONSEQUENCES.

HIRAM went to the barn after his father had whipped him. He staid there a long time. His mother wished to have him come in, that she might comfort him. She thought her husband had punished him beyond his deserts. She was sure he would never do so again. As he did not come in, she went out to him.

"Hiram, come in to mother."

This was spoken in a very tender and sympathizing voice.

"I won't," said Hiram, in a very insolent tone.

"What is the reason you won't?"

"Because you let father whip me."

"Mother couldn't help it, dear; come to mother."

"You could help it, too," said he.

After trying to soothe him, she gave up in despair, and went into the house, saying to herself, "I never knew any good to come from whipping children for ever."

It was plain that, in her mind, the blame of Hiram's conduct was to be ascribed wholly to the rod.

After awhile he came in, threw his hat upon the floor, sat down, and looked as sulky and unhappy as he could well look.

"It is time to go to school," said his mother. But he took no notice of what she said. "Come, be a good boy, and wash your face clean, and run to school." Still he moved not, but appeared as though he did not hear her.

"Father will ask you if you went to school like a good boy; and, if you don't go, I shall have to tell him. I should be very sorry to be obliged to do so."

"You told him about me last night."

"No; mother didn't. Father went up to see you, and smelled your breath."

Hiram was a little softened by this, and got up and washed his face, and, finally, set off for school.

"What is the matter with your face?" said one of the boys, who met him on the way.

"None of your business," was his vulgar reply.

"You have been crying. I guess you have been whipped."

"I haven't been whipped, neither."

Here you see was a direct falsehood. How could a boy in a Christian land tell such a lie? I do not think it was at all strange. His mother had countenanced him in deception, and had practiced it before him. I should expect that a boy, with such an example from his mother, would become a liar of the first class.

Hiram determined that he would not go to school that morning. He wouldn't go to be laughed at, not he. If his father wanted him to go to school, he need not whip him. So he played truant that day, and laid the blame wholly on his father.

How did he dispose of himself during the day? At first he went to the brook that ran through the lower part of the village. He followed it down the stream for some distance, and tried to amuse himself as well as he could, by skipping stones along the surface of the water, and watch-

ing the fish which he should like to take, and which he would have taken, if he had only had the requisite fishing apparatus and skill. It was a very long forenoon, and he felt that he would have been happier at school, even if the boys did laugh at him on account of the redness of his eyes. The twelve o'clock bell rung, and he thought he would start for home. Just as he set out, he stepped on a large smooth stone, and fell into the water, and wet his clothes all over. This rendered a change in his plans necessary. If he went home with his clothes wet, it would be known that he had not been to school. There was no water near the school-house, so that he could not invent a plausible lie to account for the state of his clothing. He thought of saying that one of the boys threw a pail of water on him; but that, he supposed, would hardly account for his being so wet as he was.

If he had only to meet his mother, he shouldn't care; but he had heard his father say that morning, that he should dine at home that day. It would not, therefore,

do for him to go home. So he lay down upon the sunny grass, and waited for his clothes to dry. After awhile, he fell asleep, and when he awoke he felt very cold and chilly. He did not know how late it was. The sun was still high in the heavens. He went to the village, and, looking carefully around to see if his father was in sight, he entered a store. It was a new one, and they were just getting the goods in. They lay on the counter. There was no person in the store at that moment. There was a box of raisins and a barrel of crackers open. Hiram looked around, and seeing no one, he filled one pocket with raisins, and another with crackers. Was he used to stealing, as well as to disobeying his parents and lying? No; but one vice soon brings on another. He felt a little uneasy at the thought of being a thief; but he said to himself, "I am hungry, and every one has a right to take as much as he wants to eat." He did not stop to ask himself where he found that text written, and whence it derived its authority. He took himself off as soon as

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he could. He was not seen, as he supposed, by any one, not taking God into the account.

After school was out, he went home. His mother saw that something was the matter with him, but forbore to question him, because he seemed indisposed to answer her. "He was nervous, poor boy! in consequence of the punishment he had received."

The next morning he was found to be seriously ill, and a fever was the consequence of his playing truant. If he had gone to school, he would not have fallen into the water; and if he had not fallen into the water, he would not have been sick. The way of transgressors is hard!



## CHAPTER VII.

THE STOLEN MONEY, AND THE CONSEQUENCES IN  
PART.

I HAVE NOW given you some account of Hiram's schoolboy days. I will now give you a relation of his proceedings when he came to be a lad, or, as he thought, a young man.

When he was fifteen years old, he no longer went to school in the summer. His father had disposed of his other property, and purchased one or two of the neighbors' farms. He thus had a very large farm, and he gave his time to its cultivation. Hiram's assistance was required in summer. In winter he went to school. He had lost none of his fear of his father. His mother had not the slightest control over him; nor did he treat her with the respect due to a servant, except when his father was present. He was skilled in deceiving his father, who thought that his authority, despite his mother's indulgence, had made him a pretty good boy. Know-

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ing, however, that he was disposed to be "unsteady," as he called it, he looked after him, as he thought, pretty sharply, and did not allow him to have any money. He supposed, that if he always kept him at home, and didn't give him any money to spend, he would be safe. He did not know that a far better safeguard was to implant the fear of God in his heart. Of this the father had no experience himself, and hence could not teach it to his son. It used to be an oft-repeated saying of his, "If boys are kept at home at nights, and haven't money to fool away, they won't be likely to become unsteady."

Did Hiram stay at home nights? No; he was frequently out to a very late hour. His father did not know it; but his mother did. He used to sit up till his father went to bed, which was at a very early hour. He would then pretend to retire to his chamber. He would go up stairs, making an unnecessary noise in so doing. He then would, from a window, get out upon the roof of the wood-house, and thence a ladder led him to the ground. Then he

would go where he pleased. He spent many nights in dissipation.

In these nocturnal expeditions, money was often wanted; and, as we have seen, it was a part of Mr. Beardslee's plan not to furnish his son with money. Mrs. B. had but very little at her command; but what she had, she gave him, entreating him to make a good use of it; to which entreaties he paid as much attention as he did to the breeze that passed him. One day Mr. B. and Hiram were at work in the field together. When it came time to go home, Mr. B. sent Hiram for his coat, which was in another part of the field. His pocket-book was in his coat pocket. It was a large one, and was filled with papers and bank notes. The notes were not folded, but were placed so that their ends projected out at the end of the pocket-book. As he was walking along, Hiram took hold of a one dollar note, and pulled it a little way out. His conscience smote him, or his fears were awakened, so that he did not dare to take it, as he had at first designed. He tried to push it back.

It would not do to take the pocket-book out, and open it, and replace the bill; for his father was in sight. So he pulled it out, and thrust it in his pocket. His father put on his coat, and they walked home together in silence. This was well for Hiram, (as he thought,) for if he had spoken, his voice would have betrayed him.

He was very uncomfortable for several days. He expected his father would discover the loss of the note, and charge him with it. He was accustomed to count his money carefully, and to know how much he had in his pocket-book. Money was the great object of his life, and he was not likely to lose a dollar without knowing it. But days passed, and nothing was said by him about the dollar. It happened that he did not miss it.

After some weeks, Hiram ventured to spend the money. He was out with some of his low companions, and astonished them by the liberality with which he called for drink, and the air with which he pulled out a dollar bill, and offered it in payment.

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From that time he felt more like a man. He had money as well as others. He was determined not to do without it in future.

In accordance with that determination, he watched for an opportunity to abstract another bill from his father's pocket-book. There happened to be but few notes in it at the time when he committed the second theft. There was but a single one dollar note in it. It was sure to be missed, and he knew it; but he had escaped on a former occasion, and he should *somehow* escape again.

The note was missed by Mr. Beardslee the first time he opened his pocket-book. He charged Hiram with having taken it; but he stoutly denied it. Here the matter rested, though Mr. B. was very careful of his pocket-book in future. It was nearly a year before Hiram could supply himself with funds in that way again. In the mean time he had borrowed money, and was greatly troubled with duns whenever he met with his companions: I mean the companions with whom he held night revels. With his former schoolmates, who

were, for the most part, leading orderly, if not religious, lives, he had little to do.

At length his father's pocket-book again fell in his way. It was lying open on the table. His father had stepped into another room. Hiram seized two bills and thrust them into his bosom, and then went out as quickly as he came in.

Mr. B. heard some one enter the room while he was out, and, glancing at the money on his return, saw that two bills were gone. He stepped to the door, and saw Hiram standing under a tree in the door-yard.

"Hiram, come here."

Hiram came toward him with a very red face.

"What, sir?" said he, with unusual politeness.

"I want that money," said his father, holding out his hand.

"What money?" said Hiram, with as much boldness as he could assume.

"You know."

"I don't know what you mean."

At that moment a gentleman called to

see Mr. Beardslee, and he left Hiram, forbidding him to go away anywhere. Hiram stood for a moment considering what it was best to do. He felt bad, as you may well suppose. He made up his mind that he would never confess it. He followed his father into the house, and took up a book, and was busily engaged in reading, when Mr. B., having dismissed his visitor, turned to his son again, and asked him for the money.

"I haven't any money."

"Yes, you have."

"I have not. Look in my pocket." And he turned some of them inside out.

"You have it in your bosom, or your boots, or somewhere about you."

This, Hiram thought, was coming pretty close. He was afraid his father would put his hand in his bosom, and find the money. Mr. B. then stepped into the next room to ask Mrs. B. a question. While he was gone, Hiram pulled out the bills, chewed, and attempted to swallow them, but did not succeed. He then rolled them hastily up, and cast them in the fire-place.

He felt relieved when his father returned to the room. The bills could not now be found on his person.

Again his father demanded the money; but he denied having taken it as stoutly as ever. Mr. Beardslee then withdrew, and let Mrs. Beardslee try her power over her son. She wept, and entreated him to give up the money; but he felt sure that now it could never be proved upon him, so he determined to persevere in his denial. I should have said that there were a few coals in the fire-place, and that he had seen the roll consumed.

When his mother had tried her powers to no purpose, Mr. Beardslee came in.

“Don't you intend to give up that money?”

“I haven't any money,” said Hiram; and with the more courage, because, as he thought to himself, he had truth on his side. His father then assumed a tone of stern authority: “Go out of the door, and don't your ever set foot within it again, until you are ready to give up that money.”

Hiram took his hat, and went out into



the orchard, and sat down under a tree. He thought over the state of his affairs. He did not believe his father was in earnest. He was sure that he would let him come in at night as usual. While he was thinking of this matter, he felt something tickle his flesh under his arm. He put his hand into his bosom, next the skin, and pulled out the thing that thus attracted his attention. It was one of the bank notes. It seems that he had destroyed but one of them. He immediately chewed it into pulp, and spit it out upon the ground. Now he was sure that no proofs of his guilt existed.

He looked up, and saw his father going toward the house from the neighboring grove with three or four heavy birch whips. He knew for what they were designed. He rose, and ran with all his might, until he reached the woods, where he concealed himself, and thought of his prospects, and endeavored to come to some decision as to the course he should pursue.

CHAPTER VIII.

FURTHER CONSEQUENCES.

THE nature of Hiram's thoughts and resolutions may be inferred from his actions. He remained in his hiding-place until it began to grow dark, when he came out, and went slowly toward the house. After it became quite dark, he drew near. At length he ventured to peep in at the window. His mother was sitting with a handkerchief to her face, and his father was writing in his account book. After awhile the light was put out, and Hiram concluded they had gone to bed. He then cautiously stole up the ladder, found the window, at which he was accustomed to pass out and in, open, and a light burning in the fire-place of his chimney. By its light he saw some food on the table. The window had been opened, and the light and food placed in the room by his mother. He was hungry, so he sat down and ate heartily of the food. He then took a handkerchief, tied up his best clothes in a

bundle, and, noiselessly descending from the window, set off for the river. The distance was about ten miles. He reached K— before daylight. He saw a dim light in a bar-room. He entered it, and sat down without disturbing the boy, who slept in a box in the corner. He sat there until it grew light. He then took a glass of rum to raise his spirits, which began to flag. He had just money enough to pay for the rum. He then went down to the wharf where several sloops were lying. He found one just ready to sail for New-York. The captain consented to take him, on condition that he should pay his passage by assisting in unloading and relading the sloop in New-York. On the third day he reached the city, and was employed several days in fulfilling his agreement with the captain. The captain gave him a dollar when he got through with him; but told him he had better go home to his father; for he would find a hard time of it, if he attempted to get his own living in the city.

We will now return, for a moment, to

the home which he had abandoned. When his father told Hiram never to come into the house until he returned the money he had taken, he had no idea but that he would sleep that night in his bed as usual. He thought it certain, that so decisive a step would oblige him to yield. When night came, and Hiram did not make his appearance, Mr. B. began to feel a little uneasy; but was careful not to manifest his uneasiness in the slightest manner. He took his account book, not because he had anything to enter in it, but that he might have something to do as the moments passed. Mrs. Beardslee sat, as we have said, with her face covered by her handkerchief, listening most anxiously for the sound of her son's footsteps. When Mr. Beardslee could no longer occupy himself with his accounts, he professed to be sleepy, and retired to his bed. He told his wife to leave the door unlocked when she came to bed, as Hiram would, doubtless, be in before morning. He lay wakeful nearly the whole night. In the morning he knew that his son was not under

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his roof—though he went through the ceremony of asking his wife if he were not in his room.

“No,” said she, “he is not ; and I expected the day would come when you would drive him away. It will not do to be too strict with boys.”

Mr. Beardslee made no reply to his wife’s remark. Whether he admitted the justness of it, or whether he thought that Hiram’s misconduct was owing to her indulgence, is not known. He began to feel alarmed for the safety of his son. News came that he had been seen at K——.

“Why don’t you go after him, and bring him home ?” said Mrs. B.

“It is best to let boys have their own way for a time ; when he is tired, he will come home ; and will come a good deal sobered down, I reckon.”

“I am afraid he will never come at all,” said the anxious mother.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE STATE'S PRISON—DEATH.

MRS. BEARDSLEE'S fears were realized. Hiram never did come home. She never saw him again. He fell into the hands of those who made use of him to promote their plans of iniquitous gain. He was detected in the perpetration of a crime, the penalty of which was confinement in the state's prison. He was sentenced, I believe, for five years.

The poor mother never recovered from the shock which the news of that event occasioned. She seemed to be bowed down with sorrow for the remainder of her days, which were not many. She fell into a decline; and, before the period for which her only son was imprisoned had expired, she had ceased to be an inhabitant of earth. Whether the heavy affliction led her to consider her ways, and to repent of her sin before God, I know not. Whether her last days were spent in bewailing the misfortune of her son, or in praying for

the pardon of his sins, I do not know. But this I know, that while it is true (in one sense) that he was his own destroyer, yet it was also true that his loving mother was the author of his ruin! What a thought! An affectionate mother the author of the ruin of her child!

How thankful ought those children to be who have parents who train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—who will not give them a temporary enjoyment at the expense of lasting pain—who use all their influence and authority to hold them back from sin—and who entreat God to add the restraining influences of his grace!

How seldom do the children of such parents become the inmates of prisons! How often do we see them walking with their parents along the path to glory!

At the end of five years, Hiram was discharged from prison. He did not return to his native place. His mother was in the grave. For his father, probably, he felt no affection. He remained in the city, (the state prison was then in the city,) but

had no settled employment. He was heard from a few times by the people of his native place; but he soon disappeared from the sight, at least, of all who felt an interest in him. Whether he sunk into the grave, or removed to another part of the country, was never known. Certain it is, that for nearly twoscore years he has not been heard from by any one of the companions of his youth.

What became of the father? I have told you that he always took some brandy when he came in at the close of the day. He gradually increased the quantity, and his visits to the cupboard were paid twice instead of once a day. It began to be whispered that Mr. Beardslee took more than was good for him. By and by he was seen sitting long in the bar-room, and walking homeward with unsteady steps. His business was neglected; his debts accumulated: he became a confirmed drunkard; and not many years afterward, was laid in the drunkard's grave!

It is not for us to limit the mercy of God. It is possible that the father, and



mother, and son, repented of their sins, and were forgiven, just before they entered eternity: but there is not the slightest evidence to show that such was the fact. So far as our knowledge goes, we have no ground to hope that they escaped the perdition of the disobedient and ungodly.

We are sometimes permitted to hope that all the members of a departed family are in heaven. An undivided family in heaven, how glorious! An undivided family in hell, how dreadful!

THE END.

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