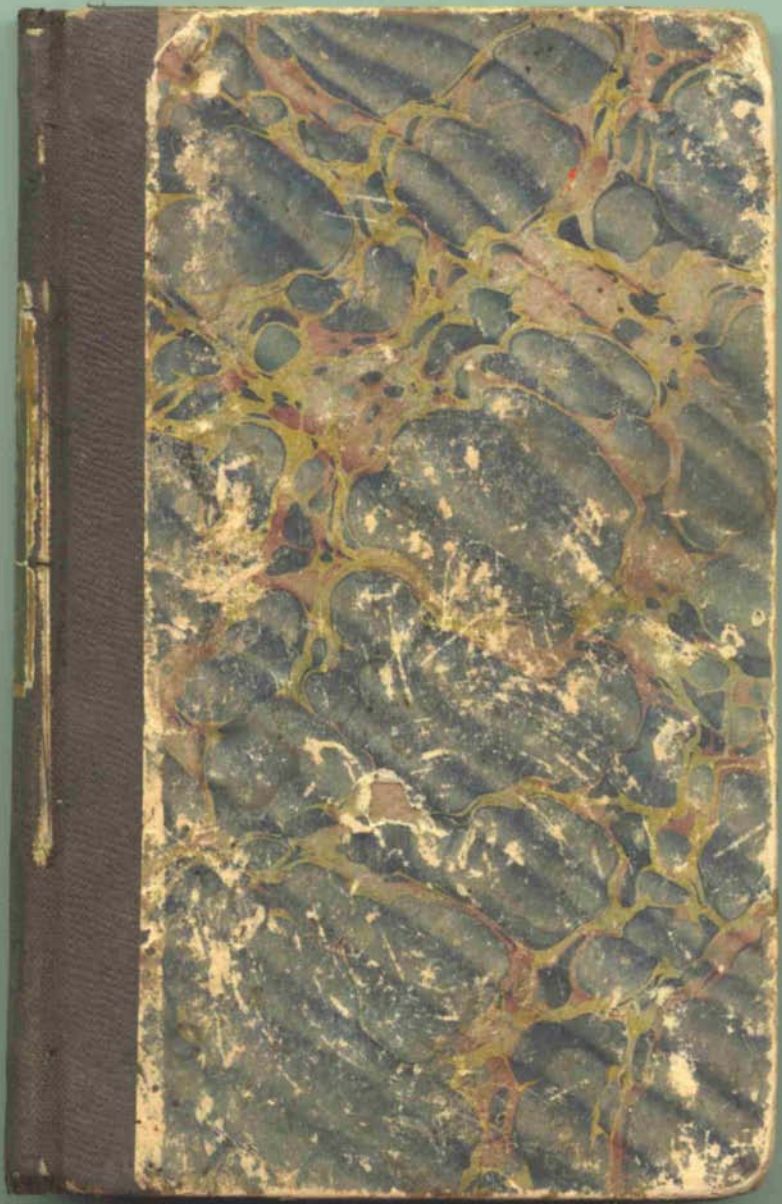

1853

He sat down on a large stone on the roadside and burst into tears.

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Bosses and their Boys;

OR,

THE DUTIES

OF

MASTERS AND APPRENTICES

ILLUSTRATED AND ENFORCED.

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION:
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BOSSES AND THEIR BOYS.

CHAPTER I.

Leaving home—Proposes to run away—Thinks better of it—Gets a blessing and goes—First night abroad—Afoot and barefoot.

James Stevens's feet were bare and sore. He had travelled more than twenty miles, and was now just in sight of the city. He sat down on a large stone on the roadside and burst into tears.

In a country town, away from any city or village of much importance, the parents of James Stevens lived. With little of this world's goods, and having hard work to train up a large family of children, they were content to toil on, comforted by the thought that God was their portion and would be more than all earthly parents to their children. In the summer-time they got along very well. But in the winter, when the boys could find no work, they had a hard lot.

But their faith never failed. They were rich in this, though poor in every thing else.

"I tell you what it is, wife," the good father used to say. "It's not much we shall ever be able to be giving the young ones, in the way of learning, and we'll try to give them good principles."

"That's what we will." said she. "And they will be better off if they are honest and poor, than if they are rogues and rich."

"Than what?" asked the father.

"Than rogues and rich," the wife repeated. "If they are rich and not honest, it will be worse for them in this world and that which is to come, than if they starve to death."

"Yes, yes, so it will. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' We are poor, but we never touched any man's gold without giving him his gold's worth, and it's not everybody that can say the like of that."

And so these good people, in their poverty and piety, helped one another to train their children in the ways of the Lord. The father worked at a trade which, in a village, might have been profitable; but in the thinly settled country where he lived, he had not a great deal of business. His oldest son he had brought up to work with him, and Mary (the

next in years) was her mother's help in taking care of the younger children and keeping house. James, the third, was now fourteen years old.

Smart and thoughtful, he had for some months been thinking that he might and ought to do something for the rest—at least by taking care of himself. There were four children younger than he, and his parents had quite as much as they could do to find food and raiment for them. There would be one mouth less to feed, and one back less to clothe, if he was away. And the more he thought of this, the more anxious he felt to go and look up something in the way of work, by which he might provide for his own wants.

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up," was a promise in the Bible which he had often heard his father read; but he had a feeling that he was going away from his parents instead of their going away from him. It looked like it; and he thought too, that perhaps his parents would never consent to his going. Then he thought of running away. What for? Why, going away for fear they would not let him if they knew what he was about. And would this be right?

He looked at the matter on all sides. "If I

were running away because I was discontented with my home, and my parents were cruel, and I could do better, then I should feel that I was doing very wrong; but I am only going away because I love my parents and brothers and sisters, and wish to be doing for them as well as for myself. That makes all the difference in the world—at least it seems so to me.

"If my father was a boy like me, he would do just so. At any rate he ought to let me go, if I am willing to go, for I shall have the worst of it, I'm sure.

"But then,—let me see.—Is it just the right thing for me to go off and not let my parents know where I am going? They will think I am drowned, or that some dreadful accident has happened to me, and they will be looking after me day and night. This would be worse than hunger or cold. It is hard to be poor, but it would be harder to lose a child and not know what had become of him.

"Oh, I know what I'll do. I will tell Mary what I am thinking of, and make her promise not to tell father and mother till I am off, and then they will know I am not drowned, and it will be too late for them to stop me, for I will have some hours the start."

This was all wrong in James, except the last

plan—that of telling Mary. He had no right to take such a step as he was now thinking of without first asking his parents, and getting their consent and blessing.

"I say,—Mary,—look here,"—he said, as Mary came out into the yard where he was sitting on a log of wood, and talking the matter over with himself.

Mary came up to him and drew her apron around her neck—for it was in the early spring, and she was chilly, coming into the open air. James was a favourite brother of her's. Next younger than herself, he had been the playmate of her childhood, and she loved him dearly.

"Well, Jimmy, what now! You look grave enough for a minister."

"Now don't laugh at me, Mary; and promise me you will never tell anybody, if I'll tell you something."

"I won't laugh at you, Jimmy, but I am afraid to promise not to tell. You know I might *have* to tell, and then what should I do? Break my promise or tell another story?"

"But you may tell this in one week after you hear it. I only want you to keep it secret a week, and then you may tell all the world of it for what I care."

Mary was silent a minute, and then said, "Well, I promise for a week. I guess it's not much, after all, or you wouldn't make me promise, and then let me off so soon." A promise for a week is no worse or better than a promise for an hour.

"No, it's not much to you, or anybody but to me," said James, and the tears came into his eyes as he spoke. "But the fact is, I am going away, and I must tell somebody of it before I start."

"Going away! Why, where on earth are you going? I would just like to know. And how are you going to get there?"

"Keep quiet, Mary, and hear me, and then you will know all about it. You know what we were talking about the other day, coming across the fields?"

"Yes,—the children, and how hard father and mother have to work to get something for us to eat, and clothes for us to wear. Yes, I do remember; and I have been thinking ever since of trying to do more to help them. What can we do?"

"You can't do any more than you are doing now, sister; and you are a great help to mother, and the greatest comfort in the world to father. But I am only in the way. And I

have made up my mind to look out for myself. I am going to ——, to see what I can do for a living."

"No, you are not going to do any such thing Who put it into your head to think of it?"

"Why, I don't know that any one ever said much to me about it, but last winter I talked a good deal about it to Mr. Johnson, when he came home from there, and said that in the great shops for making carriages and harness and hats, and almost every thing else, there were chances enough for a boy to get work; and I have a mind to try my luck, and see if I cannot do something as well as others. There is nothing to be done without trying, and I cannot be doing less than I am now—just nothing at all."

Mary was still for another minute. It was a new thought to her.

"James," she said, "have you spoken to father about it yet?"

"Not a word, for the world. He wouldn't let me go; and I mean to go, whether he will or not: so the best way is to say nothing to him till I am off, and that's what I want you to do for me. You promised not to say any thing for a week: now in less than that time I shall be clear of this place, and then I am

willing father and mother should know where I have gone to. But not a word till then; you know you promised."

"Yes, I did promise, and I will keep it, if you say so. But I guess you will change your mind about this before you start. If it is best that you should go—and I think very likely it is—it looks so to me—if you can find a good place where they will be kind and good to you—then father will consent, for he always does what is for the best. If he thinks it is not a good plan, why you had better give it up, as I know you will, if father and mother do not approve. I am sure they are the best judges. Besides, you know the fifth commandment, '*Honour thy father and thy mother;*' and I know you do not *honour* them when you run away from them for fear they will not approve of what you are trying to do. Jimmy, dear, it will all go wrong with you, if you do not have God's blessing; and how can you have that, if you break his commandments at the very start?"

It was the boy's turn now to take a minute or two to think. He stirred up the chips with his foot, and whistled a little, as if he did not mind what his sister had been saying. But he was touched. Mary knew where to take him,

and the love which James bore to his parents and his fear of offending God were both roused by the gentle words of his sister. Still he was not prepared to give up just yet.

"I tell you what it is, Mary, I do love my parents as much as you do, and if I did not love them, and you, and Dick, and Fred, and all the rest, I wouldn't think of clearing out. I would a great deal rather stay than go; but that a'n't the thing. I'm going to help the rest, and go I will."

"So you shall go, James," said Mary, now taking a seat by his side, and putting her arm around him. "I never loved you more in my life than I do now, but I would part with you for the sake of the rest; and I know that mother and father both will think as I do, after a while. But it will never do to run away. That's *mean* and *wicked* both. Never do any thing that you are afraid of letting your father and mother know. Let's talk the matter all over to-night, and see what they think about it. We are their children. They have taken care of us when we were little babies, and a hundred times we have grieved them when we were too small to know that we were giving them pain. Don't let us give them any more distress than we can help, now

that we have become older, and ought to know better."

Mary had never made so much of a speech in her life before; but now that it was made, she felt that she had done her duty, and she could have wept and kissed her brother too. He was convinced. There was no doubt now in his mind that it would be wrong for him to go off without asking his parents' advice, and he was now thinking of the best way to get at it. He asked Mary's advice on this point.

"The best way," Mary said, "to get at any thing, is the straight, out-and-out, honest way. Say what you want to say, and in a proper manner, and let the thing take its own course—that's what I think. But if you are afraid to speak it all out at once, let's begin to talk about it, when we are all sitting around the table this evening, and we shall soon find out what father and mother think of it. Leave it to me, and I'll bring it in. Will you?"

"Yes, Mary, I would leave every thing to you. I have thought of this a great deal all winter, and you don't know how I feel about leaving you. You always feel just as I do, and talk to me and love me so; and when I am away there in that great city, among strangers, and no sister to sit down with, when night

comes—and"—— But James could go no further. He leaned his head on Mary and sobbed. A brother's heart was yearning for his sister, and he was tasting in advance the pangs of absence from those he loved.

That evening the matter was all talked over in the family. Mary brought the subject up, as she had more tact than James, and it was discussed in all its bearings. Mr. Stevens was a man of good, sound sense, and had taught his children that they were to do for themselves. He loved them, and wanted to have them near him, but this desire did not interfere with his judgment, when he saw what was best for them on the whole. Indeed, he had often thought it would be necessary for some of the boys to go into the world at an early age, and he was rather pleased than otherwise that one of them had proposed it, before he had ever said any thing to them on the subject. Mrs. Stevens sat and thought, and now and then the tears would drop on the work she had in hand, and at length she had to put it aside. She couldn't see to sew.

The good old Bible, well worn, and long the family Bible, was taken up rather earlier than usual; and when a portion of it had been read with slow and faltering lips, the father of

that household commended them, and especially the boy who was soon to leave them, to the care of Him who had always been their covenant-keeping God.

It was a sober hour. And when they separated for the night, the children to their little bed-rooms, leaving the parents the room where they had been sitting, which was also their bed-chamber, there were more wet eyes than had been known in that house in many a year. But the matter was settled. James was to go from home as soon as they could put his clothes in order and make such little arrangements as they were able for his comfort and aid after he should reach the city.

The mother had the most to do. She and Mary managed to fit him out with one good suit of clothes besides his "every-day" suit, which he would need for his work, and two or three new shirts. Mr. Stevens had cast about to find some way to give his boy a start after he got there, and he finally hit upon the very best thing he could have done. He went to the minister of the church of which he was a member, and asked for a certificate of good character for his boy. This the minister could well give, for he had always noticed the Stevenson family, and knew the children to have

been brought up in the way they should go. He gave James a letter stating that he was a lad of industrious habits, good principles, who had been well taught by honest, pious parents, and being anxious to help them, (as they had a large family,) he was now going to the city in search of a situation. The letter then commended the lad to the notice and care of any good people to whom he might apply.

With this letter and a single dollar in his pocket, saved with great care by his mother and now given to him with many charges and tears, James took his bundle in his hand, one fine morning in May, and set off. Mary had put her Bible into the bundle, and her heart was in it too.

"Good-by, James. Be a good boy. God bless you and keep you!" were a few of the words of comfort and love which were sent after the lad as he marched steadily away from the door. He cast some "longing, lingering looks behind," but not a tear did he shed. Not that he was wanting in love for those he was leaving. None who knew James Stevens would doubt his strong attachment to parents, brothers and sisters; and never had Mary been so dear to him as since he had resolved to go from home. All these ties were now sundered;

but he felt it was time for him to be a man, and it would not be manly to be shedding tears, as he was only "going away."

They were all sober at home that day. Mary went to her room and had a good crying spell. She prayed too for her absent brother, and commended him lovingly to her Father and his. Mrs. Stevens said little, for her heart was too full for words. Probably James felt as little of sadness as any of the family. He knew that he was doing what was right; he thought it was brave and noble to go out into the world to do for himself and those he loved, and so he nerved himself up to the work that was before him, as a good, strong heart will. That was the day when James Stevens began the world.

It was in a "hill country" where this family lived. And as our little hero, with his bundle of clothes in his hand, trudged along, up one hill and down another, he had nothing to do but to think of those he had left and the prospect before him. To save his shoes, he took them off and put them in his bundle. He had never worn them except in cold weather, and he could walk more easily without than with them. On he went, slowly but steadily, "the

world all before him,—all he loved in the world behind him."

Noon came. He knew it by the sun; and besides, he was tired and hungry. The little store of bread and cheese that his mother had put up for him was brought out, and he sat down by the roadside and ate it. That was the first meal he had ever taken away from home. It didn't taste very well, it must be confessed. Somehow he was hungry, but could not eat. Without having made much progress in his dinner, he put up the pieces, shouldered his bundle, and walked on. A farm-house, a little way from the road, now came in sight, and he turned in and, finding the kitchen-door open, he stepped up to it and saw the woman of the house just taking the potatoes from the pot for dinner.

"Well," said she, as James stood on the broad, flat stone at the door;—"well, what would you like to have?"

This was rather a sudden question to the young traveller, but he made out to find his tongue in time to say he would like to sit down a few minutes and rest himself, for he was tired of walking.

The woman's heart melted in a moment. "Come in, my little man, and sit down; we

shall have some dinner in a minute, and you shall eat something too."

James thanked her, but said that he had his dinner with him, and would eat it here, if she would let him; for he began to think he could make a very comfortable meal in the house. Taking down a tin horn that hung up by the side of the chimney, the woman stepped to the door and blew a blast that might be heard by an army.

The farmer and his two boys were at work by the barn, not very far from the house, but this was the shortest way of telling them that dinner was ready; and before they had reached the kitchen, she had the meat and potatoes on the table. James was speedily made at home, and a good, warm dinner tasted so much better to him than bread and cheese under the fence, that he ate heartily, and told his whole story over before the farmer's family rose from the table.

James got a good lift from this call. The farmer and his wife spoke encouragingly to him, and told him to go on with his good purpose, to remember what his parents had taught him, and to fear God and keep his commandments. It was well for him to find that there were others besides his parents and the minis-

ter who thought the best way to get along in this world is to do right and fear to do wrong. James was now more than ever strong in his resolution to live and die by the good principles he brought with him from his home in the country.

But he was to be two days in walking to the city, and he had not yet made more than ten miles of the fifty. He was quite sure he could walk twenty-five miles in a day; but it was new business,—this steady tramping,—and he was more tired by twelve o'clock than he expected to be at night.

His visit to the farmer's, however, had helped him wonderfully. A good dinner did more than he thought it would to get him on the way, and the kind words were balm to his heart and to his feet. They made him bright and sunny as he started on again, after thanking his kind friends for his dinner and their gentle words. There are more good people in this world than some of us are disposed to think. And so easy is it to do good and to make others happy, that the wonder is there are not more pleasant words said among men. They may be dropped anywhere, and if they fall on tender hearts they turn to pearls.

Push on, James: you have six hours more

to walk before it will be quite dark, but in the last hours you will be very tired, and make little headway with your aching feet. On he went, until he reached a country tavern, not inviting, but still the only one near, and he had been told that this was to be the stopping-place for the night on his way.

Did he *sleep* here? In a little room over a shed that joined the end of the tavern, with the horses standing below him, and stamping their feet so as to be heard distinctly, did he get any sleep? To be sure he did. He was not afraid of the horses, nor of being alone in the dark, for his parents had taught him better than to be afraid when there was nothing to be afraid of. But James was more troubled with thoughts of home. This was his first night abroad. No mother came in and tucked up the bed-clothes, after he lay down on the little cot which had been placed there. No sister bade him "good-night" from an adjoining room, when it was time to go to sleep. And if Jimmy shed a few tears that night, it would not be very strange; but it was dark, and none but God saw them. They were tears of a true love, and none need to be ashamed of such tears.

He did not forget to pray before he turned

into his little bed. James always prayed at night as well as when he arose in the morning; and now that he was alone and from home, he felt more than ever in his life before the need of God's kind care. So he asked his Father in heaven to watch over him and keep him while he slept, and to keep those safely whom he had left at home. And here his voice gave out, and he prayed more, but he spoke very softly, and none but God heard him.

Then he crept into bed, and was soon fast asleep. The good angels whom the Father sends were around him, and James slept sweetly till the early dawn.

He was not long in dressing himself, and finding the tavern-keeper's wife already astir, he told her if she would tell him what he was to pay her for his lodging he would be going.

"Oh, but you'll stay and have some breakfast," she said.

"I should like to, very well," he answered, "but I have only a little money, and I have something to eat in my bundle."

"But never mind the pay, my lad. Come, sit down, and I ll get you something to eat before you start again. What do you say to some bread and milk?"

James said that nothing would suit him

better, and he was soon feasting on a bountiful bowl of it.

"And so you are going to learn a trade down in N——, are you?" asked the woman.

"That's it, and I mean to work hard, too."

"Well, I wish you well, but I'm thinking you have got a hard row to hoe, and you'll be sick and tired of it before a year is out."

"Why so?" asked James,—letting his spoon fall, and looking very gravely at the lady who was thus prophesying evil.

"Well, I used to live there myself, and I know it's a hard place for boys. You will have to look out for yourself, and nobody cares for you, only to see how much work they can get out of you while you are in the shop. The rest of the time you may go to the dogs, for what they care."

All this was rather new to James, but he thought he could take care of himself, if he only had work to do: his great fear was that he could not find any place to work in. If he could do that, he was determined to be industrious and faithful, let others do as they would. The good woman was pleased with his spirit, and refusing to take any of his money for his lodging or breakfast, sent him on his way with a lighter heart than he had when

he kissed Mary 'good-by' yesterday morning.

And so he trudged on all day, and the sun was sinking in the western sky when he reached the point where we found him at the opening of this chapter—sitting down on a stone and shedding some tears. The city was full in sight, and chiding himself for loitering by the way, when he was so near his journey's end, he brushed away his tears, and descended the hill.

CHAPTER II.

Enters the city—Finds first a friend, and then a place—A new world for James.

DURING this long day's walk, our young friend had ample time to make up his mind as to what he should do when he reached the city. But he had hit upon nothing that promised him a better beginning than the plan which the good pastor in the country had recommended; and that was to take his letter to the *minister*, and ask his advice as to what he should do.

The letter was directed to the Rev. A. G. Jones, No. 136 White Street, and it was an easy matter to find it, as the first one of whom he inquired pointed the way to the street, and he soon made his appearance there.

But it was a new world altogether to the boy. He had never been in the city before, and indeed had no idea what a city was. Though it was more quiet than usual when he entered, the noise of the carts and carriages, the hurrying hither and thither of men and women, the houses and shops and stores were

so close together, that it was hard for him to believe that so many people could live so, and find any thing to do. But he had one purpose in view, and although he was disturbed by the whirl of the world about him, he walked on through it, as if he was not of it, and knocked at the door of Mr. Jones.

"Why didn't you pull the bell?" said a coarse Irish girl, who came to the door after he had knocked once or twice.

"Bell!" said James, "I didn't know as there was any bell."

The girl laughed at the simplicity of one who had never before been at a house where he was to ring a bell in order to be let in, and of course he knocked on the door with his knuckles, as they do in the country. But now that the door was opened, he made known his errand, and asked if Mr. Jones was at home. He was, and was just going down to his tea. James took the letter out of his pocket, and asked the girl if she would please to give him that. She took it, and leaving him in the dark hall, carried it up-stairs to Mr. Jones in his study. Those were anxious moments to James, as he stood alone in the hall. If Mr. Jones was unable or unwilling to help him in his efforts to get into some of the shops to work, he did

not see what in the world he should do. And what reason had he to believe that Mr. Jones would take any interest in him,—a poor boy from the country? Mr. Jones had enough to do, without attending to every case of this kind that came along, and if he did it for one, he might have to do it for others. It was very doubtful, indeed, if he did not have to turn about and go home again. Well, there were worse places than home, but he was not to give it up yet.

While he was thus thinking the matter all over, and preparing himself to be disappointed, a soft step was heard in the hall overhead, and presently Mr. Jones came down, in his morning-gown and slippers, with a lamp in his hand.

His pleasant face and friendly voice as he said "Well, young man, how do you do?" were balm and hope to James's sinking heart. He could have fallen right down at the minister's feet and wept, so tenderly did the words and looks of kindness fall on his ear in this strange place.

"I am very well, sir!" said James.

"And how did you come down from Shellton?"

"I walked down, sir."

"Walked!" exclaimed Mr. Jones. "You must have had a long tramp of it. Are you not very tired? Come along with me. I am just going down to tea, and you must have something to eat."

James could find no words for the occasion, so he silently followed Mr. Jones down another pair of stairs into the front basement-room, and was there introduced to a pleasant-looking woman already seated at the head of the tea-table, about which were two or three children, the oldest being not more than eight years of age.

"My dear," said Mr. Jones, "this lad has walked all the way from Shellton, more than forty miles; and he brings an excellent letter to me from our friend Roberts, the minister, who says that he wants me to help him into some place where he can learn a trade."

"Sit down here and have something to eat," said Mrs. Jones, with the pleasantest of smiles on her face. James hesitated to accept so kind an invitation. He seemed to think it was hardly proper for him to sit down at the same table with these strangers, and who were living in a way to which he was quite unaccustomed in the country. But his hesitation was soon overcome. Mrs. Jones

would not allow him to wait, but gave him a chair by the side of one of her own children; and after Mr. Jones had asked a blessing, they learned from him more and more of the facts which have been related in the previous pages. The more they heard, the more they were interested in the youth who was now thrown upon their kindness, and they were determined to do what they could for him.

Mr. Jones was a faithful minister; a man who felt the power of the gospel which he preached, and loved to do good as he had opportunity. He was not a hasty and reckless man in his goodness, running into every new scheme that was presented for helping the poor and doing good; but steadily living according to the example of his Lord and Master, he was always active and earnest in the cause of true Christian benevolence; healing the sorrows of those who were suffering, and seeking to put the poor in a way of doing something for themselves, which he thought was altogether the best way of helping them.

There were many ministers in that place who made more noise in their way than Mr. Jones did. He was not the greatest man in making speeches at charity meetings, telling what he had done, and what he was willing to do. So

that oftentimes he was absent from the meetings wnere his brethren were drinking in the applause of the crowd for their eloquence in behalf of the wretched all around us and afar off. But if there was a poor widow who had struggled through the month, and withal could not save enough to pay her rent, she was sure to call on Mr. Jones, and tell him the story of her wants; and she never told it in vain. He contrived a plan in the course of the day to get her out of trouble, and start fair the next month. If a child of one of the poor of his flock was not clad so as to be able to go decently to school, Mr. Jones reported the case to his wife, and the matter was speedily seen to. The public were none the wiser, but many hearts were gladder for these silent acts of charity on the part of this good pastor, who never let his left hand know what his right hand was doing. But God knew, and the poor knew, and the blessings of the widow and the fatherless came down on his head.

They talked the matter over with James; and after tea, in the study, Mrs. Jones heard all he could tell about Mary and his mother and the rest of the family he had left at home. Mr. Jones had an engagement in the evening at the weekly prayer-meeting, and he had

some thoughts that he might there meet one of the master mechanics, and learn something for the advantage of the lad who was now in his hands. In this he was disappointed. He met none of his people to whom he could apply with any hope of success. It struck him more forcibly that night than usual, that the most of the persons who attended the prayer-meeting had been hard at work in their various employments during the day, while those who were more at leisure were still too busy to come.

Mrs. Jones had a comfortable bed made up for James, and he slept at the minister's house. This was a good beginning, such as he had not looked for.

"I declare,"—said James to himself, not aloud, but quite down in his heart,—"I should like to live here myself: this is the best place I ever saw in my life; and if Mary was here to wait on Mrs. Jones and take care of the baby, I should love to stay and make a home of it."

The next morning, when breakfast was over, the good Mr. Jones wrote a few lines, saying that this boy had been commended to him by a brother clergyman in the country, as honest, industrious, and trusty, and he hoped that he

would be able to find him a place. With this paper, signed by Mr. Jones, James went out into the street to seek a situation. He would have been better pleased if Mr. Jones had put on his hat and boots and gone with him. This the minister would have done very willingly, had he thought it the best thing for him. But it was his opinion that it would be better decidedly for James to try his own hand at the work, and, with only such encouragement as a certificate of good character would afford, to go out and make his first appearance in the world.

"Come back about noon, and let us know how you get on," said Mr. Jones to him, as he was leaving his door-step; and with this invitation James went out to seek his *fortune*. With a boy so well taught as he had been, fortune was *Providence*. He knew that God watches over all, both great and little, rich and poor. And when he was seeking something to do, he prayed God to help him and guide him, or he should never succeed.

Leaving the side-street in which Mr. Jones lived, the lad entered the street on which most of the manufacturing establishments were situated. He did not know where to go, or what to ask for. He had thought of various trades

that he would like very well, but he was willing to take hold of almost any thing; and now that he was fairly started in search, he felt as if he should take the first he could find. He soon came to a long and very lofty range of buildings, which were evidently filled with workmen. The steam was oozing out of a wooden pipe that went up the side of it, and from the under-ground apartment clouds of vapour were coming out. He discovered that it was a hat factory. After stopping a moment or two to look at the new and strange sights which met his wide-open eyes, he came up to the door, over which was printed, in very distinct letters—

"NO ADMITANCE EXCEPT ON BUSINESS."

"They don't spell very well," said James, "though perhaps they make good hats. They put only one *t* in *admittance*, and I remember even when I got up head in school for spelling that very word."

But that was no time for a country-boy to be finding fault with sign-spelling. He had something else to think about just then. He knew what "no admittance" meant, but he had business, and so he pushed at the door. It opened slowly, and took a hard push before

it yielded, but he crowded in and asked the first man he met—

"Where's the boss?"

"Go round to the office, if you want the boss. You won't be after finding him here."

"Where is the office?" asked James.

"And don't you know where the office is? It's just round the corner, at the other end of the shop."

The minute that James had been in had given him no very strong liking to the business he had seen going on, but he knew it was not right to make up his mind from first appearances, and he left the shop to try at the office for work.

He was not long in finding the right door, over which "OFFICE" was printed, and spelled correctly. James trembled much as he walked in, took off his hat, and stood by the door.

"What do you want?" was the rather rough greeting he got, and it was not likely to encourage him much as he stood shaking in his shoes.

"I called to ask if you would like a boy to learn the business."

"No, we don't. We've got more now than we want, by a dozen."

And the man who spoke turned to the desk

by which he was sitting, and went on with his writing. A large number of letters were lying around him; he was thinking of the profits of his business, and the prospects of wealth were bright enough. Why should he trouble himself for a moment about a poor country-boy?

James was in trouble. He hardly knew whether to go, or stay and press his application. While he was thus doubting, the master hat-manufacturer looked up again, and told him not to stand there, but to be stirring—he was only losing time, and was in other people's way.

The boy left the office, and was once more in the street, the world all before him, but where to look he knew not.

And now the thought came, "This is what I might have known; and who will do any better by me than this hard man? They are all full of boys, and if they had but little work and few boys, they wouldn't hire any more." He was on the point of giving up and going home. The road was straight, and he knew it better than when he travelled it the first time. He wanted to see Mary, and the others at home, much more than he did when he went to bed last night. But it would not have been

like James Stevens to give up and back out of the great work on which he had set his heart. He was sure he was right, and he would push on, till not a hope was left.

He met a boy not much larger than himself, and asked him if he knew any place where he would be likely to find work, and where they would take him as an apprentice.

"No, he didn't know where—it was hard to get in, and harder to stay after he got it."

"Why, what makes it hard to stay?" inquired James, with some anxiety.

"Well, it's dreadful hard work, and worse pay; and you'll be sick and tired of it if you stay here a month, I know," was all the answer he got.

And so they parted, for James was to learn nothing of this boy to help him in finding a place. Yet he was determined to try again and again, and as long as he could stay in the city on the dollar that was still unbroken in his pocket, so long would he do his best to get work.

The next trial resulted even worse than the first. He was repulsed with only a scowl and a shake of the head, that sent him out of the door. But it saved time, and he hastened to another factory, where he entered with the same in-

quiry. His reception was more gracious, and rather encouraging. A fatherly-looking old man, who seemed to have nothing to do in the office but to read the newspaper and look at the rest who were at work, was quite at leisure when James came in, and it fell in with his humour to have a little chat with him.

"So, you want to be an apprentice, do you," said the old man to James, when the boy had mentioned his errand.

"Yes, sir, I do, very much."

"But what do I know about you? I guess, now, you've run away from home, and don't know what to do with yourself, and so you are trying to get work, because you are afraid to go back."

James pulled the letter from Mr. Jones out of his pocket. It was the first time he had had a chance to show it to any one since he got it, for the others had brushed him away so quickly that he could get no time to tell his story, or prove to them that he was worth noticing.

"Ah, a note from the minister—eh? How in the world did you come by this?" asked the man, as he saw the name of A. G. JONES at the bottom of the letter.

"He gave it to me this morning, sir. I stayed there last night."

"You did, indeed? Why, that's strange, very strange! Let us see what Mr. Jones has to say? * * * * * He speaks very well, that's a fact; he knows nothing about you but what the minister up in the woods there says, but I guess it's all right."

"I would like to have you try me, sir, and see if I suit."

"Well, we will see about it. I don't know much about the shop. I will ask the foreman, and see what he thinks. Mr. Jones is a nice man, and you're not a bad-looking boy. Call in again, to-morrow or next day, and I will be able to tell you."

"To-morrow, or next day!" thought James. "What shall I do with myself till then. It will never do to stay with Mr. Jones all that time, and I may not get this place after all."

The master saw that he was hesitating, and asked him what he was thinking about.

"I do not know where to stay; and if I should wait till to-morrow or the next day, and then you shouldn't want me"——

"That's true—true—very true—I never thought of that. Well, come in here this afternoon, toward night, say four or five o'clock,

and if I am not in, ask Jenkins here—Mr. Jenkins, you see this boy. He wants to learn the business, you see. What do you think? Is it best to take him? Think it is, Jenkins?"

"I guess it is."

"Ask Johnson. Just step in and see if Johnson can make a place for another boy, fresh, green, just out of the woods—wild, I reckon, too—but he'll break in after a while." And so rattled on Mr. Ephraim Stone, the great carriage and harness maker, one of the master manufacturers of that city, as if he were driving one of his best coaches with a fast team before it. Before he had finished his sentence, Mr. Jenkins was out of the office and making inquiries of the foreman. He returned in a few moments, and informed Mr. Stone that they were in no want of boys, but if he wished to take another one, they would make room for him.

"Well, come in by-and-by, and we will see what we can do," said Mr. Stone to James; and the boy, making as good a bow as he knew how to make, went out once more into the street. Things looked brighter now—much brighter. The noisy city was almost pleasant to his eye. He saw some prospect of getting a place, and earning something by his own labour; and this

pleased and cheered him so that he was ready to jump for joy. He saw by the clock on one of the church-towers that it was nearly noon, and he took a walk around to see the town. The more he saw of it, the more he was filled with wonder. Such large buildings he had never seen, and the steeples of the churches went up so straight and so high into the air! But the people seemed stranger to him than all besides. *He did not know one of them.* Up in Shellton he never saw anybody that he didn't know, unless it was a pedler or a traveller. But here all the people passed right by him without even looking at him, and he began to feel more lonely than he ever did when he was all alone in the woods, five miles from home. At length hunger reminded him of the lateness of the hour, and he hastened to Mr. Jones's, where he was to get his dinner.

He announced the result of his morning excursion with great satisfaction, as he was strongly inclined to think that Mr. Stone would take him in on trial. Mr. Jones told him not to be too sure, as there was "many a slip between the cup and the lip," and this might be one of them. "But if you do succeed, my boy," said Mr. Jones, "I wish you to feel that you are coming into a place of

temptation and peril, where you will be in danger of bad company, and will be far from the eye of your parents. You must watch and pray. You must remember the Lord's day and public worship and the Sunday-school, and never forget the counsels and prayers of those who love you at home."

James was melting already at the thoughts awakened by these words. He would try to be upright, and remember all these kind words. He was hoping too that Mr. Jones would offer to go with him and see Mr. Stone in the afternoon. But this was more than the lad dared to ask. However, when the time came for him to go and get the answer from the manufacturer, his pleasure was great as he saw the good minister taking his hat and cane to walk with him.

But if James was surprised at having such company on his way to the factory, still greater was Mr. Stone's astonishment when the minister entered his office with the boy who was looking out for a place.

"I have called, Mr. Stone, with this lad, who wishes to get a place; and he tells me that you allowed him to come this afternoon for an answer to his application. He was commended to my care by one in whom I have confidence,

and I hope you will find the lad to be every thing that you desire."

"Let him come and try it," said Mr. Stone, in a hasty and indifferent way; "let him come, and if he behaves well and works hard, we shall get along with him. Much obliged to you, Mr. Jones, for taking so much trouble about the matter."

"No trouble at all, sir. I was interested in the lad by what my friend wrote to me about him, and he stayed at my house last night. I was pleased with him, and hope he will not give me any cause to regret that he is now here with my introduction."

It was then arranged that James should begin his work in the shop the next morning, and receive for his wages two dollars a week for the first year. He must board and clothe himself out of that, and if he proved "smart and handy" at the business, so as to earn any thing the next year, his wages would be increased.

Mr. Stone had discharged his whole duty when he thus "hired his apprentices." In other places, and in some establishments in this place, it was customary for the master to take boys as apprentices until they were twenty-one, giving them board and clothing

until that time, and being in some measure responsible for their moral and intellectual training while these years of youth were passing by. The master stood then in the place of the parent. He had his boys boarded and lodged under his own roof, or in the house of some one who would take good care of them while they were not in the shop. But this was not Mr. Stone's way. He made carriages and harness, and if these were good and sold well, he thought very little for the men and boys who worked on them.

CHAPTER III.

A boarding-house for boys—New acquaintances—Joe Akers and Bill Wilson—John Munson—James refuses to treat—Is laughed at for praying—First day in the shop.

MRS. SLATTERLY kept a boarding-house for boys in Hampton street, not very far from Mr. Stone's shop. It was a small, one-story-and-a-half house, with a basement to it and a garret, so that she managed to have one sitting-room for herself and daughters, which served also for their bed-chamber, and up-stairs under the roof she made up beds for eight lads, whom she called her *boarders*.

Most of these lads worked in Mr. Stone's shop; and as Mrs. Slatterly called once a week to get the pay for the boys' board at the office, where it was given out to her and charged to them and so taken out of their wages, Mr. Stone mentioned her name as the first one that occurred to him, when Mr. Jones asked him where he would advise James to look for a place to board. So they took Mrs. Slatterly's house on the way as they left the

office, and finding that she had a place for just one more, (she always had room for just one more,) they asked her terms, and found they were one dollar and three-quarters a week. This would take all but twenty-five cents of his week's wages, and leave him little indeed to buy his clothes with, and nothing at all to send home to his parents.

"Why then did I come away?" was the first thought of James as he made the reckoning in his head, and saw how he was coming out.

"But then I shall pay for my own food and clothes, and that will be so much saved; and then in a year or two I will do better and send all my earnings to help father and mother." This was his reasoning, and it was quite to the point.

Mrs. Slatterly "would take him in, and he had only to go around and get his bundle and make himself at home. She could make him very comfortable," she said. "Her daughters were smart girls, and did the washing and mending for the boys. They needed a great deal of sewing and stitching, but her girls did it all; and it was not many boys away from home, if she did say it herself that hadn't ought to say it, but she would say it, had such good care taken of them as she and her

girls took of the boys they had in their house."

This was Mrs. Slatterly's recommendation of herself and her girls and her house; and James was young and unsuspicious enough to believe that he had been sent to the right place, and that the very next best woman to his mother and Mrs. Jones, was the good lady who was now saying such fine things about herself and her daughters. He grew wiser as he grew older, and learned that people seldom speak less truth than when they are praising themselves.

This then was fixed upon as the place for James to stay; and going home with Mr. Jones, he got his bundle of clothes, and thanked Mrs. Jones very properly for her kindness to him, and the minister for all he had done. James then returned to Mrs. Slatterly's and entered his new quarters.

On the whole he had made much better progress than he had any right to expect. Hundreds might have failed altogether where he had succeeded. And he was thankful to God for having directed him to the minister's, who had been such a good friend to him when he needed a friend so much. He saw that if Mr. Jones had refused to help him, it would

have been very difficult for him to find a situation, and he could only be grateful to God for directing him to so kind a man in such a time of need.

"We have supper at seven o'clock; if you an't home then, you'll lose it," Mrs. Slatterly cried out to him, as he put his bundle down and left the house to take a walk in the city and see a little more of it, before he entered upon his regular work the next day.

"I'll be back long before that," said James, but there was something in Mrs. Slatterly's tones that made him feel as though it would be pleasanter to hear them seldom.

He spent the afternoon in wandering about among the shops, and seeing as much as he could see without going in, for the "No Admittance" over every door reminded him that he must make all his searches outside. He learned very little, but it was all new to him, and it is always pleasant for young people to see new things. He managed to pass away the afternoon very rapidly, and the shades of evening reminded him of Mrs. Slatterly's parting admonition. So he hastened back and got there half an hour before supper-time. The boys soon came rushing in by the basement-door, crying out that it was past supper-time—they were hungry as bears—and

didn't want to be kept all night waiting for something to eat. Mrs. Slatterly told them to be easy, or they would get no supper, and proceeded very leisurely to take off a large iron pot from the fire-place, for it was kitchen, dining-room, and all in one, and emptying out a great quantity of hasty-pudding into a big dish at the end of the table, she dealt it round in rapid succession, till the greedy mouths were silenced by being filled.

No blessing of heaven was asked as they drew near to the table; no pause to acknowledge God as the Giver of every good gift, especially of "our daily bread," but each rushed and seized and ate as if he feared he would get nothing if he did not get it before the rest, and all scrambled as if they had had no food since the day before.

All this was new to the new-comer. He sat looking on with his large eyes (as many called them) wide open, and wondering whether these dirty fellows were bears or boys. But most of all, he was sick at the thought of living with them. "I am poor, and my people at home are poor," he said to himself, "but we are decent; we wash before we eat, and we ask a blessing before we fall to; and never in my life did I see such a set as this."

Mrs. Slatterly paid no attention to their manners so long as they did not break her dishes, and she always made them pay for what they broke, and this was the only check she had on any of them. They had taken no notice of James when they came in, but as they observed him backward about eating his supper, one of them sang out to him across the table—

"Don't like the mush, do you, my honey? You had better like it; it's the best thing you'll ever get here."

It was Joe Akers that spoke in this rude way to James, and for a moment James thought he would not answer him, but then he changed his mind, and replied in a very quiet tone, that it was very good; he found no fault with it, but he was not hungry.

"You will be hungry enough to-morrow," said Joe, "if you work as hard as we do. Where are you going in?"

"At Mr. Stone's shop," James replied.

"Stone's, eh!" cried out half a dozen voices, "that's where we are, my boy. A new hand at the bellows we shall have to-morrow. You'll stand treat to-night."

James was silent. He did not exactly understand what was meant by "standing treat," and he waited to hear more.

"You don't take, do you?" demanded Joe Akers. "Well, we'll make you take, after supper."

James took courage and said he should like to know what was meant.

"If you want to know," said Bill Wilson, "I can soon let you into it. The fact is just here:—You see, every new hand that comes into the shop has to treat them that he puts up with, and so to-night we'll step over to Peters's and take a drink all round at your expense."

"That's the sort. Now you take, don't you?" they all cried out, and our raw friend from the country was quite frightened by the explanation, and the applause with which it was received. He looked down at his plate, and at first he was going to cry, but that would not do any good, and would only excite the ridicule of the boys. So he put a stop to any thought of crying, while he resolved to be a man and "not be scared before he was hurt."

"I understand what you mean now, and I am not going to treat at Peters's or anywhere else."

"You an't, eh? And why not, sir, we should just like to know?"

"You can know," said James, "whenever you like. I don't drink any thing but milk and water, and I suppose we get that sort of

drink where we board. And as I don't drink any thing else, I shan't go to Peters's to get any thing for myself or for you either."

"Quite a crack speaker, I declare!" said Joe Akers; "too good for us boys; but we must have the treat anyhow."

"What say, boys," cried out Bill Wilson, "who's for Peters's?"

The motion was carried unanimously, and, with many a gibe and jeer at the expense of James Stevens, they marched out of the house, with quite as little ceremony and more noise than when they entered it. James was left behind, to his own reflections and the company of Mrs. Slatterly. She had quite as much sympathy with the rowdyism of the boys who had gone, as with the principles of James who stayed at home. In fact, she greatly preferred that the boys should go to any place they liked in the evening, rather than stay at home. She was bound to give the boys food and lodging; beyond that she wished to have nothing to do with them. If they were required to go back to their shop and work till bed-time, it would have pleased her very well; but if not, she greatly preferred to have them take to the streets, or to the haunts they might seek and find. Their room was better

than their company to Mrs. Slatterly. Her daughters were fine ladies, and thought it altogether beneath them to associate with shop-boys. They would not condescend to have one of them spending an evening in their parlour, and it was a dreadful annoyance to them when the boys were making a noise in the dining-room down-stairs.

Now what was James to do with himself, when left alone? Mrs. Slatterly put out all the lights but one candle, and walked up-stairs, leaving him to his own reflections. He was half tempted to go out and find Peters's, only to see what was going on. However, he yielded to this thought but for a moment, and as he had promptly refused the whole set when they had attacked him in company, he would not think of going after them now he was fairly rid of them all for the evening.

He looked for his bundle, which he had left in the hall under a chair, and got the Bible which Mary had given him before he left home. Mary's Bible! How precious it seemed to him as he took it in his hand, and went down again to his solitary place. "Up there in Shellton they are all sitting about the clean table, on which the frugal supper was spread a few moments ago; and now they are thinking and

perhaps speaking of the one who is gone from among them. If I was only there now," thought James, "it would be easy to come away in the morning and work hard all day, with the prospect of going back to such a sweet home at night."

So it is; "home, sweet home!" The house his parents and brothers and sisters lived in was poor and small, but love made it a happy home to all who were in it, and it drew forth the heart of the only one who had left it. He was decidedly homesick that evening. And the Bible did not make him feel much better. Nothing in the thousand sweet recollections of his childhood were dearer to his soul than the memory of those hours when the family were gathered for religious instruction. Around the fireside on a winter evening, and on the door-step in the summer, they sat once a day, and read and talked of the things which are written in God's holy word. The children loved those hallowed hours. They loved their parents and one another more, because of those precious seasons, and in after-life they might wander to the ends of the earth, and be exposed to ten thousand temptations, but the memory of those lessons could never be effaced from their hearts.

James thought of all these when he opened his Bible; and his eyes were soon so filled with tears that he could not read. But he could indulge in pleasing recollections of the past; and as Mary's love, her words of parting, his mother's silent tenderness when he came away, his father's morning prayer and words of counsel came back to his mind, he was strengthened.

James was not a boy to give up to himself, any more than to others. If I have done right, he would say, there is nothing to be sorry for: why then should I cry about it? And with such a short process of reasoning, he convinced himself that it was his duty to put a good face on the whole matter, and go on as he had begun.

It was singular that he opened to the chapter where he found the familiar words, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." It was the first chapter of the Book of Proverbs, and he knew there was much in that book for youth to read when from home and in danger. He therefore began at the beginning, and read on till he came to these words, and he thought he would make them his MOTTO while he was in the midst of such a set as he found at Mrs. Slatterly's. Then he read on,

and the solemn counsels and warnings with which the chapter closed, sank into his heart. God had spoken to him in his solitude, and he opened his heart to his voice.

He sat still for an hour or more, and mused on what he had been reading. He was not alone, for God was with him. The sweet comfort of being in the way of his duty, and suffering for the sake of those he loved, was all that he could enjoy, for there was no one to whisper a word of hope in his ear.

The longest evening as well as the longest day comes to an end, and at last the clock on a neighbouring church-tower struck NINE. That was bed-time at home, and it was the hour that he meant to keep as the time for retiring when he was away. He went up-stairs and told Mrs. Slatterly that he would like to go to bed, if she would show him where he was to sleep. She led the way up to a wide attic-room where there were two beds, and pointed to one of them as the place where he would sleep. "Wilson," she said, "would sleep with him,—one of the cleverest fellows in the house."

James had no heart to speak, badly as he felt at the prospect of being confined to the same room and to share the same bed with such a sad specimen of a youth as this Bill Wilson.

But sadly as James felt at the prospect before him, he did not forget to kneel down and pray that God would give him grace to help him in the life he was to lead. Here was a terrible struggle to be gone through, and unless God should help him, he had many fears that he might not be able to stand up against the evil influences about him. Here, too, was a new world and a new life opening before him. At last he was thrown upon God and himself. No one in that house cared a straw for him, and there was not one to whom his heart would go out as to a friend. He must find in God a father and a friend, or there would be none to help him when his courage failed. He prayed as he had never prayed till that night—first for himself, and then for those at home, and then for those dreadful boys that he was thrown among, like a lamb among wolves! God heard him, and blessed him that very night with such peace of mind as this world cannot give nor take away.

He was not asleep when the boarders came home. Mrs. Slatterly secured her own repose for the night by locking up at ten o'clock, and if any one of her family was not in at that hour, he must find lodgings where he could. This was no easy matter, and it, therefore, hap-

pened that this—the only good rule Mrs. Slatterly had—worked very well, and brought the boys home in a rush about that time every night. She "would have a quiet house o' nights." She always insisted on that, and she would march any boy out, bag and baggage, the next morning, if he could not behave himself and let other folks sleep, if he didn't want to sleep himself. The boys, therefore, turned in as soon as they came home, and James made out a more quiet night than he expected. They laughed and cracked low jokes among themselves for a half-hour or so, but a hard day's work had made sleep very acceptable to all of them, and before eleven the little boarding-house of Mrs. Slatterly was as still as an empty church.

"Ho, look a-here!" screamed Bill Wilson, just about daylight. "Here's Jim Stevens praying!" And then he uttered an oath at the end of his speech, which is not to be repeated here.

Sure enough, James had risen very early, before any of the rest of them were awake, and dressing himself quietly, kneeled down by his bedside to pray. So he had been taught, and so he meant to do as long as he lived. Many boys who pray at night neglect to pray in the morning. They jump out of bed, hurry on their clothes, and run down to breakfast,

without stopping to thank God for keeping them in peace and safety during the darkness of the night, when they could take no care of themselves. James was not one of these boys:—not he. There had not been a morning since he was old enough to know any thing about prayer, when he had not thanked the Lord for taking care of him through the night, and asked him to keep him from danger and sin during the day. And such a habit was too good for him to break almost the first day he was from home and about to begin life in a new place, among those whom he feared more than any whom he had ever expected to meet.

"Jim Stevens is a-praying!" exclaimed the boys in the other bed, as they sat up looking across in the early twilight to see so strange a spectacle as a boy at prayer. A loud laugh burst from the whole of them, as they saw the lad on his knees. He got up without delay, for there was no use in his trying to pray in the midst of this uproar, but their raillery did not cease when he rose.

"Now, see here,"—Wilson went on to say,—"that is all well enough at home and among the babies, but you'll get over all that sort of thing fast enough, if you stay here."

"I shall never get over praying, as long as

I live," said James, as decidedly as he spoke the night before, when the boys wanted him to go and treat.

"You don't mean to be a mammy-boy all your life, do you?" pursued his tormentor. "We don't have them fellows here a great while before they get sick of it, and by-and-by they get over it, just as you will in less than a month."

"I guess not," said James, as he washed his hands and face, and paid as little heed as he could to the talk that was going on, in which all of them now joined. But he thought one of them was less boisterous than the rest, and, though he laughed at their fun, rather shrank from the ribaldry with which they spoke of praying and reading the Bible. It was a comfort and a hope to him that one of the boys was (even in a silent way) disposed to think well of him, and not to fall in with the wicked set. This lad was John Munson, who had been in the city but a few weeks, and had not yet become as reckless as the rest. His story may be told, perhaps, before we are through.

John Munson came up to James Stevens, and in a half-laughing, half funny way, said to him—"Never mind these fellows; you've as good a right to pray as they have to make fun of it. 'Every man to his liking,' is my rule."

"I mean to do what I think is right," replied James, "whether others like it or not. I have been brought up to pray, and I mean to pray every night and morning."

This cooled the heat of the boys, and they began to think James to be made of better stuff than they supposed at first. They rallied a little, however, and Joe Akers told him he "Needn't set up to be better than other folks, for if he did, he would soon find out that they could take the starch out of him."

"I don't think myself half so good as many others, and I wish I was a great deal better than I am. But you must let me alone, and I will not trouble any of you."

After breakfast, John Munson and James Stevens went over to the shop together, and James was set to work by the foreman. His business was very simple, and required no great amount of strength, but he kept steadily at it. It was chiefly to move a pile of light stuff for seasoning, and arranging it so that the heat would reach it evenly, and do the work effectually. While thus engaged there was no opportunity for much conversation, but what reached him was chiefly from those who were but a little older than himself, and of the same sort with the company at his boarding-house.

His new acquaintance, John Munson, was not in the same part of the shop, and he saw nothing of him till the twelve o'clock bell rang, and then they all rushed out and hastened home to dinner. James had no fault to find with his food. He had been accustomed to frugal fare at home, and a crust of bread with a cup of cold water would have tasted better there, than Mrs. Slatterly's boiled beef and cabbage. But he had made up his mind to take things as they came; to make the best of every thing, and never complain until his lot was too hard for any body to bear. He had been taught that there is always more than half in making up your mind to any thing, and every day he was learning more and more of the truth there is in that idea.

His first day's labour was over. The foreman had found no fault with him. Every one in the shop had treated him well enough, and there was a fair prospect of his being pleased with his work, and of his giving satisfaction to those who employed him. The first day in the shop was a great day to him, and when it was well over, he felt as if he had performed a wonderful feat, and was much more of a man than he was in the morning. At supper the boys attacked him again on the subject of

treating all around, and said that no one had ever got along without it. James glanced at John Munson, and one of them understood the look, and said—

"John Munson, didn't you treat the first night after you came?"

John had to acknowledge that he did, but he took no great pleasure in owning it. In fact, the coming of James had begun to awaken some good feelings in this lad, and he was pausing to think before he took any more downward steps.

All the rest were eager to boast of having *treated*, and each one could tell how many shillings he spent, and how much he drank. But James was quite as firm as he had been the night before.

They left James alone again. If John Munson had any notions of breaking off from their company, they vanished when he thought of the ridicule they would heap on him as soon as they saw him lagging behind.

While they were at their frolic in the street and the nine-pin alley, James had a solitary evening with his Bible, and his thoughts of Mary and the rest at his country home. He wished that he had some paper, and he would try to write a letter to Mary; but he had none,

and he did not believe he could get any if he asked Mrs. Slatterly. But he meant to get some, and then he could put down his thoughts and send some of them to those he loved so much. It was pleasant to think of it. And so thinking of what he would do, reading a chapter or two, and then having a quiet time to himself for his evening prayer, he went up to bed, and was sound asleep when the roistering boys came home.

CHAPTER IV.

A night adventure—Under-ground sports—A fight—A long night with a sore head and aching bones—A friend in need.

THE second day of James's apprenticeship was much as the first. It was varied only by a little change in his work, and meeting with new faces in the shop.

Among the journeymen, (or rather those who had ceased to be apprentices, and were now receiving high wages,) there were several men of years and character, earning enough to maintain themselves and their families respectably. They were members of the church, and useful in the community, orderly citizens and intelligent men. Some of them had grown up in the place; but these were few. Most of them had come from the East, and had brought with them habits of temperance, industry, and "going-to-church." But there was not a man of them all to whom it had ever occurred that there was any thing for him to do in this shop in the way of reclaiming or saving the young apprentices from ruin.

If there were any such good rules as "*No swearing in the shop,*" or "*No liquor drank on these premises,*" it was violated daily and hourly by the looser part of the community, and there was no voice of remonstrance raised to prevent a practice that was constantly tending to destroy the young. The working of the whole system of factory or shop labour went upon this principle, that the "boss" was to find the work and pay the wages; and the workmen, young and old, were to look out for themselves when their work was done. The machinery was driven by steam, the men and boys were urged by the want of money, and nothing but work and wages was to be made a matter of reckoning between the employer and employed.

What did Mr. Stone care for those boys at Mrs. Slatterly's boarding-house? The foreman never made any complaint to him; and if Joe Akers, or Bill Wilson, or any of the rest of them were out on a spree at night, and unfit to work the next day, the lost time was taken out of the week when their wages were paid, and that was the end of it! Mr. Stone had a splendid mansion at the head of the street, with uncommonly fine and spacious grounds around it for a city residence, and he rode in an elegant carriage of his own manufacture,

and when he made his appearance in New York with it, as he did sometimes, it was a travelling advertisement of his ability to make the article, as well as to make money by it.

Mr. Stone had a large family of his own, and being a good Christian man and a worthy member of the church, he brought them all up in the fear of God, and in obedience to his commandments.

But it had never been revealed to Mr. Stone that a part of his duty as a Christian master and employer, was to watch and pray for the souls of the hundred and fifty people in his establishment. Very likely, if Mr. Stone had been a planter or farmer, and had seen all these men and boys assembled, once a day, on his premises to get their dinner, or in his house to find quarters for the night, he would have thought of his relations to them, and, being a good man in his way, he would have made some efforts to promote their moral well-being. At least, he would have seen to it that they were provided with some place and some means of rational enjoyment and improvement, when their hands were not employed in his work. And if he did not surround them with the luxuries that he enjoyed himself, (which he certainly was not required

to do,) he would have made them comfortable for an evening at their own lodgings; and, with others to join him, he would have opened such places for public instruction, or moral and entertaining amusements, as would have diverted them from the haunts of vice and the snares of the destroyer.

But there was no such place within reach of the poor, who were compelled to spend most of their earnings upon their bare support, leaving but a little for the gratification of their tastes, and these were soon so depraved as to find refreshment only in drink and games. Of these James had a specimen the third evening after he arrived in town.

It was Friday, at the close of the second day's work in the shop, when the only one of the boys to whom he had taken the least fancy, John Munson, stayed with him after the rest had gone out, and as they were chatting, John proposed a walk to see what was going on. James agreed to it—more because he did not know what to do with himself, than for any better reason—and they were soon sauntering along toward the *Main* street of the city.

A few steps out of it, James stopped suddenly, and seizing his companion by the arm, asked him what made the noise?

John laughed at his ignorance, and asked nim if he never heard that before.

As if it were quite down under the ground, a low, long, rumbling, *rolling* sound, and then a sudden clatter and crash came up, repeated often, and always ending in the same way; and if James had known what an earthquake was, he might have thought there was a small one near the corner of Hampton and Main Street. But a laugh and a shout that often came up at the end of the roll and roar, dispelled all fear from the mind of the listener, and only increased his wonder.

John enjoyed the perplexity of his friend, so fresh from the country, and so unused to "life," that he could not tell a nine-pin alley from an earthquake.

"I say, Jimmy," said he, in a friendly and encouraging way, "let's take a turn in and see them roll."

"Roll what?" exclaimed James, half frightened at the thought of seeing what was making the noise he had just now heard, but half willing to see all he could without going into danger.

"Why, the boys are down there, rolling nine-pins; and if you have a mind, we can just look in and see them. They won't hurt us any, and we needn't play."

It did not occur to James that there would be any harm in his seeing a new sight, and he had no thought of any thing wrong in such a place as a cellar—for such the place seemed to be whence the noise came up into the street. He therefore followed John down-stairs, and along a narrow passage between the street and the wall of the house, till they reached a side-door, which was instantly opened in answer to a bell which they rang.

A long and not a very wide apartment, lighted with smoky oil-lamps, smelling with rank fumes of tobacco, and damp with the confined air of the place, presented itself to the visitors. Three long alleys, narrow and smooth, had each of them a group of six or eight half-grown young men standing at one end, and a person at the other who set up the pins for them to knock over with balls which they rolled in turn. The number of pins which each succeeded in knocking down was announced with eagerness and marked down; and one after another took his turn in rolling—the excitement keeping up and increasing with every stage of the game. Each alley had its party, and each party was divided into sides, who were playing to see which would knock down the greatest number of pins, and

soonest reach the *hundred*, which was the extent of the game. The beaten party had to treat the company, and then the game would be renewed, the old sets being retained, or a new cast of hands being made.

When he first entered, James could scarcely get a breath. There were no windows in this under-ground apartment—only small openings under the ceilings for ventilators, but these were not sufficient to carry off the foul odours of the room, and no fresh air could make its way into it. On one side of the room, behind the players, was a counter, in the rear of which stood a long-haired and shabby-looking fellow, to deal out liquors to the company, as they came up in groups to take a drink all round, as often as a game was lost or won.

With the drinks and the rolls the excitement rose, not among the players only, but among the lookers-on, of whom there were many besides James and his friend John Munson, who had just dropped in! Among the most expert and the noisiest of the set who were rolling were Joe Akers and Bill Wilson; rollicking fellows, now that they were loose, and heated too with drink. Joe caught sight of James Stevens, as he was returning from the bar, and made up to him with all haste. "Ah! and so

you have come to have a game, have you? Well —glad to see you—here's a hand, come, take a roll." This was the sudden and unexpected challenge with which James was greeted.

"No, I didn't come to play; but John and I dropped in as we were walking, just to see what was going on," was the timid answer of James to the invitation so rudely given.

"Never mind what you come for. You are here now, and must take a game with us. It shan't cost you any thing, if you are afraid of that, as you was when you wouldn't treat."

"I am not afraid of the cost; but I do not know how to play, and don't want to know. If I had known what kind of a place it was, I'm sure you wouldn't have caught me here—and now I have found out, I shall quit." And so saying, James was turning to go out of the door, when Akers laid his hand on his shoulder and stopped him

"See here," said he in a bullying tone, "don't go off in a huff! Nobody has hurt you; and now you are here you may as well stay and have some fun."

"Let go of me," said James. "I'll go when I like, and I don't want any fun of you."

"None of your sauce!" Akers replied, and taking James by the collar, he gave him a

whirl which made him spin some feet around before he could stop. The temper of the boy was up, and returning toward the door, mad enough to cry or to strike, he encountered Akers, who had planted himself with his back against it and refused to let him pass. James pushed against him, and demanded to be let out. Akers shoved him off, and with so much violence as to throw him down. Picking himself up and coming back to the charge, he met the fist of his enemy full in the face. The blood started from his nose, and, maddened by the pain and the shame, he drove blindly into Akers, and with feeble force attempted to resist his superior strength.

"A fight! A fight!" was the cry now raised in all parts of the room.

"A ring! A ring! Make a ring!" was the call of the company as they pressed toward the door, and, in the great confusion, tried to find out what was the matter. But there was no fight. James was no match for his foe, and Akers, with the fierceness of a tiger and the rage of a brute, pounced on the puny boy and beat him like a dog.

"Take him off!" John Munson shouted, and there were many who joined with him in the cry. But some were afraid of Akers, and

others thought he might have reason for giving the boy a flogging, and so between them all the poor fellow was severely beaten before his assailant would let him alone. First he slapped him on one side of the head, then the other; then he kicked him, and next he gave him a blow across the mouth, which cut his lip badly on his teeth and drew more blood still; and he followed up this savage bruising and beating till he was tired.

"Now you'll let me alone, won't you, another time, you ——," said Akers, as soon as he could get breath, giving Stevens a farewell kick, which sent him violently against the crowd that pressed around them.

"It's too bad!" said John Munson. "If you want to fight, you might take one of your size, and not beat one that ain't half as big as you are."

Akers felt the contempt even of his own set, and said he wouldn't have struck him if he hadn't begun it.

"He didn't begin it," said John. "You began it yourself, and tried to pick a quarrel the minute you saw him here."

John and Akers might have had a pitched battle in a minute more, but John saw that Stevens was deadly pale and ready to fall.

He took his arm, and two or three of the more humane of the boys joined with him, and they led their abused fellow-apprentice out of the stifling cellar, helped him up the steps into the fresh air, and proposed at once to take him home.

Home! What would not the miserable James Stevens have given now, to have his own home within reach, and Mary to sit by and comfort his distresses.

The boys took him to a pump and washed off the blood. He was greatly revived, and soon found that he was not so badly hurt as he thought; but such a beating he had never dreamed of as among the *possibles* that might overtake him, in quitting his father's house to seek his fortune. They led him to Mrs. Slatterly's, and John Munson, now loving him as he pitied him, helped him up-stairs to bed, saying nothing to the woman about what had happened. He was so weak that he could not take off his clothes, and John, his interest in him growing stronger every moment, remained by him and gently took of his clothes.

"Now go to bed," said John, as he turned the clothes down, "and I will cover you up nicely, and you will feel a thousand times better in the morning."

"Stop till I've said my prayers, John. I never go to bed without that."

And as he let himself down by the side of the bed, to get on his knees, John Munson knelt down too, and with one arm over the neck of James, as if he would give him support, he waited in silence to hear the prayer of his abused and suffering friend.

James often prayed in his own words at night, and remembered the friends at home, and his own peculiar trials and wants. Now he began with the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and when he came to the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," he prayed for Joe Akers, that God would bless him and give him a better mind. And then he prayed that his own sin in going to such a place, and in getting angry, even when he was injured, might be forgiven, and that God would keep him from falling into sin again. His prayer was short, for his limbs ached so that he longed to lay them down on the bed. John gave him such help as he needed, but never said a word after rising from his knees, till he had tucked the clothes in nicely, and James was quiet. And then James was the first to speak.

"You are so good to me, to come home with me. and now to take such care of me, when I have been so wicked, and don't deserve it at all!"

John was still, but he felt much. At length he could contain himself no longer, and bursting into tears, said, "I want to pray too."

"Do pray, do," said James, as he saw at once that the heart of his young friend was moved.

"I used to pray when I lived home, but its three or four years since I came away, and I've forgot how."

"Try, John, do try: it will all come to you if you'll only just begin."

John Munson knelt down again, and said—"O God!" and here he paused. Words would not come, till James helped him by saying—"Tell him that you want to be what you ought to be, and are sorry that you have sinned against him so often," and so he went on, James prompting him, and John taking up his words and turning them into prayers as he went along, till he made a full confession, and strong promises to be good in time to come.

"I wonder if Bill Wilson would let me sleep with you. I would rather than to get in with Joe. At any rate I'll try it, and if he turns

me out when he comes home, why so be it." So John reasoned, and James encouraged him to turn in with him, which he did without any delay, though it was hardly nine o'clock yet, and he had never been in the habit of going to bed before Mrs. Slatterly's appointed hour of ten.

As John was lying down, James actually groaned with pain. His limbs ached sadly, and he could not help a sigh now and then, perhaps the more as he felt that he had brought all this misery and disgrace upon himself.

"I was so glad to hear you pray," said James—at a moment too, when John supposed he could be thinking of nothing but his own pains.

"I used to pray when I was at home, but oh, I've been a wild boy since. When you came here the other day, I thought of my brother at home, and how happy I was there." He would have gone on, but somehow his voice grew thick, and the words would not flow freely.

"Tell me," said James to him, "all about your family, and then I'll tell you about our's."

John cleared up his voice and began.

"We live up in Cramville, fifty miles or more from here, and my father has a farm. He

and mother belong to the church, and made us all go to church every Sunday, and say our prayers every night and morning. But I never liked it up there, it was so dull—nothing going on—and I tried to get father to let me learn a trade. But he said it would be better for me to stay and work on the farm; and I did stay till I was fourteen years old, and then I went off—ran away, I suppose—and went to New York, where I tried all sorts of ways to get a living; now at work at this, and now at that; not long at any thing, and never earning more than just enough to get my victuals and clothes, and not much of them, and very poor too.

"And then you know I got in with a bad set of fellows, that were up to all sorts of mischief; and what good there was in me when I left home, was all used up and gone in a short time. So I worked along for two years or so, and then made a trip to sea, and that finished me. But I didn't like it, and was glad enough to get ashore. Trying one thing and another, at last I got here about three months ago, and as good luck would have it, I got a place here in Stone's shop, and mean to stick to it.

"But there's a terrible set of fellows here, I tell you; and if I could only keep clear of them, there would be some hope of doing something.

But in all the time since I came away from my father's house, I never saw any one of the boys who prayed, or who did not swear and have their way on Sunday. And when I saw you was praying yesterday morning, after Bill sung out so, I thought of the old time when I was at home, and used to say my prayers every night and morning.

"Oh Jim, I tell you what it is, we may get over every thing else, but we can't forget mother's coming to put us to bed, and sitting down on the side of the bed while we said our prayers. That's what has hung around me all the time, wherever I've been, and whatever I have done; and if I should be as bad as Joe Akers or Bill Wilson, I should never forget the things that I learned from my mother when I was a little boy, and said my prayers."

James heard all this with deep interest and much emotion. He saw that in his new-found friend there were the same principles which he had been taught; and although for three years the lad had been exposed to strong temptations, and had doubtless been led into a thousand sins, yet he had not wholly forgotten the instructions of his childhood, the lessons he had learned at his mother's knee. James quite forgot his own aches and pains in his

sympathy with John, whose story had so sensibly revived the recollections of past years.

And then they talked of their early homes, of parents and sisters and brothers; and James, notwithstanding his aches and pains, (which were more severely felt the next day,) was very eloquent when praising Mary, whom he firmly believed to be the best girl that ever lived. And he never was afraid or ashamed to say so.

They were in the midst of their discourse when Joe Akers and Bill Wilson came in, the other boys going to their room. Joe was half drunk—indeed rather more than half—and so stupid as to take little or no notice of the boys already in bed. Bill did not exactly like it that John took his place, but said he would rather sleep with Joe any time, than with such a chicken-hearted fellow as that Stevens. They were soon all sound asleep.

This was indeed a new and sad experience in the life of our young friend from the country. Little did he think, when talking it over with Mary, or while trudging along barefoot in search of his fortune, that in three days after getting into his new place, he would be beaten almost to death in a quarrel with one of his companions, and go to bed groaning with pain and shame.

But he knew nothing of the *system*, (we might almost say the heathenish system,) on which the whole of that great mass of labour was managed. He did not know that in a single town of not more than ten thousand people, there were at least one thousand young men for whose souls no man cared. They might spend their nights as they pleased, if they did their work well by day. It was no concern of Mr. Stone's, how much his workmen wasted of their money, or how much they drank or gambled, or how many street-fights they had, if the carriages that were ordered were the best that could be made, so that customers never found fault. And Mr. Stone felt, just as too many employers in our great manufacturing towns have always felt about those in their service,—that is, he did not feel at all. It is no worse in the factory system than in the mercantile walks of life. Many a merchant who has five, ten, or fifty young men in his service, satisfies his conscience, and never thinks that he fails of doing his whole duty, when he gives them from fifty to five hundred dollars a year for their work, and leaves them to live and die as they can on their wages. To some he may give more than they earn; and others, if he gave them more, would only have more

to spend in the ways of the wicked, and thus would but hasten their own ruin.

If young men and young women have not the restraints of home, parental and domestic ties to bind them to virtue, and to the paths of wisdom which are pleasantness and peace, they are in danger. And those who have their services are under solemn obligations to make some provision for their moral and intellectual care. This whole matter ought to be looked at; and perhaps it will be found that there is need of quite as great a reform in this department of our social system as in any other.

CHAPTER V.

Ashamed to be seen—Truth told—A willing hand—Faithful and trusted—Letter to Mary—The great fire—The young incendiaries.

THE appearance of James, as he presented himself in the shop the next morning, was far from being satisfactory to himself or pleasing to others. His lip was swollen badly, and one eye was so black all around it, that any one would say, at the first sight of him, that he had been fighting. He was so conscious of this himself, that he hesitated some time before he could make up his mind to meet the eye of the foreman in the shop, and the taunts of the boys, who would doubtless crack their jokes at the expense of his face of so many colours. But John Munson told him it was no strange thing there for boys to have black eyes, and he promised to put it all right with Jenkins, the foreman, if any notice was taken of it.

"But," said James, "I don't want anybody to think I've been fighting."

"Well you haven't exactly. You have been

abused by a big bully, who ought to be pounded"——

"Stop, stop!" said James. "You know we pray 'forgive us as we forgive our enemies;' let us try and feel right."

"So we will, but I shall never learn to be good, if I must forgive such a fellow as Joe Akers. Why, I have been here now three months, and I never knew him to do the first thing yet that wasn't mean or cruel. Everybody hates him; and the boys who are most like him, hate him the most."

"We are told," said James, "to love our enemies, and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us; and certainly Joe is just one of those who need our prayers."

This was the talk of the two boys on their way to the shop. As they entered it, they met Mr. Jenkins, and in spite of John's effort to get between him and James, so that the wounds and bruises should not be seen, his quick eye caught sight of the lad, and he said, "What's the matter?" John offered to explain, and having been longer in the shop and quite at home with the formidable foreman, he told him the nature of the quarrel between Joe and James, and of course laid all the blame on the former.

"But tell me this," asked Mr. Jenkins; "how came either of you in such a place? You had no business there, and might have expected to get into trouble if you went."

John was ready with his answer. "James and I were out, walking; and as he had never seen a nine-pin alley, I took him down to see them roll; but as soon as he found out it was a bad place, he wanted to come away, and would have come right out, if Joe hadn't stopped him."

Mr. Jenkins was satisfied, and told the boys to go to their work. James felt as if he had lost ground by his adventure, and reproaching himself with having done wrong, he was sorely punished in his own feelings, even if he did not sink in the esteem of others.

This fear that Mr. Jenkins would not like him so well now that he had been in such a scrape, and come out of it with such a face, made James more than ever careful to attend faithfully to his business, and to gain as far as he could the better opinion of those around him. In this attempt, he was glad to have the company of John Munson, who seemed to cling to him for encouragement and help. Though he was three years older than James, this lad felt that James had strength in his religious

principle and his love for the Bible, that no years (without them) would give to any one. He looked to James for an example, and believing that he was always right when doing as James did, he held to him fast, as his guide and friend.

By the end of three months from the time James entered this shop, he had worked his way by diligence and faithfulness, not only into a fair knowledge of the early stages of the business he had undertaken, but what was far more difficult, into the good graces of Jenkins, and of all the journeymen who had any sense of the superiority of a good boy over a bad one. A more willing hand there was not about the concern. Trusted beyond the rest, and often called on to go here and there, he was ready always, and never failed to give satisfaction by the manner in which he discharged his duty. But it was a long road and a slow journey to great proficiency in the business; and however much he might desire to be doing better for himself than to be merely earning his food and clothes, he saw nothing before him but to wait patiently, work on, and trust God for the future.

He was doing nothing for the loved ones at home, and this thought gave him pain. His

parents did not have to support him, it is true; and this gave him a little comfort. The better opinion favoured his staying where he was and trying as hard as he could to get an increase of wages as soon as possible. That good time he felt was to come, one of these days, and he hoped it was not very far off.

Such an example as James was now setting ought to have had some effect upon those who were with him in his boarding-house and in the shop. They saw him rising in the regard of others, and esteemed for his industry and general good conduct, and often heard him referred to as the *model of a boy;* but they were too far gone in their course of evil to be much affected by the good example even of James Stevens. And he did not press himself on their attention, or provoke them by remonstrance. His plan was to mind his own business, and never to have words with those whom he did not like, unless they imposed their opinions upon him, in which case he was always ready to maintain what he believed to be right, no matter how many boys there were, or how big they were, who thought otherwise. As to being "shut up" by the insolence of others, so long as he had the breath of life in him, he would stand up for what he thought

was fair and true, come what might. In time this habit earned for him the respect of those who hated him for his virtue. They saw that he was not afraid to maintain what he believed, and had as good a reason to give for his way of thinking and acting as they had for theirs: so that when they would not be convinced of their own error, and much less would admit that James was right, they were compelled to feel that he was more of a man than any of them, and had something in him that none of the rest had.

Late in the summer of this first year of James's apprenticeship, a circumstance occurred that gave a colouring to his future course, and must be mentioned here. But the better way will be to give one of his letters to Mary, in which the first part of the story is told in his own simple way.

LETTER TO MARY STEVENS FROM JAMES.

DEAR MARY,—I got your letter about two weeks ago, and you can't tell how much good it did me. I tell you in all my letters that I am lonesome, and want to see you and all the rest at home; but then I know it's all for the best as it is, and that helps me to feel con-

tented wnere I am. If it was not for your letters, that come once in a great while, I could not stand it anyhow.

Last night we had a great time here. A large shop, where they made carriages just as they do in our's, was burnt down; and to-day there has been the greatest time about it in our shop, and in all the rest, that ever you saw. It is said by some that it was set on fire by one of our boys, and he has been taken up and is put in jail to be tried for it. You have heard in my letter about Joe Akers, one of the worst boys that ever lived. Well, he is the one they have taken up; but he is not the only one that had a hand in it by a good deal. I rather think that I know something about it, and if I thought it was right for me to say nothing and keep dark, as the boys say, I should feel better. But I don't know what I ought to do. You see, Joe Akers and I are not good friends. He always had a spite against me, and I never told you and don't mean to tell you what a time we had when I first came here, when he tried to make me treat the boys, and I wouldn't. Joe thinks I would be glad to hurt him; but I am sure I wish him well, and would not do him any harm if I could. Now, Mary, what do you think I

ought to do? John Munson (you don't know what a nice young man John is) and I sleep together in the same room with Bill Wilson and Joe. Mrs. Slatterly always fastens up the house at ten o'clock, and lets nobody in after that time. But last night, after we had all been in bed for an hour or more, the boys, Joe and Bill, got up, and, as softly as they could, put on their clothes and went out into the other room, where four other boys are sleeping. We heard them get up and could see them dressing, for it was light enough from the windows. After they had been in there a few minutes, we heard them go down-stairs on their bare feet, very still, so as not to disturb Mrs. Slatterly, and then they opened the front-door and went out. They had not been gone long, not more than half an hour, when they came in again, bolted the door, crept up-stairs and into our room, pulling off their clothes, and jumping into bed.

"Think they are awake?" says Bill.

"No, the stupid fellows sleep like logs," said Joe.

"I only wish that watchman had been asleep too; but I'll bet a dollar he saw me, and will know me when he sees me again."

Just at this time we heard the cry of *Fire!* and soon the engines rattled along the streets.

We were all up in a minute. Joe and Bill pretended to be fast asleep, but when we were nearly dressed, they asked what was to pay, and, (as if they had just heard the noise,) got up and dressed too. We all ran out, and the whole city was hurrying to the fire. By this time the fire was all through the shop, and there was so much light stuff in it that it blazed all up, and in a very little while it was burned down, with all that was in it. Now, John and I knew well enough that Joe must have come from the shop with Bill and perhaps one or two of the boys who sleep in the next room. We knew from what we saw and heard after they came back. They were out of breath, as if they had been running hard; and the way they spoke about the light and the watchman, makes us sure that they had been out and set fire to the shop. But ought we to tell any thing about it? If we do, the boys will all be down on us, and we shall be kicked about, as long as we stay here, for tell-tales. What to do I don't know. John says he shall say nothing till he is asked, and then he shall tell the truth. So shall I, and the boys may do what they have a mind to.

I wish you would write to me and tell me what you think is right. You know I would do

that, as soon as I find out what is right, and nobody can tell me better than you. You recollect when I was going to run away from home, you told me not to go without father's knowing it, and how much better it was that I took your advice, and told him all about it; and now I want you to tell me again just what you think. This is the longest letter I ever wrote, and I never had so much to write about before. Give my love to all.

Your loving brother, JAMES STEVENS.

The burning of Mr. Van Arden's carriage factory was one of many fires that had taken place that summer in the city. It was rare that a night passed without some alarm. Many of these were false alarms, made by the boys to call out the engines, and have a run with them, down one street and up another, making as great a racket as if the whole city was on fire. This was considered great sport among the boys and half-grown young men. A gang of the apprentices hung around all the engine-houses, and at the first cry of fire they rushed in, seized the "*machine*," as they call it—and away they went, whooping like so many Indians rushing to battle. Every turn-out of this kind wound up with a row of some sort—

generally a drinking frolic, and often broken heads. The worst boys were always the foremost for running with the engines. Too young to be admitted as regular members of the fire-companies, they fastened themselves upon the skirts of the different companies, and got up as much rivalry, and fought as bravely, swore as roundly, and drank as freely in behalf of their favourite engine, as if they had a life-interest in its success. In this way the engines destroyed the souls of the boys, while they were made to save the property of the men. In vain did parents beg that their children might not be allowed to frequent these engine-houses. The boys were infatuated with the excitement, and preferred the race to any other amusement that could be found. And the worse they grew, the more they liked the nightly run and revel.

These false alarms became so frequent that the city government took steps to prevent them, and they made a law to allow any citizen who heard a person raise the cry of "Fire," when there was no cause for the alarm, to seize the person crying, and to deliver him into the hands of an officer. In this way it was made very dangerous for the boys to raise an alarm, as they were liable to be "nabbed" in an instant, by anybody in the street. But the

alarms of fire were about as frequent after this order as before; and with this great difference—they were almost all *real* fires. In some place remote from the centre of business, an old shed or barn standing a short distance from the houses, would be in flames, though there had been no fire in it during the day, and perhaps not for years. It was plain that they had been fired by some miscreant, but for what purpose it could not be learned for a long time, till it was suspected that the boys burned them merely to bring out the engines.

A terrible disaster and a fearful tragedy resulted from this wicked recklessness on the part of the boys. They had marked a small and long-deserted tenement as just the building to make a grand illumination, and, as nobody lived in it, they would do no harm, as they said, beyond destroying the property, which was of very little value.

"And it's a real nuisance, too," said one of them, as they were calculating on the expediency of burning it up.

"It does nobody any good, and it will make that end of the street look a great deal better," said another.

"Yes," added a third, "especially while it's burning."

So it was agreed on all hands that the house should be burned, and the next Saturday night was fixed on for the deed. More than a dozen of the young men, or boys just growing into young men, were engaged in the plot; and as they had hitherto attempted nothing beyond the burning of a shed or a shanty, there was a great stir among them, and the anticipation of the "tallest kind of sport." The former fires had usually occurred in the early part of the evening, and were oftentimes got up when some public meeting was in progress in one of the churches, that the breaking up of the assembly and the confusion that followed might add interest to the occasion. But now they had chosen Saturday night; and as the building was not very far off from others in the same street, it was thought more prudent to delay setting the fire till after the people were asleep. So it was quite midnight when the alarm was sounded. A man who had been out late was on his way home, and saw the flames bursting from the front-door of the old tenement. He did not suppose that any one was in the house, but without the delay of an instant, he gave the alarm, which was taken up by the watchmen, and speedily spread far and wide. As a few of those first roused gathered around the

spot, a man came rushing through the smoke and fire, with a child in his arms, and flinging it into the arms of those who were near, turned back and dashed into the burning house again. He was too late. The stair-case, upon which he had just before come down, had fallen as he left it with his first load, and now on the threshold he stood, and, looking up into the blazing chambers, he called for his wife and children. It was a house but a story and a half high, and at the end window the wife soon appeared in her night dress, and while striving to raise the sash, the floor gave way, and she sank into the mass of fire! Two of her children never woke in this world. They were burned alive, or perhaps suffocated with the smoke, before the flames came and devoured them. The frantic husband and father could only say that he was waked up by hearing the roar and crackling of the flames in the house; that he called to his wife, who was with him, to follow him, and seizing their youngest child, he rushed out as soon as he could, supposing that she was behind him. Only the day before they had taken possession of the house, having obtained the privilege of living in it for the rest of the warm season, or until they could do better. By a strange coincidence, the first

night they had slept in the house was the night which the young incendiaries had fixed upon for their adventure. Had they known the awful consequences of their wickedness in setting fire to a house that was not their own, they would probably have shrunk from the awful deed.

The terrible tragedy sent a thrill of horror through the whole town. As the house had not been inhabited, it was plain enough that it must have been the work of an incendiary, unless the fire had been the result of an accident on the part of the family who had just come in. But when they came to examine the premises, the walls of which were left standing, it was plain that bundles of straw had been brought and put into the front door-way, and there, not far from the foot of the stairs, had been set on fire. The wonder was that even the man had been able to make his way out at all.

But so secretly had the thing been managed that the guilty parties were not detected. They had their own horrors of remorse, when they saw the extent of the evil they had wrought, but they were silent as death about it, fearing to speak of it to one another, lest they should be overheard. And so they escaped present punishment.

CHAPTER VI.

The arrest—The trial—The sentence—The consequences.

One would think that so dreadful an event as that resulting from their foolish and wicked sport, would have been the last of such mischief, and that these reckless fellows would have found some other mode of making fun and frolic, besides burning houses with women and children in them. Each one of the rogues did think in his own heart that it would be best to give it up.

But there were too many of them. They were always putting one another up to mischief. "Who's afraid?—I ain't!" was a common saying among them. And from one thing to another they went, till the burning of Van Arden's factory was agreed on as the grand exploit of the season. This stood so far out of the crowded part of the town, that there was very little danger of the flames spreading to other buildings; and it was so long and large, so full of light, combustible matter, that it would make a grand conflagration, and rouse the whole town. And there were not so many boys in this plot as in the other. It was too

great an undertaking to be trusted to many hands and tongues. Joe Akers had planned it, and his friend, Bill Wilson, with one of the boys in the opposite room, were to be joined by a single one besides, who lived in a house close by, and these four had kept the thing to themselves, and carried it through.

It was not done as well as they expected. They made two or three blunders. They were frightened and fled in great haste, but not until the flame was kindled, and they had good reason to fear they would be found out. We shall see how this happened, when the affair came to be investigated.

As might be expected, the fire was the great subject of conversation the next day, and produced an excitement that reached nearly every man, woman and child in town. Van Arden was one of the leading manufacturers in the place. He had grown up with the city, and as his business increased, he had built and rebuilt, always enlarging, and only a year or two before he had struck out of the central and crowded part of town, quite into the suburbs, where he could have plenty of room. Here he had put up a large and commodious building, and was driving a great business, employing at least one hundred and fifty men and boys.

The destruction of his property, and the sudden throwing out of work of so many, and among them those who had families depending on their daily labour, was an event of great interest, and could not fail to rouse the feelings of the whole community.

As John Munson and James were coming from the shop to dinner, they saw a hand-bill posted on the walls :—

$500 REWARD

Will be paid to any one who will give information that will lead to the conviction of the person or persons who set fire to A. Van Arden's carriage factory, last evening.

A. Van Arden & Co.

The boys read it, and walked on in silence for a few moments, each thinking what it was his duty to do in this matter. They had already come to the conclusion to tell the truth if they were asked, but now they were called on to come forward and volunteer their testimony ; and if it were not conclusive it might lead to something else.

They both agreed that the offer of the reward ought not to make any difference, but they should do what was right, whether there was any money to be made by it or not. They

were afraid of being abused by the wild and wicked set around them, yet they were much more afraid of doing wrong and displeasing God. Even John Munson had come to feel that the fear of God is better than the fear of man.

So they talked the matter over on their way to dinner. What was their surprise, when they arrived at Mrs. Slatterly's, to find all the boarders there but JOE AKERS! Where was he? No one knew any thing more than that Mr. Jenkins had come into the room where Joe worked, and spoke to him, when he went out, and had not since been seen.

The fire and the reward and the absence of Joe were the subjects of conversation at dinner, in which all joined with great interest and excitement except Wilson. He was very still, contenting himself with wondering what had become of Joe!

When Mr. Jenkins touched Joe Akers on the shoulder, and told him that Mr. Stone wanted to see him in the office, it is altogether likely that his heart beat quicker than before; and his first thought was of the fire. But he neither started nor turned pale. He had never been sent for to go to the office before, except to receive his wages, and he knew that it was not the time for that, so that it must be something new, and, he felt quite

sure, not very agreeable. He put on his coat, and walked out with a swaggering, careless air.

Joe was surprised to find that the office was filled with gentlemen, some of whom he had never seen, and to none of whom, except Mr. Stone, had he ever spoken in his life. He had manners enough to take off his hat, which he stood twirling in his hand.

Mr. Stone spoke to him :—"Akers, do you know any thing about the fire last night?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't you go out to see it with the rest?"

"Yes, sir; but I don't know any thing about how it got afire."

Mr. Stone. Where were you when you first heard the cry of fire?

Joe. I was in bed, and asleep.

Mr. Stone. What time did you go to bed last night?

Joe. About ten o'clock. We always go to bed then. Slatterly shuts up at ten, and nobody gets in after that.

Mr. Stone. And you were not out of the house last night, after ten, till you heard the cry of fire?

Joe. No, I wasn't; and Bill Wilson sleeps with me; and he knows I wasn't.

Mr. Stone. Did you ever see this knife before? showing him a double-bladed pocket-knife.

Joe. No, sir; I never did.

Mr. Stone. Then this is not your knife, is it?

Joe. No, sir; I never saw the knife before in my life.

Mr. Stone said that he had no more questions to ask, and the sheriff, who was present, rose, and telling Joe that *he was his prisoner*, led him out of the office and up to the court-house, where he was locked in a cell, and left to his own reflections. The jailer was directed to allow no intercourse between Joe and any one else, especially his cronies, should any of them, in the course of the evening, attempt to get a chance to talk with him.

It was a gloomy day for Joe, and yet not so gloomy as many that came afterward. What could be the reason that he was suspected? That watchman! Joe knew that as he was running away from the factory he had run against one of the city watchmen, who had tried to stop him, and he was very much afraid that he was known; but then he was quite sure the watchman could know nothing of where he had been and what he had been doing.

Besides, Wilson and Marks were the only fellows that knew he was out, and they were as much in the business as he was. They could not tell without telling of themselves; and they

would not be such big fools as that. Still, he was very uneasy. He knew that knife, and he knew when and where he must have lost it, and what he was doing when he lost it; and though Mr. Stone did not know whose it was, it was very likely that some of the boys would be able to prove it was his. The more he thought it over, the worse it looked for him. He probably had never read those terrible words of Scripture, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

The gentlemen in the office of Mr. Stone had formed a committee of investigation, and with the aid of the police of the city, they were pursuing their inquiries in every direction. The watchman had reported Joe Akers as having been seen running rapidly through the street just before the alarm of fire, and that information led to his arrest on suspicion. The pocket-knife had been found in the dirt, some little distance from the end of the factory where the fire begun, but as yet no one knew to whom it belonged, nor whether it had any connection with the fire. But they had caught one, and through him they hoped to reach the rest, and break up a gang of incendiaries now threatening to be the ruin of the city. They separated after Joe was taken off, and agreed to meet again in the evening.

It was that evening that James wrote to Mary for advice. He did not have time to hear from her, before he was called to act in the very matter.

The next day all the boarders at Mrs. Slatterly's were called up, one after another, and examined separately as to what they knew of the fire, and who was in and who was out of the house during the evening and the night. John Munson and James Stevens told their story, with a straight-forward, open air and manner that commended it to the gentlemen who questioned them.

Mr. Stone. It seems to me, Stevens, I have seen you before, have I not?

James. Yes, sir. I was in the office with the minister—Mr. Jones—when I came here to find a place last spring.

Mr. Stone. Oh, I recollect; and now I remember what Mr. Jones said of you. Have you seen much of Akers and Wilson?

James. Only as I have to see them at meals and in the morning. I have kept out of their company as much as I could since I found out what kind of fellows they are.

Mr. Stone. But you must spend your evenings with them, when you are not at work?

James. Oh no, sir. We have no place at

home to stay in, of an evening; and the boys all go off to find as much fun as they can. I never go with them. John Munson and I stay at home and do as well as we can.

A new thought struck Mr. Stone at this moment, and he said to James—

"Do you feel the want of some place to spend your evenings in?"

James. We do, sir, very much indeed; and many of the boys who are now in the habit of going to the nine-pin alleys and the liquor-houses, would stay away if there was any other place to go to.

This was not the place or time to pursue the subject. It was plain that one of the first duties which these rich and Christian employers owed to their apprentices had never yet been attempted, and many youth had perhaps gone to ruin from this neglect. Strange thoughtlessness! but fatal it had been to hundreds, now beyond the reach of aid.

James and John could say nothing of any but the two who slept in their room. They heard them open and shut the opposite door, but who came out with them it was impossible for them to say. Who was the third, and how many more went with them, it was now the aim of the committee to find out. They called in

Wilson again, who had already denied all knowledge of the matter as roundly as Akers did, but with a faltering voice and indecision that gave the gentlemen reason to think that he knew more than he was willing to say. The evidence of Munson and Stevens was conclusive as to Wilson's connection with the fire, and they determined to frighten him, if possible, into a confession. Wilson came with more hesitation than before. What now? When the rest had been called with him, he was in hopes that he was not suspected, but he trembled now. Mr. Stone began:

"Wilson, we have got to the bottom of this matter, and the best thing you can do for yourself is to make a clean breast of it, and tell us the names of all who had any hand in it. You and Akers are found out; the thing is clear enough. You two went out together half an hour before the fire, and you had other company with you. After setting fire to the building you ran home, but not in company; Joe Akers was seen on his return, and you went in together into Mrs. Slatterly's, and came out again shortly after the alarm was given. Here is Akers' knife, which was lost at the scene of the fire. You know it, and know all about it; and you and Joe will go to the penitentiary,

unless you confess and tell us the names of all the parties engaged."

This was like a thunder-clap to Wilson. He was so confounded that he never stopped to ask himself how all this was known. It was true, there was no denying that, and he wondered how in the world it had come out. Wilson had not learned the great truth that

> Wherever man commits a crime,
> Heaven finds a witness!

He said that he would tell all he knew about it.

"Stop," said Mr. Stone, "let me warn you, Wilson, if you tell a lie now, it is all over with you; and if you try to deceive us any further, we shall not trust to any thing you say, but use the evidence we have against you and Joe, and let you take the consequences."

Wilson then confessed that Joe Akers, Marks, and he were the only ones engaged in setting fire to the factory, but it had been talked of a good deal, in their set, for some time past. They three went out together, and no one else was with them. Marks and he stood at different points of approach to the factory, while Joe went to the building and made a fire of shavings at the west end of it, and ran as soon as he had got it fairly kindled. He must have pulled his knife out of his pocket as he was

getting the matches out, as he had no use for it that Wilson could think of. They were to take different streets on their way home, so as not to attract attention, and to meet at the corner nearest Mrs. Slatterly's, and all go in together, as they came out. In answer to further inquiries, Wilson added that they fired the building for the sake of the excitement, to call out the engines and the people, and to have "a good time generally."

Marks and Wilson were taken off by the sheriff, and lodged in jail, in separate cells. A few weeks afterward they were all brought up for trial. Wilson was admitted as a witness against the other two, who were convicted of the crime, and sentenced to the state prison—Akers for five years, and Marks for four. Wilson was discharged, but was advised to leave the State, which he did without delay.

A few years ago these three boys would have been shocked at being told that they would be convicted of such a crime before they were nineteen years of age! But the road to ruin is rapidly travelled, and all the way down hill. Bad company is bad enough! Running with fire-engines is one of the worst schools that bad boys ever attend. Nine-pin alleys and liquor-shops are the very gates of death. Few are saved who go in thereat.

CHAPTER VII.

Great results—The boys' mission—Mr. Jones on reform.

WHAT was the effect of this crime and punishment upon the youth in that community? That it put an end to fires for mischief is very certain. The example that was made of Akers, Marks and Wilson sent a thrill of fear through every shop in the city; and those who had been most fond of the sport of burning down houses and getting up fire-alarms were now most afraid of being caught. But they were not made better, only more cautious in their choice of amusements. They were no less fond than before of the riot in the streets and the revel in the alleys and beer-shops.

But there were two of the youth of that city on whom the example of these wicked incendiaries was not lost, though they were not in need of it to warn them of the danger of bad company. James Stevens and John Munson were now thoroughly roused to the great work of seeking a reform in the habits of the youth by whom they were surrounded. They talked the matter over with great serious-

ness among themselves. It seemed to them that the great difficulty lay in the want of interest on the part of their employers in the moral improvement of their young apprentices. Here were at least a thousand lads in one small city, from fourteen to nineteen years of age, almost all of them away from home, and for whose souls it might with truth be said that "no man cared." True, they had the Sabbath as a day when no work was to be done, and if they pleased they could go to church and find a seat where they could; and if they were disposed to attend Sunday-school they would be received and well treated. But who was to take them by the hand, and bring them in? Who was to find them seats in the sanctuary where they could feel themselves at home? Who would encourage them to break away from their evil habits and loose companions, and give the Sabbath to religious duties, instead of spending it in the fields or the haunts of the idle and wicked?

It was not long after the sentence of Akers that James ventured on the bold experiment of going to see Mr. Jones, the minister, to talk with him about the matter. He had often seen him during the summer past, and he and John had been the steadiest of the steady in the

Bible-class which was attached to the Sunday-school of Mr. Jones's church. But he had never ventured to speak with him on such a subject as the ways and means of doing good to others. Six months ago, James was a bare-footed boy, coming into town to look after work, and it was quite the strangest part of our strange story that he should now be going to the minister in behalf of a thousand youths, who were like himself exposed to temptation, with no one to look after their eternal well-being!

James did not go to Mr. Jones for the sake of *teaching* him—by no means. It was far from his thought to do any thing more than ask Mr. Jones to think of some way by which the boys could be led into better habits, and saved from the dangers to which they were now so constantly exposed. Because he had been with the boys, and one of their number, he knew, as Mr. Jones could not know, the temptations of youth in such a city; and it was, therefore, with the feelings of a friend to those who, like him, were in the shops, he came to his minister to tell him what was in his heart. He was a long time in getting at the subject, after he found himself in the house of Mr. Jones, in the midst of his family, who had encouraged him freely

to come and see them whenever he had time to spare. It seemed to James that a kind Providence put it into the heart and mind of Mr. Jones to say to him, looking up from the book he was reading—

"What do you do with yourself when you are at home evenings, James?"

"Why, sir," answered the lad with some hesitation, "I have my Bible lesson to learn, and sometimes I write a letter, but there are many evenings when I have nothing to do; and there are a great many others quite as badly off as I am."

"How '*badly* off?'" asked Mr. Jones.

"They do not have any place in which to spend their evenings, and as they have nothing to keep them at home, they go off among the beer-shops and bowling-alleys, making amusement for themselves wherever they can."

"But why are they not contented at home?" asked Mr. Jones,—for the want of something better to say, for he began to be disturbed with the thoughts awakened by the young man's statements.

"They have no *home*. The place they might stay in is not home."

"Do not the boys at Mrs. Slatterly's have the privilege of the family, spending their

evenings as her children do, and with them, if they please?"

James was now roused to state the whole case. It was what he had come for, and the way was open.

"I suppose," said the youth, "that I have been as well treated as any of them, and have had as many favours as the rest, but I have never been asked to sit down in the parlour with Mrs. Slatterly's family since I went there to board; and I never knew one of the boarders to be asked to come in where the family are. And if they stay down-stairs where we have our meals, they must keep still, or the old woman is down upon them very soon, and makes them still. She won't have any noise in her house. The boys will not stand that, and as they have no enjoyment at home, they go abroad to look after it, and find it where they can. John Munson and I have talked a great deal about it this summer; and since the Akers affair, we have been thinking that if the 'bosses' knew as much about the boys as we do, they would try and do something."

"And what do you think ought to be done?" asked Mr. Jones, "for you seem to have given

some attention to the matter. Perhaps you have thought of some plan?"

"No, sir," replied James, "I cannot say that I have. It is hardly the thing for me to say any thing about, if I have; for I would not want to take any step that you would think out of the way for one so young and in my situation."

The good pastor was pleased with the sound sense and the modesty of the answer; for while James had but a very humble opinion of his own merits, he was truly a *sensible* lad, and when he did speak with those older and wiser than himself, he spoke to the purpose. Even his words were better chosen than those of most boys of fourteen or fifteen; for as he never indulged in the loose way of talking so common with boys in his condition of life, he was in the habit of using such language as the books that he read and the conversation of intelligent people suggested. In this, as in many other respects, his example was worthy of being followed by all the young. The careless, coarse, free-and-easy way of talking which boys so often fall into and cultivate, as if it were an evidence of being smart, will not only stay by them, and show itself in their riper years, but it hinders them greatly in forming

a good habit of conversation. The "flash" terms are always at their tongue's end, and they find it very hard to think of any others. There is a wonderful difference in this respect in the language of the young, of boys more especially; but the girls are not without fault, for there is quite as much carelessness, though not so much coarseness among them as among the boys. Mr. Jones had always been pleased with James Stevens when he heard him talking; but never so much so as when he thus gave his opinion, with diffidence but great distinctness, of the state of things among the youth of the shops and the necessity of doing something to save them from going to destruction. He laid down his book, and walked the floor a few minutes in a deep study. At length he stood still in front of the shop-boy, who was half frightened with the serious manner of Mr. Jones, who now looked as if his mind was earnestly at work with a thought of great interest and importance.

"My young friend,"—at length the minister said,—"God has sent you here to-night as a messenger to reprove me and others of our great neglect of duty, and to call us to the work which long ago we ought to have performed. I see it now, and it is wonderful that

I never saw it in this same light before. Here we have been living for years with this multitude of youth around us, and have seen that many of them are going to ruin, and some of them have perished; but we have never made any systematic efforts to lead them in the way of life—to turn them away from the road to death and hell, and to make the ways of wisdom and virtue to appear pleasant in their eyes. My son, (for I do feel as a father when I speak to you,)—my son, I thank you for coming here to talk with me about this matter, and you have put thoughts into my heart on the subject, which I mean to work out for the good of those in whose behalf you have come to plead. If we can do nothing more for them, we can at least wash our own hands of the stains which we have contracted by our past neglect. God bless you, James, and make you a blessing to others, as I know that he will. Indeed, he has already."

James was affected to tears by the earnest words and tones of the pastor, as he thus poured out his heart, and he put his head down and wept freely.

"Why do you weep?" Mr. Jones inquired "I have said nothing that ought to grieve you or give you any pain whatever."

"Oh no, sir, I know that very well; but I was thinking how strange it must look for a poor boy like me to come from the shop to talk with you about these things. You must think that I am very bold, and I do not know as I have done right."

James did not express his own mind, when he said these words. They were all true, but they were not what he wanted to say. He was melted to tears when Mr. Jones *thanked him for coming*, and spoke of him as having been sent of God to call the minister's attention to this great subject. Mr. Jones caught his idea, however, and said to him that God often employs the young and the humble to do great things for him.

"Do you recollect," said he, "the story of Naaman the Syrian general, who was sent to the Lord's prophet by the advice of a little captive girl, and he was healed of his leprosy by following her advice?"

"I remember it very well," said James, "for I have often read the story in the Bible."

"It may be," continued Mr. Jones, "that the Lord has now directed you to come here to-night, and lay this matter before me, that I may be moved to do what I and others ought to have done before. At any rate, not another

day shall pass before I make an effort to see if something cannot be done for these youth."

James sat a little while longer, and after thanking his minister with deep feeling for all that he had said, he took his leave. It is not to be wondered at that he was much affected by what had passed. He walked the streets alone for some time thinking it all over, and was more and more surprised at himself that he should undertake the work of a reformer. He found John in the room below when he went home, and told him all that had occurred. John was delighted indeed, and cried out, "It was just like you, James, I always thought you would be a man—ever since the fellows tried to laugh at you for praying."

"Stop, John; don't talk so to me," said James, with more seriousness than even he was accustomed to speak to his friend.

"And why should I not talk so to you, James? You are the only one in this city who ever said a word to me about my soul, till you took me to the Sunday-school. You taught me to pray. You led me to see the danger of bad company. You taught me the way to Jesus, who is able to cleanse me from all my sins. I never can help feeling that if it had not been for you I should have gone on in the same bad way

with Joe Akers and the rest, and have gone to hell in the end, as I fear they will."

James was touched with the simple eloquence with which his young friend poured out his feelings. He said to him—

"And now, John, you feel that the Saviour has forgiven your sins, and will prepare you for heaven!"

"Sometimes I feel so," said John; "but yet there is so much sin in my heart and I have been so wicked, and so long too, that I am almost afraid to hope that God is my friend."

"'I love them that love me,'" replied James, "is the precious promise, and I think more of it than of almost any other promise in the whole Bible. It makes me sure that if I love God, he is my friend, and will be my friend, for he will never forsake those who put their trust in him."

"But I am often afraid that I do not love God, and I am sure that I am so wicked it would be right for him to send me away for ever from his presence."

"And don't you feel sorry that you have sinned so much against God, who is so holy and so kind?"

"Oh yes, I do feel sorry, more than I can

ever tell you or anybody; but the more sorry I feel, the more wicked I feel."

"You mean just the other way," said James; "the more wicked you feel, the more sorry you are that you have been so wicked."

"Perhaps it is so," answered John—as if a new thought had struck him.

"And the more wicked you feel yourself to be," continued James, "the more willing is the blessed Saviour to pardon all your sins, and adopt you with the family of God."

"So I have always felt, since I took him to be my Saviour. But I forget him, and forget my promises; and often, when the rest of the boys are around me, I seem to be as wild and careless as any of them. I wish we could go away into the country, and live where there wouldn't be so many bad fellows about, to draw us into sin."

"I will tell you what it is, John; it don't make so much difference where we are, or what sort of boys there are about us. If we want to serve God and keep his commandments, he will give us all the help we need; and we may do as well here as up in the country. It's the HEART, John, it's the heart! If that is only kept right, there is no trouble about the rest. But I should like, as well as you would, to go up ir

the country to live. And of all things I should love to have you go to Shellton with me, and see my mother and Mary."

"You have told me so much about them that I feel," said John, "as if I knew them all. One of these days we will see them, I reckon, and have a good time there."

And so they wandered off from one subject to another—from their souls to their sisters and friends—and it was bed-time while they were in the midst of their pleasant discourse. Yet it was no great wandering either. The love of parents and sisters is not far from the love of every thing that is good. And when a boy is away from home, and exposed to ten thousand evil examples, there is hope for him still, if the love of a sister twines itself about his heart, and he cherishes the memory of her gentleness and tenderness as the sweetest treasure that he can keep. A mother's love is one of the strongest and deepest motives that sways the youthful heart; and there is in the pure affection of a sister and brother a source of pleasure that no other fountain supplies. It has been growing silently and side by side, strengthening with the growing strength of childhood and youth; fragrant with flowers of loveliness in the spring time, and yielding

fruits of beauty and joy when the summer comes on.

Love your sisters, boys! Love them tenderly, and they will be more than jewels of gold and of silver to you, when you come to be men. Love your brothers, girls! and they will be more than fortunes to you in the long years to come, if God prolongs your life.

When James laid his head upon his little pallet, called a pillow, that night, he was truly thankful that God had enabled him to make an effort for his glory and the good of others. He had often read in the books of his Sunday-school library that young people had been successful in their efforts to do good, and this was the first experiment he had ever made beyond that of talking to his companions and striving to bring them under better influences. Now he had taken a long step, and he went to sleep asking himself what was likely to come of it?

CHAPTER VIII.

The mayor—The reformers—New plans—The changes—What one boy can do.

Mr. Jones went to sleep with very much the same thoughts in his mind that James had. But he did not sleep that night until he had resolved on a great many plans for the work of reform to which his attention had been so suddenly called.

The next day he talked the matter over with one or two of his friends with whom he was in the habit of taking counsel. To his great surprise, they were quite indifferent to the subject. The good man had supposed they would take the alarm as soon as he did, and ask at once, "What is to be done?" Not at all. They had seen the thing going on the same way for twenty years, and they had no anxiety about it—they did not believe there was any use in trying to bring about any changes.

Stephen Stebbins, Esq., had been the mayor of the city for many years, and as a prominent man in Mr. Jones's congregation, and a leading manufacturer too, the pastor called in at his

office toward the close of the day, and asked him what he would think of a movement to improve the character and condition of the boys employed in the establishments? Having enjoyed no advantages of early education, and being, as he was called, "a self-made man," it was his idea that boys needed no education. "For, see," said he often, "I never went to school but three winters in my life, and I've got ahead fast enough and far enough for anybody."

He was not the most hopeful man for Mr. Jones to approach on this errand, but the minister was well aware how much people are led by the example of prominent men, and he was very anxious to enlist Mr. Stebbins in his schemes, and, if possible, to make him "the father of the plans." What the plans were, as yet he did not know himself. He was fortunate in finding the mayor in his office and quite pleased to see him. His errand was soon told. It was urged with feeling and the earnest eloquence of a true man in a good work. Mr. Stebbins heard him patiently, and when he had said all he had to say, the respectable manufacturer drew himself up in his chair, and spoke as follows:—

"'Tain't no use at all, Mr. Jones. I know

all about it. I've been here, off and on, man and boy, forty years, and I tell you boys *is* a nuisance. You can't do nothing with 'em; and the more you try, the worse it will be. Some on 'em will turn out well, and the rest on 'em will go to destruction, and I don't think there's any use in trying. You preach to them that's a-mind to go to church, and there's the Sunday-school. I give ten dollars to the library, to get books for it, only a week or two ago, and think there's jist as much done for them as there's any use a-doing."

This was the last call Mr. Jones made that day. At tea he related his labours and success, or rather his want of success; for he had not met with the first man who sympathized with him in his view of the importance of the great work in which he sought to enlist them.

Mrs. Jones heard it with grief, and, like a true wife, encouraged her husband to try again when once he had failed in a good cause. The next time, he would make an effort in another form. He would put the subject before the people in the way of his duty as a minister of the gospel, and try the power of religious considerations addressed to them as responsible for the manner in which they performed their duties to those whom Providence had committed to their care.

He preached the very next Lord's-day from the words, "Give an account of thy stewardship;" and from this he went on to show the duties of parents and masters, and of all those who had the souls of others in any way intrusted to their care. There was no doubt, he said, that parents would be called to a strict account at the bar of God for their fidelity to their children, and sad would be the reflections of those who suffered their children to perish from neglect. That mother is a monster who leaves her own child to starve, when she has the means of giving it food; or who suffers her child to fall into the well and be drowned, or into the fire and be burned, when by proper diligence and care she might save it from such an end. But far worse than such a monster is the father or the mother who neglects a child's salvation, and lets it perish in hell, instead of making use of all the means which God has provided to save it.

"Equally solemn," said he, "is the obligation of employers or masters to their servants, apprentices, clerks, and others in their service, who have not the guardianship of parental affection and authority. If they have been sent from home to be employed in your establishments, whatever may be the nature of

your business, you do not discharge your obligation when you pay them their wages and leave them to look out for themselves. They are young and giddy, and easily led astray. With hearts inclined to sin, and loving evil rather than good, they will go astray, and be ruined, unless something is done for them. And no one is guiltless who refuses to do what is in his power to save the young who are in his service from destruction."

This was good doctrine, and just as true and important in every other city as in the one where Mr. Jones preached. It took effect. God blessed it that very day. There were many present who were influenced by what they heard; and so much were they affected by it, that before they left the house they began to concert measures for the benefit of the young.

Mr. Jones had not been satisfied with merely laying down some general principles, but he had appealed to them by the facts well known to them, of very recent occurrences among them, and he asked the employers there present what they knew of the apprentices in their service *after dark*, seven nights in a week? "Who of you knows or cares," he asked, "whether one in your employ is in the house of God or in the haunts of sin on the Lord's day? Who

of you knows where your clerks and apprentices are at this moment, while I am speaking?"

This was plain language, but no plainer than the case demanded. The consciences of some were awakened. All were more or less moved by the argument and the appeal. Something must be done!

In the course of the week a meeting for consultation was held. Mr. Stone put his hand to the work with that decision of character for which he was distinguished. Even "his Honour the Mayor" was carried along by the general good feeling on the subject, when he found that the movement was likely to be popular. He was present at the meeting to *preside*, and declared that the subject had often laid heavily on his mind, and he would be glad to do every thing he could to help along so good a work.

A great reform was begun. Committees were appointed to devise the best schemes, and ways and means to carry them out. The first point to which attention was directed was the boarding-house system. It was considered essential to all other improvements, that employers should stand *in some degree* toward those in their service as to their children, and make suitable provision for their oversight when out of the shops. This was effected by

the gradual introduction of a better class of boarding-houses, with keepers employed by the manufacturers, and these keepers were persons in whom confidence could be reposed that they would take an interest in the young, and exert what influence they could to induce them to stay at home and employ themselves there, when there were no useful and attractive sources of pleasure open to them abroad.

The next step was toward opening reading-rooms and a large and well-selected library. In each extensive establishment a large room was set apart, to which all the journeymen and apprentices could have access at all hours when they were not at work. It was abundantly supplied with periodicals and books selected with care and appropriate to the object, and here they could resort with entire freedom, and feel themselves as much at home as in the shop or the boarding-house.

A general library for the youth of the place, with a large lecture-room, was provided, where courses of lectures were delivered, at the expense of the proprietors of the establishments, who soon began to find that the money thus expended was well laid out, and brought in good returns, in the increased intelligence, industry and good order of those in their service.

The course of scientific study which many of the men entered upon, led them to the investigation of a great many principles in the business they were pursuing; and for the first time it was discovered in this very enlightened city, that an *intelligent* class of workmen turn out better work, and to a far greater advantage for the capitalist, than a set of ignorant and unthinking men.

It is very true that intelligence is not religion, and a whole community may become very wise and yet be very wicked. But ignorance and vice are very apt to keep company. And the general improvement now witnessed in the youth was no less to be observed in their attention to religious duties than in other respects. They sought the house of God on the Sabbath-day. They were far more easily induced to attend Sunday-schools and Bible-classes, and the power of religious instruction began to be felt in the minds of many. The Sunday-school libraries and religious papers there distributed became popular, and hundreds of useful publications were sown widely in the very soil where they were the most needed. All these helped on the good work. It might be hard to say which was cause, and which was effect; but that was of very little consequence

when the great result was reached—*the moral improvement of a class of young men, rapidly going to ruin in the midst of the most abundant means for their salvation.*

Nor was this a mere sudden excitement. It was a permanent reform. It was begun in an earnest desire to do good to the souls of the young—to save them from sin and hell. The help of divine grace, without which all reforms are short-lived, was sought and found. God was in the work, and he will always accomplish what he begins, and establish what he makes to stand.

Of course, all this was not brought about without much opposition. Indeed, there were some rather well-disposed men who thought it was money wasted and time spent in vain to try to do any thing for the boys. "Things had always been so, and there was no use in making such an ado about them now," they said—with a very wise look, and now and then a smile of gentle contempt when the friends of reform pressed them to engage in the good work.

In the slyest way imaginable, but with all the arts they could bring to bear on the youth of the city, the keepers of the liquor-shops and bowling-alleys, and all such places of corruption, spread their snares, and strove to

retain their hold upon their former customers and friends. Alas! they were too successful in many cases. Not a few of the young men were too far gone when the new movement was made. They laughed at the whole thing, as well enough for the *boys*, but "you can't catch old birds with chaff," they said, and so they drank to the health of all the reformers, but chose to have their own way.

And they did have it. I could here write the names of several who were discharged for early intemperance, rowdyism and other vices; who soon became loafers in the streets, a disgrace to themselves and a burden to the community. Some of them did not wait to be turned off. They ran away, and became vagabonds on the earth and on the sea. I know some of them this moment who are roving widely and wildly too, abroad—mere wrecks of what they were ten years ago. Some of them were the sons of very respectable parents, who have long mourned over them as worse than dead.

But these are the exceptions. A great and good work was begun and carried out. It was the blessed means of saving many from a bitter end, and training them up for usefulness and respectability here, and happiness for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

Out of his time—Getting ahead—The new firm—Stevens and Munson—Mr. Stone and his son-in-law—The crying-stone.

THE grand design of this record is now finished, as I have shown the power of good principles to preserve a boy from being led astray by evil associates, and also the influence of one good boy over a whole community. Here I might leave the story; but its interest, and perhaps its usefulness, will be greatly increased if we go on and show, from the subsequent history of our young friends, that industry and virtue are sure of their reward.

Ten years have passed away. The first of these ten was not completed before James Stevens had so distinguished himself in the shop by his faithfulness and skill, as to attract the marked and favourable notice of the foreman, and indeed of all the older workmen. His promotion in the business was steady, and with it came an increase of his wages—a result which he had long and earnestly desired, that he might have the means of doing something

for the support of his father's family. What a full, glad heart he had when he was able to write a letter and send it off with even a *one*-dollar bank-note in it!—the first dollar that he had ever been able to call his own, when he owed nothing for his board or clothes. Mary wrote him back a letter full of congratulation, not because he had saved a dollar, but for the success of her dear brother in thus overcoming all the difficulties of beginning a new life in the midst of strangers, and resisting all the temptations of a city, where hundreds had been ruined.

Munson, too, was making progress in the same direction. He became a consistent Christian youth. The joy of his parents came back to him when they heard that their lost son was not only found, but had been brought home to Christ. John wrote to them often, and told them all about his new friend—who had been the means of bringing him back to the thoughts of home and the sweet lessons his mother had taught him in the sunny days of childhood.

The two friends were inseparable companions. They were among the first to enjoy the advantages of the new system of boarding; and they soon had the pleasure of a room to themselves,

where they could enjoy their morning and evening devotions without interruption; and the precious hours of the Sabbath they could spend with the quietness becoming that holy day. Thus they went on from year to year, improving in mind and manners, growing in grace and in the knowledge of God. They prized highly and attended with great diligence the popular lectures which were introduced for the benefit of the young mechanics; but more highly than all others, they valued the lessons they learned in God's word, and the instructions they received in God's house. They became wise unto salvation.

Once a year the boys (now grown to be young men) visited their parents; and they always arranged it so as to pass a few days with each other. Stevens felt that his poor parents had very indifferent quarters to offer his friend; but he was a welcome guest, and in his admiration of the neatness, order and peacefulness of the house, he found enough to make up for any want of the more abundant comforts which his father's farm afforded. Mary was the great charm of the Stevens's house—at least, John Munson thought so; and after his first visit there, he always had a good word to send to her when he found James was writing a letter

home. John Munson was out of his term of apprenticeship some three years before James, but he continued to work as a journeyman, and the wages that he made he was careful to lay up in the SAVINGS BANK—an institution unknown in the city until the great reform began. By the time that James Stevens had completed his term, he too had something ahead, and they began to think about going into business for themselves.

Mr. Stone had been more and more interested in the progress of his apprentices. It was by his direction that James's wages had been increased from time to time, more rapidly than they would have been but for the favour of his employer, who had been an attentive observer of the habits of his men ever since he had been roused to a sense of his high responsibility as an employer. He had been compelled to dismiss several from his service, on the ground of unfaithfulness growing out of their bad habits; and when he saw the mischief which these were working, he could not fail to notice with approbation the deportment and abilities of such a youth as James Stevens.

Mr. Stone found in James what he had long been looking for—"*one who would make his employer's interest his own*"—a young man

who would labour and watch with the same zeal and fidelity for the interest of his employer that he would if the establishment belonged to him. This is the secret of securing the favourable regard of one who "owns the concern." Most business men keep a bright look out for their own interest. It is not an easy matter to find help that suits. Very few young men are disposed to work for others as they would work for themselves. They do not think that they are working for themselves when they are serving an employer for wages. It is very short-sighted in them to take such a view of the case; for it will be found in the long run, that he who is faithful in a few things will by-and-by have the charge of many things; and though merit is sometimes suffered to lie unobserved in this world, it is generally appreciated; and success that is not built on merit is not worth having.

Mr. Stone was a fair sample of manufacturers and merchants and capitalists generally. He was willing to do well by those who were disposed to do well by him. When he saw that a young man would do no more than just enough to keep his place and get his wages, working as if he grudged every minute and every blow, Mr. Stone set him down as a lazy

and indifferent fellow, not worthy of his regard. But he saw Stevens and Munson always ready for any thing that would promote the efficiency of the business. Early and late, in season and out of season, they were always ready; and if they had owned the shop, and were making fortunes out of the business, they could not have more faithfully laboured in it.

He was now getting well on in life. Most of his children were grown up. He had taken a fancy to these young men, and he advised them to go into business on their own account. They urged the want of capital as a fatal objection; but he removed that difficulty by telling them that he would put them in the way of beginning a small concern, and they might come to him for help whenever they were in need.

They could not refuse so favourable an opening, and, taking a building of moderate dimensions, they set up business for themselves under the firm of

STEVENS & MUNSON,
COACH AND CARRIAGE MANUFACTURERS.

In a manufacturing community such as this, the social position of the people is of course not regulated by birth and education. There

are fewer distinctions in society than elsewhere. These young men found themselves at once entitled to the respect, as they had long enjoyed the entire confidence of the community, so far as they were known. James Stevens was often at Mr. Stone's house; and it came to pass that, in the lapse of time, James Stevens became the son-in-law of Mr. Stone; and not very long after that important event, Mr. Stone proposed to James to take his business and carry it on in his own name, as he, Mr. Stone, was now advanced in age, and was anxious to retire. To this James said he had but one objection; and that was, he was in partnership with John Munson, and he was not willing to leave him, however his prospects might be improved by so tempting an offer as Mr. Stone had made him. The old gentleman told him it would be very easy to get along with that matter, as Munson could come into the new arrangement, putting in whatever sum of money he might be able to command. Mr. Stone himself consented to remain, if the young men would take the entire charge of the business and let him act only as a silent partner. So they formed a new firm under the name of

STEVENS, MUNSON & CO.,
COACH, CARRIAGE AND CAR MANUFACTURERS;

and under this firm they are doing business at this very time. Mr. Stone has ceased to give any attention to the concern, but is enjoying the evening of life with his children and grandchildren around him.

James Stevens, who sent his first dollar to his parents, was glad to spend the first thousand dollars that he was worth in improving the house they occupied in Shellton; and from time to time he added to it all the comforts which the old people could desire. The same good spirit led him to provide for the education of the younger children; and as they come on in life, he will see that they are put into the way of earning an honest livelihood as he has done before them.

Next to the enjoyment that James finds in his own family and in the church of which he is now one of the main pillars, is the pleasure that it gives him to have Mary, his sister, near him.

"Mary," said he, one evening which they were spending together, "do you recollect that morning when you came out and found me on that log in the back-yard?"

"Yes, I do," said Mary; "and I remember you were thinking of running away without asking father's consent to leave home!"

"And I should have run away, and perhaps gone to ruin, if it had not been for you."

"I do not know that," replied Mary. "I hope you would not have been any worse for going away as you wanted to."

"I must have been worse for running off; for that would have been wicked, and no one has a right to expect the blessing of God when he is doing wrong. I have been greatly blessed; and I trust I have been mindful always that every good gift cometh from the hand of God."

"Greatly blessed! and so have I been," said Mary, as her eyes filled with tears at the memory of all she had passed, and the thought of the pleasant places in which her lines had now fallen.

"Mary," said James, "there is on the hill, about a mile and a half north of this city, a stone sticking up out of the ground, that I want to have taken up and put into the door-step of my house. I have never lost sight of that stone since I came to this city. They are building houses now all around it, and as soon as the streets are graded there, I know

that stone will be dug out and broken up, and I want to get it before it is gone?"

"What for, brother?" again inquired Mary, with more seriousness;—for by this time James looked almost sad.

"Why, Mary, it was on that stone I sat down, a barefooted boy, and cried, the day after I kissed you good-by, when I first came away from home."

James got the stone, and had it set by the side of the steps that lead up to the front-door of his handsome house; but no one except Mary knows why James has such a partiality for that particular stone.