

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

It must not be understood that the Harums, Larrabees, Robinsons, Elrights, and sundry who have thus far been mentioned, represented the only types in the prosperous and enterprising village of Homeville, and David perhaps somewhat magnified the one-time importance of the Cullom family, although he was speaking of a period some forty years earlier. Be that as it may, there were now a good many families, most of them descendants of early settlers, who lived in good and even fine houses, and were people of refinement and considerable wealth. These constituted a coterie of their own, though they were on terms of acquaintance and comity with the "village people," as they designated the rank and file of the Homeville population. To these houses came in the summer sons and daughters, nieces, nephews, and grandchildren, and at the period of which I am writing there had been built on the shore of the lake, or in its vicinity, a number of handsome and stately residences by people who had been attracted by the beauty of the situation and the salubrity of the summer climate. And so, for some months in the pleasant season, the village was enlivened by a concourse of visitors who brought with them urban customs, costumes, and equipages, and gave a good deal of

life and color to the village streets. Then did Homeville put its best foot forward and money in its pouch.

"I ain't what ye might call an old residerter," said David, "though I was part raised on Buxton Hill, an' I ain't so well 'quainted with the nabobs; but Polly's lived in the village ever sence she got married, an' knows their fam'ly his-t'ry, dam, an' sire, an' pedigree gen'ally. Of course," he remarked, "I know all the men folks, an' they know me, but I never ben into none o' their houses except now an' then on a matter of bus'nis, an' I guess," he said with a laugh, "that Polly 'd allow 't she don't spend all her time in that circle. Still," he added, "they all know her, an' ev'ry little while some o' the women folks 'll come in an' see her. She's putty popular, Polly is," he concluded.

"I should think so, indeed," remarked John.

"Yes, sir," said David, "the's worse folks 'n Polly Bixbee, if she don't put on no style; an' the fact is, that some of the folks that lives here the year 'round, an' always have, an' call the rest on us 'village people,' 'r' jest as countryfied in their way 's me an' Polly is in our'n—only they don't know it. 'Bout the only diff'rence is the way they talk an' live." John looked at Mr. Harum in some doubt as to the seriousness of the last remark.

"Go to the 'Piscopal church, an' have what they call dinner at six o'clock," said David. "Now, there's the The'dore Verjooses," he continued; "the 'rig'nal Verjoos come an' settled here some time in the thirties, I reckon. He was some kind of a Dutchman, I guess" ["Dutchman" was Mr. Harum's generic name for all peo-

ple native to the Continent of Europe]; "but he had some money, an' bought land an' morgidges, an' so on, an' havin' money—money was awful scarce in them early days—made more; never spent anythin' to speak of, an' died pinchin' the 'rig'nal cent he started in with."

"He was the father of Mr. Verjoos the other banker here, I suppose?" said John.

"Yes," said David, "the' was two boys an' a sister. The oldest son, Alferd, went into the law an' done bus'nis in Albany, an' afterw'ds moved to New York; but he's always kept up the old place here. The old man left what was a good deal o' propity fer them days, an' Alf he kept his share an' made more. He was in the Assembly two three terms, an' afterw'ds member of Congress, an' they do say," remarked Mr. Harum with a wink, "that he never lost no money by his politics. On the other hand, The'dore made more or less of a muddle on't, an' 'mongst 'em they set him up in the bankin' bus'nis. I say 'them' because the Verjooses, an' the Rogerses, an' the Swaynes, an' a lot of 'em, is all more or less related to each other, but Alf's reely the one at the bottom on't, an' after The'd lost most of his money it was the easiest way to kind o' keep him on his legs."

"He seems a good-natured, easy-going sort of person," said John by way of comment, and, truth to say, not very much interested.

"Oh, yes," said David rather contemptuously, "you could drive him with a tow string. He don't *know* enough to run away. But what I was gettin' at was this: He an' his wife—he married one of the Tenakers—has lived right here fer the Lord knows how long; born an' brought

up here both on 'em, an' somehow we're 'village people' an' they ain't, that's all."

"Rather a fine distinction," remarked his hearer, smiling.

"Yes, sir," said David. "Now, there's old maid Allis, relative of the Rogerses, lives all alone down on Clark Street in an old house that hain't had a coat o' paint or a new shingle sence the three Thayers was hung, an' she talks about the folks next door, both sides, that she's knowed alwus, as 'village people,' and I don't believe," asserted the speaker, "she was ever away f'm Homeville two weeks in the hull course of her life. She's a putty decent sort of a woman too," Mr. Harum admitted. "If the' was a death in the house she'd go in an' help, but she wouldn't never think of askin' one on 'em to tea."

"I suppose you have heard it said," remarked John, laughing, "that it takes all sorts of people to make a world."

"I think I hev heard a rumor to that effect," said David, "an' I guess the' 's about as much human nature in some folks as the' is in others, if not more."

"And I don't fancy that it makes very much difference to you," said John, "whether the Verjooses or Miss Allis call you 'village people' or not."

"Don't cut no figger at all," declared Mr. Harum. "Polly 'n I are too old to set up fer shapes even if we wanted to. A good fair road-gait 's good enough fer me; three square meals, a small portion of the 'filthy weed,' as it's called in po'try, a hoss 'r two, a ten-dollar note where you c'n lay your hand on't, an' once in a while, when your conscience pricks ye, a little some-

thin' to permote the cause o' temp'rance, an' make the inwurd moniter quit jerkin' the reins—wa'al, I guess I c'n git along, heh?"

"Yes," said John, by way of making some rejoinder, "if one has all one needs it is enough."

"Wa'al, yes," observed the philosopher, "that's so, as you might say, up to a certain point, an' in some ways. I s'pose a feller could git along, but at the same time I've noticed that, gen'ally speakin', a leetle too big 's about the right size."

"I am told," said John, after a pause in which the conversation seemed to be dying out for lack of fuel, and apropos of nothing in particular, "that Homeville is quite a summer resort."

"Quite a consid'able," responded Mr. Harum. "It has ben to some extent fer a good many years, an' it's gettin' more an' more so all the time, only diff'rent. I mean," he said, "that the folks that come now make more show an' most on 'em who ain't visitin' their relations either has places of their own or hires 'em fer the summer. One time some folks used to come an' stay at the hotel. The' was quite a fair one then," he explained; "but it burned up, an' wa'n't never built up agin because it had got not to be thought the fash'nable thing to put up there. Mis' Robinson (Dug's wife), an' Mis' Truman, 'round on Laylock Street, has some fam'lies that come an' board with them ev'ry year, but that's about all the boardin' the' is nowdays." Mr. Harum stopped and looked at his companion thoughtfully for a moment, as if something had just occurred to him.

"The' 'll be more o' your kind o' folk 'round,

come summer," he said; and then, on a second thought, "you're 'Piscopal, ain't ye?"

"I have always attended that service," replied John, smiling, "and I have gone to St. James's here nearly every Sunday."

"Hain't they taken any notice of ye?" asked David.

"Mr. Euston, the rector, called upon me," said John, "but I have made no further acquaintances."

"E-um'm!" said David, and, after a moment, in a sort of confidential tone, "Do you like goin' to church?" he asked.

"Well," said John, "that depends—yes, I think I do. I think it is the proper thing," he concluded weakly.

"Depends some on how a feller's ben brought up, don't ye think so?" said David.

"I should think it very likely," John assented, struggling manfully with a yawn.

"I guess that's about my case," remarked Mr. Harum, "an' I sh'd have to admit that I ain't much of a hand fer church-goin'. Polly has the princ'pal charge of that branch of the bus'nis, an' the one I stay away from, when I *don't* go," he said with a grin, "'s the Prespyterium." John laughed.

"No, sir," said David, "I ain't much of a hand for't. Polly used to worry at me about it till I fin'ly says to her, 'Polly,' I says, 'I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll compermise with ye,' I says. 'I won't undertake to foller right along in your track—I hain't got the req'sit speed,' I says, 'but f'm now on I'll go to church reg'lar on Thanks-givin'.' It was putty near Thanks-givin' time," he remarked, "an' I dunno but she thought if

she c'd git me started I'd finish the heat, an' so we fixed it at that."

"Of course," said John with a laugh, "you kept your promise?"

"Wa'al, sir," declared David with the utmost gravity, "fer the next five years I never missed attendin' church on Thanksgivin' day but *four* times; but after that," he added, "I had to beg off. It was too much of a strain," he declared with a chuckle, "an' it took more time 'n Polly c'd really afford to git me ready." And so he rambled on upon such topics as suggested themselves to his mind, or in reply to his auditor's comments and questions, which were, indeed, more perfunctory than otherwise. For the Verjooses, the Rogerses, the Swaynes, and the rest, were people whom John not only did not know, but whom he neither expected nor cared to know; and so his present interest in them was extremely small.

Outside of his regular occupations, and despite the improvement in his domestic environment, life was so dull for him that he could not imagine its ever being otherwise in Homeville. It was a year since the world—his world—had come to an end, and though his sensations of loss and defeat had passed the acute stage, his mind was far from healthy. He had evaded David's question, or only half answered it, when he merely replied that the rector had called upon him. The truth was that some tentative advances had been made to him, and Mr. Euston had presented him to a few of the people in his flock; but beyond the point of mere politeness he had made no response, mainly from indifference, but to a degree because of a suspicion that

his connection with Mr. Harum would not, to say the least, enhance his position in the minds of certain of the people of Homeville. As has been intimated, it seemed at the outset of his career in the village as if there had been a combination of circumstance and effort to put him on his guard, and, indeed, rather to prejudice him against his employer; and Mr. Harum, as it now appeared to our friend, had on one or two occasions laid himself open to misjudgment, if no more. No allusion had ever been made to the episode of the counterfeit money by either his employer or himself, and it was not till months afterward that the subject was brought up by Mr. Richard Larrabee, who sauntered into the bank one morning. Finding no one there but John, he leaned over the counter on his elbows, and, twisting one leg about the other in a restful attitude, proceeded to open up a conversation upon various topics of interest to his mind. Dick was Mr. Harum's confidential henchman and factotum, although not regularly so employed. His chief object in life was apparently to get as much amusement as possible out of that experience, and he was quite unhampered by over-nice notions of delicacy or bashfulness. But, withal, Mr. Larrabee was a very honest and loyal person, strong in his likes and dislikes, devoted to David, for whom he had the greatest admiration, and he had taken a fancy to our friend, stoutly maintaining that he "wa'n't no more stuck-up 'n you be," only, as he remarked to Bill Perkins, "he hain't had the advantigis of your bringin' up."

After some preliminary talk—"Say," he said to John, "got stuck with any more countyfit money lately?"

John's face reddened a little and Dick laughed. "The old man told me about it," he said. "Say, you'd ought to done as he told ye to. You'd 'a' saved fifteen dollars," Dick declared, looking at our friend with an expression of the utmost amusement.

"I don't quite understand," said John rather stiffly.

"Didn't he tell ye to charge 'em up to the bank, an' let him take 'em?" asked Dick.

"Well?" said John shortly.

"Oh, yes, I know," said Mr. Larrabee. "He said sumpthin' to make you think he was goin' to pass 'em out, an' you didn't give him no show to explain, but jest marched into the back room an' stuck 'em onto the fire. Ho, ho, ho, ho! He told me all about it," cried Dick. "Say," he declared, "I dunno 's I ever see the old man more kind o' womble-cropped over anythin'. Why, he wouldn't no more 'a' passed them bills 'n he'd 'a' cut his hand off. He, he, he, he! He was jest ticklin' your heels a little," said Mr. Larrabee, "to see if you'd kick, an'," chuckled the speaker, "you *surely* did."

"Perhaps I acted rather hastily," said John, laughing a little from contagion.

"Wa'al," said Dick, "Dave's got ways of his own. I've summered an' wintered with him now for a good many years, an' I ain't got to the bottom of him yet, an'," he added, "I don't know nobody that has."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

ALTHOUGH, as time went on and John had come to a better insight of the character of the eccentric person whom Dick had failed to fathom, his half-formed prejudices had fallen away, it must be admitted that he oftentimes found him a good deal of a puzzle. The domains of the serious and the facetious in David's mind seemed to have no very well defined boundaries.

The talk had drifted back to the people and gossip of Homeville, but, sooth to say, it had not on this occasion got far away from those topics.

"Yes," said Mr. Harum, "Alf Verjoos is on the hull the best off of any of the lot. As I told ye, he made money on top of what the old man left him, an' he married money. The fam'ly—some on 'em—comes here in the summer, an' he's here part o' the time gen'ally, but the women folks won't stay here winters, an' the house is left in care of Alf's sister who never got married. He don't care a hill o' white beans fer anything in Homeville but the old place, and he don't cal late to have nobody on his grass, not if he knows it. Him an' me are on putty friendly terms, but the fact is," said David, in a semi-confidential tone, "he's about an even combine of pykery an' vinger, an' about as pop'lar in gen'ral 'round here as a skunk in a hen-house; but Mis' Verjoos is