shall remember you daily in my prayers, and, if you wish, I'll write to you."

"Thank you! thank you!" said Peters, in tones which gave the words full meaning.

"Well, good-by," said the prefect.

But Peters turned his face to the wall and sobbed as though his heart were breaking.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH PERCY FINDS HIMSELF ON THE SICK-LIST.

WHEN Percy awoke next morning, the sun was up and shining brightly through the infirmary windows. He made an attempt to arise, but discovered to his astonishment that he was scarcely able to turn in his bed.

Tranquilly resigning himself to the situation, he made the sign of the cross and recited his morning prayers; which he had scarcely concluded, when the Brother entered bearing on a tray tea and toast, eggs and beefsteak.

"What a lazy boy you are!" he said. "At your age you should rise with the lark. Jump up! put on your clothes, and take a run about the grounds and get an appetite for breakfast."

"The spirit is willing," said Percy, with a smile, "but the flesh is weak. And besides, I don't think my appetite needs so much care at present."

The Brother bolstered him into a sitting position, and set the tray beside him on a small table.

"Now help yourself."

"Brother, I want to ask you a question. Don't you think it looks queer for a boy of my age and size to go around with his hair hanging down to his shoulders."

"It's very pretty, perhaps," answered the in-

firmarian, cheerfully, "but it is certainly uncommon here."

"That's just what I've been thinking," said Percy, reflectively. "And besides, it isn't convenient for a boy, though. I suppose it may be all right for girls. It gets in the way so often, you know. Sometimes when I am playing catch, my hair comes tumbling over my eyes, and that makes me muff worse than I would do otherwise. Indeed, if I didn't have hair at all, I don't think I'd hold one ball in twenty—I have such butter-fingers, as Tom says. Yes; I think I'll have it cut short. I don't want people to think I'm proud."

"Very good," said the Brother, who had listened to these naïve confessions with ill-suppressed amusement. "When you're limber enough to leave the infirmary, I'll cut your hair myself."

Percy contrived to make a fair breakfast, and had hardly finished, when who should enter but Charlie Richards!

"Why, how do you do, sir?" said Percy in some astonishment. "Won't you take a seat? Do. Bring a chair over here by my bed: I regret that I am unable to rise."

The invalid was quite serious as, with the grand air of a young prince, he made his polite requests, tendered his apologies.

Richards, somewhat confused by this anomalous reception, brought a chair beside Percy, and seated himself.

"Percy, I've come to ask your pardon," he began. "I'm awfully ashamed of myself, and I'm very glad you spoiled our mean plot. Would you mind shaking hands?"

"Certainly not," answered Percy, warmly. "I'm very glad you and I have come to be friends; and I guess it's mostly my fault that you haven't liked me. I'm so stuck-up, you know. I came here like a young peacock, and strutted around as if I weren't a boy at all. I'm not one bit surprised now that the boys teased me, and pulled my hair sometimes, and threw it over my eyes when I was trying to catch a ball. I'm sure they wanted to teach me; for they were nearly always so good-natured. Indeed, my only surprise is that they didn't plague me more."

Percy was entirely serious. Like the noble-hearted child he was, he had a habit of looking upon everything from the bright side; and even those of the very thoughtless or cruel boys who had shown him unkindness he had come to look upon as his benefactors.

"Aren't you making fun of me?" asked Richards.

"No, indeed! But I hope you're not going to be punished."

"No; but I ought to be. Mr. Middleton has begged me off. The very first thing this morning, Tom Playfair came to me and asked me to shake hands."

"Oh, it's so like Tom!" said Percy with enthusiasm. "He's the best boy I ever met. If Pancratius were alive to-day, he'd be something like Tom; I know he would."

"Indeed he is a splendid fellow," said Richards, earnestly. "And I wish I had got to know him when I first came here, instead of falling in with Peters. You know he's been expelled, don't you?"

"I heard of it last night," said Percy.

Richards, who was a fluent talker, related graphically the last night's scene in the study-hall.

"Poor fellow!" said Percy, sadly. "We must pray for him. How his mamma must feel about it!"

"He has no mother, he told me once: she died when he was little more than a baby."

"Oh dear, dear! No wonder he wasn't a very good boy. I'm sure if it hadn't been for my mamma and my sisters to care for me, I'd have been a villain. I know I would. It almost makes me cry, sometimes, when I think of poor boys growing up without a mother's love, and with no one to take the mother's place. They have such poor chances."

"It is indeed hard," assented Richards.

"And then to think of those boys not of our faith who have no mother here and no Mother Mary in heaven—no Blessed Virgin to help them, no mother at all."

"I'm going to try to join the sodality," said Richards. "I haven't been what I ought to be, so far. In fact, I haven't used a pair of beads for over a year."

"Oh gracious!" exclaimed Percy. "No wonder you fell into bad company."

"Well, I've learned a few things the last few days," Richards resumed, "and I'm going to make a new start."

"Do," said Percy, earnestly, "and I'm sure we'll be good friends."

Contrary to prevailing custom, there were no games going on in the yard after breakfast. The students were grouped into two crowds, one about Harry Quip, the other about Tom, each of whom

was holding forth with eloquence on Percy's great achievement.

"I used to think he wasn't much of a boy," said Tom, "but now I don't think I'm half as much of a boy as he is."

Greatly to Tom's delight, the prefect of studies, summoning him before studies, informed him that he might absent himself from Latin and Greek schools for the present (Tom was leader in both these branches), and give the time to teaching Percy.

Percy was, if possible, even more pleased. Sitting up in bed, when his young professor had inaugurated class, he rattled off the five declensions, the adjectives of three, two and one endings, the personal, possessive, and demonstrative pronouns —everything, in fact, as far as the verb.

"You know it like a book," said Professor Tom, "and I must say that I am—ahem!—more than—ahem!—gratified. Now let's apply your knowledge. We'll begin with something easy. What's the Latin for rose?"

"*Rosa.*"

"Exactly, genitive *rosæ*, of the first declension, and feminine, because words of the first declension have a way of being always feminine. And for moon?"

"*Luna.*"

"Quite correct," said the professor, gravely. "And from *luna* comes lunatic and lunacy, which is a learned way of saying moonstruck. Now say this, and be careful about it, or you'll choke: To the roses of the moon."

"To-the-*rosæ*-of-the-*luna*," said Percy, innocently.

The professor began laughing, and turned away his head to recover himself: he considered it unprofessional to laugh in the face of his pupil.

"Not correct, Percy. Look here: are there any articles in the Latin language?"

"Oh, that's a fact," said Percy. "Now I've got it, sure. To *rosæ* of *luna*. There, now."

"That's a little better. But what is 'to' a sign of?"

"Of the dative case."

"Just so. Now we're getting there. And then what is 'of' a sign of?"

"The genitive."

"Precisely. And in Latin, instead of using 'to' or 'of,' which are not Latin words at all, but common English, we simply put the word in the proper case."

"Oh, what a goose I was!" said Percy. "Now I understand the whole matter—*Rosis lunæ*."

"You're there now. Now say: To the rose of the moons."

"*Rosæ lunarum*."

Tom twisted these words in all possible ways, then threw in an adjective, then a verb; and having an uncommonly bright pupil to deal with, he succeeded, within the short space of one hour, in initiating Percy into the mystery of Latin cases and agreement.

"You're a good pupil, Percy. For your next lesson take the indicative mood of the verb *esse*, 'to be.'"

"Very good. But, Tom, I don't like the way of

changing the nouns in Latin for every case. In English it's much simpler. We keep the noun the same, but make the difference by using 'to' or 'for' or 'with,' or some such little word."

"I don't know that it's so much easier," answered Tom. "Did you ever hear a boy of foreign birth struggling with English prepositions and expressions?"

"No. Do they find it hard?"

"I should say so. The other day John Boes, a German boy in our class, who boards in St. Maure's village, told our teacher that he had lost his written theme under the way to school."

"Oh, what a funny expression!"

"Isn't it? And he told me, once I got talking with him, that he lived by his uncle's house, and that he took dinner by his grandmother every day out of the week."

"Oh my!"

"And in one of his class-compositions describing Spring, he wrote: 'The little chickens run around rapidly, and stuff themselves full of green grass.'"

Percy laughed so that he shook every nerve and muscle, and was minded by their soreness to restrain himself.

"And in another of his compositions, which I shall never forget," continued Tom, "he described the way he spent one of his holidays. It was short but interesting, so I learnt it by heart. It ran this way: 'I stood up from my bed at a quarter behind six, and I washed my eyes out and my neck off, and combed down my hair. I spent the rest of the day by my grandmother in the country, who wears green spectacles.'"

Percy could hardly restrain himself from violent laughter. His sense of humor was keen, and Tom's imitative powers were fairly good.

But all fun aside, Tom was correct in his opinion. Boys of foreign birth, in learning English, have great difficulty in handling prepositions and connecting words. The Latin tongue, with its clearly defined cases and set rules of grammar, they find to be far more easy.

In the afternoon the private lessons were resumed; and Percy's progress was most encouraging to the learned professor.

"If you stay here another week," said Tom, "you'll know more Latin than I."

Next day, Percy received a visit from Mr. Middleton.

"How's the young tramp?" he inquired.

"Oh, I'm just splendid!" answered Percy. "Everybody's so nice and kind. And see what a fine easy-chair I'm in. I can notice my improvement every hour, almost. To-day I found I could walk a little; and in a few days or so my legs will be as good, or rather as bad, as ever."

"Don't you find it lonesome here?"

"Oh dear! no. Tom and I have grand Latin classes. He's given me four lessons already, of an hour each, and I'm now nearly through the verb *amo*, and have already begun translating the *Historiæ Sacræ*. I've made out the first six chapters by myself. Then, you know, when I get tired studying, I've got 'Dion and the Sibyls.' It reminds me of 'Ben Hur.' Both of them are splendid books."

"It's a great gift to like good reading," said the prefect. "Whether sick or well, we can always read. For myself, I must say that books have lent happiness to many of my spare hours."

"That's so," said Percy, who, it should be remembered, previous to coming to St. Maure's had associated almost entirely with persons older than himself. "A really good book brings us into good company. When I've been reading about noble and brave men, I feel just as if I had been spending my time with them."

"Yes; but the pity is that the reverse is equally true. Those boys who are constantly reading about low characters and vile conduct come from their books as if they had been in evil company. These cheap detective and Indian stories—many of them, at least—do more harm than people in general imagine. I wish all boys were of your way of thinking, Percy. Some won't read anything unless they know that there are Indians to be killed, or trains to be robbed, or mysterious and blood-curdling murders to be explained."

"Mamma says that people like such stories only because they've been trained badly. She says that all boys are naturally good and religious, and naturally love what is brave and beautiful and noble; but by being led to consider fighting as brave, and slang as witty, they look upon everything the wrong way—'from the seamy side,' she used to say."

"Your mamma is right. I wish all the mammas in the land had her ideas."

"Oh, Mr. Middleton, she's coming here during the Christmas holidays. I want to introduce you. I know she'll like you ever so much."

"Indeed!"

"Oh yes, indeed. I like you, Mr. Middleton,"—Percy, be it remembered, was by no means bold or forward. It was in beautiful simplicity he thus spoke to the prefect, just as he was wont to speak to mother and sisters,—"and I want you to know all my sisters. They are nice girls: but they weren't one bit kinder to me at home than you've been here."

"Well, good-by," said the prefect, laughing. "I'm bashful and not used to being complimented, so I'd better retire. When you feel very grateful to me again, please pay your gratitude out in prayer for me."

"Oh, indeed I will. I do pray for you every day, Mr. Middleton, and I intend keeping it up. And I'll get my sisters to join in, too. They're far better at it than I am."

"Well, good-by."

And the prefect departed wondering.

CHAPTER XV.

"FROM GRAVE TO GAY"—A SERIOUS CONVERSATION, FOLLOWED BY A GAME OF FOOT-BALL.

IT was the afternoon of the eighth day since Percy's entrance into the infirmary. He was now in good health, but, as a matter of prudence, was still kept on the sick-list.

Tom entered to give his last private lesson in Latin. He found Percy reading a letter from home.

"You're just in time, Tom; here's a message for you. It's from sister Mary. She says: 'Tell your magnificent little friend Tom Playfair that we are all full of gratitude to him for the kindness and painstaking he has bestowed on our dear little brother. If prayers and good wishes may help him on, they shall never be wanting.' And here's something else, Tom."

He handed Tom a lace picture of the Blessed Virgin.

"It's from Minnie."

"Minnie ?"

"Yes: she's my youngest sister, only six years old. She wants sister Mary to let me know that she likes Tom Playfair better than all her sisters, except, perhaps, sister Mary. (She has her doubts even about this exception.) And she wants it known to the whole family that if she's not allowed