

"Is it!" I responded, imitating his tone. "Then they're all green—Mr. Bird and all."

"There's where you're right, little chap," said he. "They are all green—Mr. Bird and all."

"Miss Butler isn't green," I asserted stoutly.

"Oh! *isn't* she?" exclaimed Andrews, with a degree of sarcasm in his tone that quite exasperated me. "Oh, no! Miss Butler isn't green of course," he continued, as he saw my face reddening. "She's a duck—so she is! so she is! and if you are a good little boy you shall waddle around with her some time, so you shall!"

I was so angry that I am sure I should have struck him if we had been out of doors, regardless of his superior size and age. I turned sharply on my heel, and, retiring to a corner of the room, glared at him savagely, to his very great amusement.

It was at this moment that the bell rang for bed; and receiving, one after another, the kisses of Mr. and Mrs. Bird, and bidding the guests a good-night, some of whom were departing while others remained, we went to our rooms.

UNIVERSIDAD DE NUEVO LEON  
BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA  
"ALFONSO REYES"

Avdo. 1625 MONTERREY, MEXICO  
CHAPTER V.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE BIRD'S NEST AS ILLUSTRATED BY TWO  
STARTLING PUBLIC TRIALS.

SCARCELY less interesting than the exercises of reception-evening were those of the "family meeting," as it was called, which was always held on Sunday. This family meeting was one of the most remarkable of all the institutions of The Bird's Nest. It was probably more influential upon us than even the attendance at church, and our Bible lessons there, which occurred on the same day, for its aim and its result were the application of the Christian rule to our actual, every-day conduct.

I attended the family meeting which was held on my first Sunday at the school with intense interest. I suspect, indeed, that few more interesting and impressive meetings had ever been held in the establishment.

After we were all gathered in the hall, including Mrs. Bird and the teachers, as well as the master, Mr. Bird looked kindly out upon us and said:

"Well, boys, has anything happened during the week that we ought to discuss to-day? Is the school going along all right? Have you any secrets buttoned up in your jackets that you ought to show to me and to the school? Is there anything wrong going on which will do harm to the boys?"

As Mr. Bird spoke, changing the form of his question so as to reach the consciences of his boys from different directions, and get time to read their faces, there was a dead silence. When he paused, every boy felt that his face had been shrewdly read and was still under inspection.

"Yes, there is something wrong: I see it," said Mr. Bird. "I see it in several faces; but Tom Kendrick can tell us just

what it is. And he will tel. us just what it is, for Tom Kendrick never lies."

All eyes were instantly turned on Tom, a blushing, frank-faced boy of twelve. Close beside him sat Andrews, the new boy, who had so roused my anger on Friday night. His face wore the same supercilious, contemptuous expression that it wore that night. The whole proceeding seemed to impress him as unworthy even the toleration of a gentleman's son, yet I felt sure that he would be in some way implicated in Tom Kendrick's revelations. Indeed, there was, or I thought there was a look of conscious guilt on his face and the betrayal of excitement in his eye, when Tom rose to respond to Mr. Bird's bidding.

Tom hesitated, evidently very unwilling to begin. He looked blushing at Mrs. Bird and the teachers, then looked down, and tried to start, but his tongue was dry.

"Well, Tom, we are all ready to hear you," said Mr. Bird.

After a little stammering, Tom pronounced the name of Andrews, and told in simple, straightforward language, how he had been in the habit of relating stories and using words which were grossly immodest; how he had done this repeatedly in his hearing and against his protests, and furthermore, how he had indulged in this language in the presence of smaller boys. Tom also testified that other boys besides himself had warned Andrews that if he did not mend his habit he would be reported at the family meeting.

There was the utmost silence in the room. The dropping of a pin could have been heard in any part of it, for, while the whole school disliked Andrews, his arrogance had impressed them, and they felt that he would be a hard boy to deal with. I watched alternately the accuser and the accused, and I trembled in every nerve to see the passion depicted on the features of the latter. His face became pale at first—deathly pale—then livid and pinched—and then it burned with a hot flame of shame and anger. He sat as if he were expecting the roof to fall, and were bracing himself to resist the shock.

When Tom took his seat Andrews leaned toward him and muttered something in his ear.

"What does he say to you, Tom?" inquired Mr. Bird.

"He says he'll flog me for telling," answered Tom.

"We will attend to that," said Mr. Bird. "But first let us hear from others about this matter. Has any other boy heard this foul language? Henry Hulm, can you tell us anything?"

Henry was another boy who always told the truth; and Henry's testimony was quite as positive as Tom's, though it was given with even more reluctance. Other boys testified in confirmation of the report of Tom and Henry, until, in the opinion of the school, Andrews was shamefully guilty of the matter charged upon him. I was quite ignorant of the real character of the offense, and wondered whether his calling Miss Butler a duck was in the line of his sin, and whether my testimony to the fact was called for. No absurdity, such as this would have been, broke in upon the earnest solemnity of the occasion, however, and the house was silent until Mr. Bird said:

"What have you to say for yourself, Andrews?"

The boy was no whit humbled. Revenge was in his heart and defiance in his eye. He looked Mr. Bird boldly in the face; his lips trembled, but he made no reply.

"Nothing?" Mr. Bird's voice was severe this time, and rang like a trumpet.

Andrews bit his lips, and blurted out: "I think it is mean for one boy to tell on another."

"I don't," responded Mr. Bird; "but I'll tell you what is mean: it is mean for one boy to pollute another—to fill his mind with words and thoughts that make him mean; and I should be sorry to believe that I have any other boy in school who is half as mean as you are. If there is anything to be said about mean boys, you are not the boy to say it."

At first, I confess that I was quite inclined to sympathize with the lad in his view of the dishonor of "telling on" a boy, notwithstanding my old grudge; but my judgment went with the majority at last.

Mr. Bird said that, as there were several new boys in the school it would be best, perhaps, to talk over this matter of reporting one another's bad conduct to him and to the school.

"When boys first come here," said Mr. Bird, "they invariably have those false notions of honor which lead them to cover up all the wrong-doings of their mates; but they lose them just as soon as they find themselves responsible for the good order of our little community. Now we are all citizens of this little town of Hillsborough, in which we live. We have our own town authorities and our magistrate, and we are all interested in the good order of the village. Suppose a man should come here to live who is in the habit of robbing hen-roosts, or setting barns on fire, or getting drunk and beating his wife and children: is it a matter of honor among those citizens who behave themselves properly to shield him in his crimes, and refrain from speaking of him to the authorities? Why, the thing is absurd. As good citizens—as honorable citizens—we must report this man, for he is a public enemy. He is not only dangerous to us, but he is a disgrace to us. So long as he is permitted to live among us, unproved and uncorrected, every man in the community familiar with his misdeeds is, to a certain extent, responsible for them. Very well: we have in this house a little republic, and if you can learn to govern yourselves here, and to take care of the enemies of the order and welfare of the school, you will become good citizens, prepared to perform the duties of good citizenship. I really know of nothing more demoralizing to a boy, or more ruinous to a school, than that false sense of honor which leads to the covering up of one another's faults of conduct."

Mr. Bird paused, and, fixing his eye upon Andrews, who had not once taken his eye from him, resumed: "Now here is a lad who has come to us from a good family; and they have sent him here to get him away from bad influences and bad companions. He comes into a community of boys who are trying to lead good lives, and instead of adopting the spirit of the school, and trying to become one with us, he still holds the

spirit of the bad companions of his previous life, and goes persistently to work to make all around him as impure and base as himself. Nearly all these boys have mothers and sisters, who would be pained almost to distraction to learn that here, upon these pure hills, they are drinking in social poison with every breath. How am I to guard you from this evil if I do not know of it? How can I protect you from harm if you shield the boy who harms you? There is no mischief of which a boy is capable that will not breed among you like a pestilence if you cover it; and instead of sending you back to your homes at last with healthy bodies and healthy minds and pure spirits, I shall be obliged, with shame and tears, to return you soiled and spotted and diseased. Is it honorable to protect crime? Is it honorable to shield one who dishonors and damages you? Is it honorable to disappoint your parents and to cheat me? Is it honorable to permit these dear little fellows to be spoiled, when the wicked lad who is spoiling them is allowed to go free of arrest and conviction?"

Of course I cannot pretend to reproduce the exact words in which Mr. Bird clothed his little argumentative address. I was too young at the time to do more than apprehend the meaning of it: and the words that I give are mainly remembered from repetitions of the same argument in the years that followed. The argument and the lesson, however, in their substance and practical bearings, I remember perfectly.

Continuing to speak, and releasing Andrews from his regard for a moment, Mr. Bird said: "I want a vote on this question. I desire that you all vote with perfect freedom. If you are not thoroughly convinced that I am right in this matter, I wish you to vote against me. Now all those boys who believe it to be an honorable thing to report the persistently bad conduct of a schoolmate will rise and stand."

Every boy except Andrews rose, and with head erect stood squarely upon his feet. The culprit looked from side to side with a sneer upon his lip, that hardened into the old curl of defiance as he turned his eyes upon Mr. Bird's face again.

"Very well," said Mr. Bird, "now sit down, and remember that you are making rules for the government of yourselves. This question is settled for this term, and there is to be no complaint hereafter about what you boys call "telling on one another." I do not wish you to come to me as tattlers. Indeed, I do not wish you to come to me at all. If any boy does a wrong which I ought to know, you are simply to tell him to report to me what he has done, and if he and I cannot settle the matter together I will call upon you to help us. There will be frictions and vexations among forty boys; I know that, and about these I wish to hear nothing. Settle these matters among yourselves. Be patient and good-natured with each other; but all those things that interfere with the order, purity, and honor of the school—all those things that refuse to be corrected—must be reported. I think we understand one another. The school is never to suffer in order to save the exposure and punishment of a wrong-doer.

"As for this boy, who has offended the school so grossly and shown so defiant a spirit, I propose, with the private assistance of the boys who have testified against him, to make out a literal report of his foul language and forward it to his mother, while at the same time I put him into the stage-coach and send him home."

It was a terrible judgment, and I can never forget the passion depicted upon Andrews' face as he comprehended it. He seemed like one paralyzed.

"Every boy," said Mr. Bird, "who is in favor of this punishment will hold up his right hand."

Two or three hands started to go up among the smaller boys, but as their owners saw that they had no support, they were drawn down again. Four or five of the boys were in tears, and dear Mr. Bird's eyes were full. He gathered at a glance the meaning of the scene, and was much moved. "Well, Tom Kendrick, you were the first to testify against him; what have you to say against this punishment?"

Tom rose with his lips trembling, and every nerve full of

excitement. "Please, sir," said Tom, "I should like to have you give Andrews another chance. I think it's an awful thing to send a boy home without giving him more than one chance."

Tom sat down and blew his nose very loud, as a measure of relief.

I watched Andrews with eager eyes during the closing passages of his trial. When Tom rose on behalf of the whole school to plead for him—that he might have one more chance—the defiant look faded from his face, and he gave a convulsive gulp as if his heart had risen to his throat and he were struggling to keep it down. When Tom sat down, Andrews rose upon his feet and staggered and hesitated for a moment; then, overcome by shame, grief and gratitude, he ran rather than walked to where Mrs. Bird was sitting near her husband, and with a wild burst of hysterical sobbing threw himself upon his knees, and buried his face in the dear motherly lap that had comforted so many boyish troubles before. The appeal from man to woman—from justice to mercy—moved by the sympathy of the boys, was the most profoundly touching incident I had ever witnessed, and I wept almost as heartily as did Andrews himself. In truth, I do not think there was a dry eye in the room.

"Tom," said Mr. Bird, "I think you are right. You have helped me, and helped us all. The lad ought to have another chance, and he shall have one if he desires it. The rest of this matter you can safely leave to Mrs. Bird and myself. Now remember that this is never to be alluded to. If the lad remains and does right, or tries to do right, he is to be received and cherished by you all. No one of us is so perfect that he does not need the charity of his fellows. If Andrews has bad habits, you must help him to overcome them. Be brothers to him in all your future intercourse, as you have been here to-day; and as we have had business enough for one family meeting, you may pass out and leave him with us."

"Gorry!" exclaimed Jack Linton, wiping his eyes and wringing his handkerchief as he left the door, "wasn't that a freshet? Wettest time I ever saw in Hillsborough."

But the boys were not in a jesting mood, and Jack's drolleries were not received with the usual favor. Every thoughtful and sympathetic lad retired with a tableau on his memory never to be forgotten—a benignant man looking tearfully and most affectionately upon him, and a sweet-faced, large-hearted woman pillowing in her lap the head of a kneeling boy, whose destiny for all the untold and unguessed ages was to be decided there and then.

It was more than an hour before we saw anything of Mr. and Mrs. Bird. When they issued from their retirement they were accompanied by a boy who was as great a stranger to himself as he was to the school. Conquered and humbled, looking neither to the right nor the left, he sought his room, and none of us saw his face until the school was called together on Monday morning. His food was borne to his room by Mrs. Bird, who in her own way counseled and comforted him, and prepared him to encounter his new relations with the institution. The good, manly hearts of the boys never manifested their quality more strikingly than when they undertook on Monday to help Andrews into his new life. The obstacles were all taken out of his path—obstacles which his own spirit and life had planted—and without a taunt, or a slight, or a manifestation of revenge in any form, he was received into the brotherhood.

On Monday evening we were somewhat surprised to see him appear, dressed in his best, his hands nicely gloved, making his way across the village green. No one questioned him, and all understood the case as he turned in at the gate which led to the home of the village minister.

When any lad had behaved in an unseemly manner at church, it was Mr. Bird's habit to compel him to dress himself for a call, and visit the pastor with an apology for his conduct. "It is not a punishment, my boy," Mr. Bird used to say, "but it is what one gentleman owes to another. Any boy who so far forgets his manners as to behave improperly in the presence of a clergyman whose ministrations he is attending owes him an apology,

if he proposes to be considered a gentleman; and he must make it, or he cannot associate with me or my school."

In this case he had made conformity to his rule a test of the genuineness of the boy's penitence, and a trial of his newly-professed loyalty. The trial was a severe one, but the result gratified all the boys as much as it did dear Mr. and Mrs. Bird.

I was very much excited by the exposure of Andrews, and put a good many serious questions to myself in regard to my own conduct. The closing portion of the Sunday evening on which the event occurred was spent by several boys and myself in our rooms. We were so near each other that we could easily converse through the open doors, and I was full of questions.

"What do you think Mr. Bird will do with Andrews?" I inquired of Jack Linton.

"Oh, nothing: he's squelched," said Jack.

"I should think he would punish him," I said, "for I know Mr. Bird was angry."

"Yes," responded Jack, "the old fellow fires up sometimes like everything; but you can't flail a boy when he's got his head in a woman's lap, can you, you little coot?"

"That's the way my mother always flailed me, any way," I said, at which Jack and all the boys gave a great laugh.

"Flailing," said Jack, taking up a moralizing strain, when the laugh was over, "don't pay. The last school I went to before I came here was full of no end of flailing. There gets to be a sort of sameness about it after a while. Confound that old ruler! I used to get it about every day—three or four whacks on a fellow's hand; first it stung and then it was numb; and it always made me mad, or else I didn't care. There isn't quite so much sameness about a raw-hide, for sometimes you catch it on your legs and sometimes on your shoulders, but there gets to be a sort of sameness about that too. But here in this school! My! You never know what's coming. Say, boys, do you remember that day when I was making such a row out in the yard, how Mr. Bird made me take a fish-horn, and blow it at each corner of the church on the green?"

The boys laughed, and Henry Hulm said: "Yes, Jack, but you liked that better than that other punishment when he sent you out into the grove to yell for three-quarters of an hour."

"I'll bet I did," responded Jack. "I got so hoarse that time I couldn't speak the truth for a week, but that's enough better than meditating. If there's anything I hate it's meditating on my misdemeanors and things, kneeling before a tree by the side of the road, like a great heathen lunny. I suppose half the people thought I was praying like an old Pharisee. Gorry! If the minister had found me there I believe he'd have kneeled right by the side of a fellow; and wouldn't that have been a pretty show! Did any of you ever hug a tree for an hour?"

None of them ever did. "It's awful tiresome," continued Jack, upon whose punishments Mr. Bird seemed to have exercised all his ingenuities. "It's awful tiresome and it isn't a bit interesting. If it was only a birch-tree a fellow might amuse himself gnawing the bark, but mine was a hemlock with an ant-heap at the bottom. Oh! I tell you, my stockings wanted tending to when I got through: more ants in 'em than you could count in a week. Got a little exercise out of it, though—fighting one foot with the other. After all it's better than it is when there's so much sameness. It's tough enough when you are at it, but it doesn't make you mad, and it's funny to think of afterwards. I tell you, old Bird—"

"Order! Order! Order!" came from all the boys within hearing.

"Well, what's broke now?" inquired Jack.

"There isn't any Old Bird, in the establishment," said one of them.

"Mr. Bird, then. Confound you, you've put me out. I forget what I was going to say."

Here I took the opportunity to inquire whether any sins of the boys were punishable by "flailing."

"Yes," replied Jack, "big lying and tobacco. Unless a fellow breaks right in two in the middle, as Andrews did to-day, he'd better make his will before he does anything with either of

em. Old Bird—Mr. Bird, I mean—don't stand the weakest sort of a cigar; and look here, Arthur Bonnicastle" (suddenly turning to me), "you're a little blower, and you'd better hold up. If you don't, you'll find out whether there's any flailing done here."

The conversation went on, but I had lost my interest in it. The possibility of being punished filled me with a vague alarm. It was the first time I had ever been characterized as "a little blower," but my sober and conscientious chum had plainly told me of my fault, and I knew that many statements which I had made during my short stay in the school would not bear examination. I resolved within myself that I would reform, but the next day I forgot my resolution, and the next, and the next, until, as I afterwards learned, my words were good for nothing among the boys as vouchers for the truth. I received my correction in due time, as my narrative will show.

My readers will have seen already that The Bird's Nest was not very much like other schools, though I find it difficult to choose from the great variety of incidents with which my memory is crowded those which will best illustrate its peculiarities. The largest liberty was given to us, and we were simply responsible for the manner in which we used it. We had the freedom of long distances of road and wide spaces of field and forest. Indeed, there was no limit fixed to our wanderings, except the limit of time. There were no feuds between the town-boys and the school. It was not uncommon to see them at our receptions, and everybody in Hillsborough was glad when The Bird's Nest was full.

During the first week of my active study I got very tired, and after the violent exercise of the play-ground I often found myself so much oppressed by the desire for sleep that it was simply impossible for me to hold up my head. It was on one such occasion that my sleepy eyes caught the wide-awake glance of Mr. Bird, and the beckoning motion of his finger. I went to his side, and he lifted me to his knee. Pillowing my head upon his broad breast, I went to sleep; and thus holding

me with his strong arm he went on with the duties of the school. Afterwards, when similarly oppressed, or when languid with indisposition, I sought the same resting-place many times, and was never refused. A scene like this was not an uncommon one. It stirred neither surprise nor mirth among the boys. It fitted into the life of the family so naturally that it never occasioned remark.

It must have been three weeks or a month after I entered the school that, on a rainy holiday, as I was walking through one of the halls alone, I was met by two boys who ordered me peremptorily to "halt." Both had staves in their hands, taller than themselves, and one of them addressed me with the words: "Arthur Bonnicastle, you are arrested in the name of The High Society of Inquiry, and ordered to appear before that august tribunal, to answer for your sins and misdemeanors. Right about face!"

The movement had so much the air of mystery and romance that I was about equally pleased and scared. Marching between the two officials, I was led directly to my own room, which I was surprised to find quite full of boys, all of whom were grave and silent. I looked from one to another, puzzled beyond expression, though I am sure I preserved an unruffled manner, and a confident and even smiling face. Indeed, I supposed it to be some sort of a lark, entered upon for passing away the time while confined to the house.

"We have secured the offender," said one of my captors, "and now have the satisfaction of presenting him before this honorable Society."

"The prisoner will stand in the middle of the room, and look at me," said the presiding officer, in a tone of dignified severity.

I was accordingly marched into the middle of the room and left alone, where I stood with folded arms, as became the grand occasion.

"Arthur Bonnicastle," said the officer before mentioned, "you are brought before The High Society of Inquiry on a

charge of telling so many lies that no dependence whatever can be placed upon your words. What have you to reply to this charge. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"I am not guilty. Who says I am?" I exclaimed indignantly.

"Henry Hulm, advance!" said the officer.

Henry rose, and walking by me, took a position near the officer, at the head of the room.

"Henry Hulm, you will look upon the prisoner and tell the Society whether you know him."

"I know him well. He is my chum," replied Henry.

"What is his general character?"

"He is bright and very amiable."

"Do you consider him a boy of truth and veracity?"

"I do not."

"Has he deceived you?" inquired the officer. "If he has, please to state the occasion and circumstances."

"No, your Honor. He has never deceived me. I always know when he lies and when he speaks the truth."

"Have you ever told him of his crimes, and warned him to desist from them?"

"I have," replied Henry, "many times."

"Has he shown any disposition to mend?"

"None at all, your honor."

"What is the character of his falsehood?"

"He tells," replied Henry, "stunning stories about himself. Great things are always happening to him, and he is always performing the most wonderful deeds."

I now began with great shame and confusion to realize that I was to be exposed to ridicule. The tears came into my eyes and dropped from my cheeks, but I would not yield to the impulse either to cry or to attempt to fly.

"Will you give us some specimens of his stories?" said the officer.

"I will," responded Henry, "but I can do it best by asking him questions."

"Very well," said the officer, with a polite bow. "Pursue the course you think best."

"Arthur," said Henry, addressing me directly, "did you ever tell me that, when you and your father were on the way to this school, your horse went so fast that he ran down a black fox in the middle of the road, and cut off his tail with the wheel of the chaise, and that you sent that tail home to one of your sisters to wear in her winter hat?"

"Yes, I did," I responded, with my face flaming and painful with shame.

"And did your said horse really run down said fox in the middle of said road, and cut off said tail; and did you send home said tail to said sister to be worn in said hat?" inquired the judge, with a low, grum voice. "The prisoner will answer so that all can hear."

"No," I replied, and, looking for some justification of my story, I added: "but I did see a black fox—a real black fox, as plain as day!"

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" ran around the room in chorus. "He did see a black fox, a real black fox, as plain as day!"

"The witness will pursue his inquiries," said the officer.

"Arthur," Henry continued, "did you or did you not tell me that when on the way to this school you overtook Mr. and Mrs. Bird in their wagon, that you were invited into the wagon by Mrs. Bird, and that one of Mr. Bird's horses chased a calf on the road, caught it by the ear and tossed it over the fence and broke its leg?"

"I s'pose I did," I said, growing desperate.

"And did said horse really chase said calf, and catch him by said ear, and toss him over said fence, and break said leg?" inquired the officer.

"He didn't catch him by the ear," I replied doggedly, "but he really did chase a calf."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" chimed in the chorus. "He didn't catch him by the ear, but he really did chase a calf!"

"Witness," said the officer, "you will pursue your inquiries."

"Arthur, did you or did you not tell me," Henry went on, "that you have an old friend who is soon to go to sea, and that he has promised to bring you a male and female monkey, a male and female bird of paradise, a barrel of pineapples, and a Shetland pony?"

"It doesn't seem as if I told you exactly that," I replied.

"Did you or did you not tell him so?" said the officer, severely.

"Perhaps I did," I responded.

"And did said friend, who is soon to go to said sea, really promise to bring you said monkeys, said birds of paradise, said pine-apples, and said pony?"

"No," I replied, "but I really have an old friend who is going to sea, and he'll bring me anything I ask him to."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" swept round the room again. "He really has an old friend who is going to sea, and he'll bring him anything he asks him to."

"Hulm, proceed with your inquiries," said the officer.

"Did you or did you not," said Henry, turning to me again, "tell me that one day, when dining at your Aunt's, you saw a magic portrait of a boy upon the wall, that came and went, and came and went, like a shadow or a ghost?"

As Henry asked this question he stood between two windows, while the lower portion of his person was hidden by a table behind which he had retired. His face was lighted by a half-smile, and I saw him literally in a frame, as I had first seen the picture to which he alluded. In a moment I became oblivious to everything around me except Henry's face. The portrait was there again before my eyes. Every lineament and even the peculiar pose of the head were recalled to me. I was so much excited that it really seemed as if I were looking again upon the picture I had seen in Mrs. Sanderson's dining-room. Henry was disconcerted, and even distressed by my intent look. He was evidently afraid that the matter had been carried too far, and that I was growing wild with the strange excitement. Endeavoring to recall me to myself, he said in a tone of friendliness:



"Did you or did you not tell me the story about the portrait, Arthur?"

"Yes," I responded, "and it looked just like you. Oh! it did, it did, it did! There—turn your head a little more that way—so! It was a perfect picture of you, Henry. You never could imagine such a likeness."

"You are a little blower, you are," volunteered Jack Linton, from a corner,

"Order! Order! Order!" swept around the room.

"Did said portrait," broke in the voice of the officer, "come and go on said wall, like said shadow or said ghost?"

"It went but it didn't come," I replied, with my eyes still fixed on Henry.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" resumed the chorus. "It went but it didn't come!"

"Please stand still, Henry! don't stir!" I said. "I want to go nearer to it. She wouldn't let me."

I crept slowly toward him, my arms still folded. He grew pale, and all the room became still. The presiding officer and the members of The High Society of Inquiry were getting scared. "It went but it didn't come," I said. "This one comes but it doesn't go. I should like to kiss it."

I put out my hands towards Henry, and he sank down behind the table as if a ghost were about to touch him. The illusion was broken, and I started as if awakened suddenly from a dream. Looking around upon the boys, and realizing what had been done and what was in progress, I went into a fit of hearty crying, that distressed them quite as much as my previous mood had done. Nods and winks passed from one to another, and Hulm was told that no further testimony was needed. They were evidently in a hurry to conclude the case, and felt themselves cut short in their forms of proceeding. At this moment a strange silence seized the assembly. All eyes were directed toward the door, upon which my back was turned. I wheeled around to find the cause of the interruption. There, in the doorway towering above us all, and look

ing questioningly down upon the little assembly, stood Mr Bird.

"What does this mean?" inquired the master.

I flew to his side and took his hand. The officer who had presided, being the largest boy, explained that they had been trying to break Arthur Bonnicastle of lying, and that they were about to order him to report to the master for confession and correction.

Then Mr. Bird took a chair and patiently heard the whole story.

Without a reproach, further than saying that he thought me much too young for experiments of the kind they had instituted in the case, he explained to them and to me the nature of my misdemeanors.

"The boy has a great deal of imagination," he said, "and a strong love of approbation. Somebody has flattered his power of invention, probably, and, to secure admiration, he has exercised it until he has acquired the habit of exaggeration. I doubt whether the lad has done much that was consciously wrong. It is more a fault of constitution and character than a sin of the will; and now that he sees that he does not win admiration by telling that which is not true, he will become truthful. I am glad if he has learned, even by the severe means which have been used, that if he wishes to be loved and admired he must always tell the exact truth, neither more nor less. If you had come to me, I could have told you all about the lad, and instituted a better mode of dealing with him. He has been through some sudden changes of late that have had the natural tendency to exaggerate his fault. But I venture to say that he is cured. Are n't you, Arthur?" And he stooped and lifted me to his face and looked into my eyes.

"I don't think I shall do it any more," I said.

Bidding the boys disperse, he carried me down stairs into his own room, and charged me with kindly counsel. I went out from the interview humbled and without a revengeful thought in my heart toward the boys who had brought me to my trial.

I saw that they were my friends, and I was determined to prove myself worthy of their friendship.

Jack Linton was waiting for me on the piazza, and wished to explain to me that he hadn't anything against me. "I went in with the rest of 'em because they wanted me to," said Jack, "and because I wanted to see what it would be like; but really, now, I don't object so much to blowing myself. There's a sort of sameness, you know, about always telling the truth that there isn't about blowing, but it's the same thing with hash and bread and butter, and it seems to be necessary."

I told him that I wasn't going to blow any more, and that I had arranged it all with Mr. Bird. He shook hands with me and then stooped down and whispered: "You don't catch me trying any High old Society of Inquiries on a chap of your size again."

As soon as I settled into the routine of my school life the weeks flew away so fast that they soon got beyond my counting. The term was long, but I was happy in my study, happy in my companionships, and happy in the love of Mr. and Mrs. Bird, and in their control and direction. I wrote letters home every week, and received prompt replies from my father. The monthly missives to "My dear Aunt," were regularly written, though I won no replies to them. I learned, however, that Mr. Bird had received communications from her concerning myself. On one occasion she sent her love to me through him, and he delivered the message with an amused look in his eyes that puzzled me.

The summer months passed away, and that great, mysterious change came on which reported the consummation of growth and maturity in the processes and products of the year. The plants that had toiled all summer, evolving flower and fruit, were soothed to sleep. The birds stopped singing lest they should waken them. The locusts by day and the crickets by night crooned their lullaby. A dreamy haze hung around the distant hills, and here and there a woodbine lighted its torch in the darkening dingle, and the maples in mellow fire signalled

each other from hill to hill. The year had begun to die. There were chills at night and fevers by day, and stretches of weird silence that impressed me more profoundly than I can possibly reveal. It was as if the angels of the summer had fled at the first frost, and the angels of the autumn had come down, bringing with them a new set of spiritual influences that saddened while they sweetened every soul whose sensibilities were delicate enough to apprehend and receive them.

During those days I felt my first twinges of genuine homesickness. I was conscious that I had grown in body and mind during my brief absence; and I wanted to show myself to the dear ones with whom I had passed my childhood. I imagined the interest with which they would listen to the stories of my life at school; and I had learned enough of the world already to know that there was no love so sweet and strong as that which my home held for me. I had been made glad by my father's accounts of his modest prosperity. Work had been plenty and the pay was sure and sufficient. The family had been reclothed, and new and needed articles of furniture had been purchased.

I wrote to Mrs. Sanderson and asked the privilege of going home to spend my vacation, and through my father's letters I learned that she would send for me. A week or more before the close of the term I received a note addressed to me in a hand-writing gone to wreck through disuse, from old Jenks. If I were to characterize the orthography in which it was clothed, I should say it was eminently strong. I do not suppose it was intended to be blank verse, but it was arranged in disconnected lines, and read thus:

- "Bring home your Attlus.
- "I stere boldly for the Tropiccks.
- "Desk and cumpusses in the stable.
- "When this you see burn this when this you see.
- "The sea rolls away and thare is no old wooman thare.
- "Where the spisy breezes blow.
- "I shall come for you with the Shaze.
- "From an old Tari

"THEOPHILUS JENES."

This unique document was not committed to the flames, according to the directions of the writer. It was much too precious for such a destiny, and was carefully laid away between the leaves of my Testament, to be revealed in this later time.

The last evening of the term was devoted to a reception. Many parents of the boys who had come to take their darlings home were present; and sitting in the remotest corner of the dancing-room, shrunken into the smallest space it was possible for him to occupy, was old Jenks, gazing enchanted upon such a scene as had never feasted his little gray eyes before. I had learned to dance, in a boy's rollicking fashion, and during the whole evening tried to show off my accomplishments to my old friend. One after another I led ladies—middle-aged and young—to the floor, and discharged the courtesies of the time with all the confidence of a man of society. Occasionally I went to his side and asked him how he liked it.

"It's great—it's tremendous," said Jenks. "How do you dare to do it—eh? say!" said he, drawing me down to him by the lappel of my coat: "I've been thinking how I'd like to have the old woman on the floor, and see her tumble down once. I ain't no dancer, you know, but I'd dance a regular break-down over her before I picked her up and set her on her pins again. Wouldn't it be fun to see her get up mad, and limp off into a corner?"

I laughed at Jenks's fancy, and asked him what he thought of the last lady I danced with.

"She's a beauty," said Jenks. "I should like to sail with her—just sit and hold her hand and sail—sail away, and keep sailing and sailing and sailing."

"I'm glad you like her," I said, "for that is my lady-love. That's Miss Butler."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Jenks. "Well, you don't mind what I say, do you?"

"Oh no," I said, "you're too old for her."

"Well, yes, perhaps I am, but isn't she just—isn't she rather—that is, isn't she a bit too old for you?"

"I shall be old enough for her by and by," I replied.

"Well, don't take to heart anything I say," responded Jenks. "I was only talking about sailing, any way. My mind is on the sea a good deal, you know. Now you go on with your dancing, and don't mind me."

The next morning there were all sorts of vehicles at the door. There were calls and farewells and kisses, and promises to write, and hurrahs, and all the incidents and excitements of breaking up. With a dozen kisses warm upon my cheeks, from teachers and friends, I mounted the chaise, and Jenks turned the old horse toward home.

I suppose the world would not be greatly interested in the conversation between the old servant and the boy who that day drove from Hillsborough to Bradford. Jenks had been much moved by the scenes of the previous evening, and his mind, separated somewhat from the sea, out toward whose billowy freedom it had been accustomed to wander, turned upon women.

"I think a woman is a tremendous being," said Jenks. "When she's right, she's the rightest thing that floats. When she's wrong, she's the biggest nuisance that ploughs the sea, even if she's little and don't draw two feet of water. Perhaps it isn't just the thing to say to a boy like you, but you'll never speak of it, if I should tell you a little something?"

"Oh, never!" I assured him.

"Well, I s'pose I might have been a married man;" and Jenks avoided my eyes by pretending to discover a horse-shoe in the road.

"You don't say so!" I exclaimed in undisguised astonishment, for it had never occurred to me that such a man as Jenks could marry.

"Yes, I waited on a girl once."

"Was she beautiful?" I inquired.

"Well, I should say fair to middling," responded Jenks, pursing his lips as if determined to render a candid judgment. "Fair to middling, barring a few freckles."

"But you didn't leave her for the freckles?" I said.

"No, I didn't leave her for the freckles. She was a good girl, and I waited on her. It don't seem possible now, that I ever ra'aly waited on a girl, but I did."

"And why didn't you marry her?" I inquired warmly.

"It wasn't her fault," said Jenks. "She was a good girl."

Then why didn't you marry her?" I insisted.

"Well, there was another fellow got to hanging round, and—you know how such things go. I was busy, and—didn't 'tend up very well, I s'pose—and—she got tired waiting for me—or something—and the other fellow married her, but I've never blamed her. She's been sorry enough, I guess."

Jenks gave a sigh of mingled regret and pity, and the subject was dropped.

The lights were shining cheerfully in the windows as we drove into Bradford. When we came in sight of my father's house, Jenks exacted a pledge from me that all the confidences of the day which he had so freely reposed in me should never be divulged. Arriving at the gate, I gave a wild whoop, which brought all the family to the door, and in a moment I was smothered with welcome.

Ah! what an evening was that! What sad, sweet tears drop upon my paper as I recall it, and remember that every eye that sparkled with greeting then has ceased to shine that every hand that grasped mine is turned to dust, and that all those loving spirits wait somewhere to welcome me home from the school where I have been kept through such a long, eventful term.

## CHAPTER VI.

I BECAME A MEMBER OF MRS. SANDERSON'S FAMILY AND HAD A WONDERFUL VOYAGE WITH JENKS UPON THE ATLAS.

AT an early hour on the following morning, dressed in my best, I went to pay my respects to Mrs. Sanderson at The Mansion. As I walked along over the ground stiffened with the autumn frost, wondering how "my dear Aunt" would receive me, it seemed as if I had lived half a lifetime since my father led me over the same road, on my first visit to the same lady. I felt older and larger and more independent. As I passed Mr. Bradford's house, I looked at the windows, hoping to see the little girl again, and feeling that in my holiday clothes I could meet her eyes unabashed. But she did not appear, nor did I get a sight of Mr. Bradford.

The autumn was now in its glory, and, as I reached the summit of the hill, I could not resist the temptation to pause and look off upon the meadows and the distant country. I stood under a maple, full of the tender light of lemon-colored leaves, while my feet were buried among their fallen fellows with which the ground was carpeted. The sounds of the town reached my ears mellowed into music by the distance, the smoke from a hundred chimneys rose straight into the sky, the river was a mirror for everything upon it, around it and above it, and all the earth was a garden of gigantic flowers. For that one moment my life was full. With perfect health in my veins, and all my sensibilities excited by the beauty before me, my joy was greater in living than any words can express. Nothing but running, or shouting, or singing, or in some way violently spending the life thus swelled to its flood, could give it fitting utterance; but, as I was near The Mansion, all these were denied me, and I went on, feeling that passing out of the