

"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

morning sunlight into a house would be like going into a prison. Before reaching the door I looked at the stable, and saw the old horse with his head out of one window, and Jenks's face occupying another. Jenks and the horse looked at one another and nodded, as much as to say: "That is the little fellow we brought over from Hillsborough yesterday."

That Mrs. Sanderson saw me under the tree, and watched every step of my progress to the house, was evident, for when I mounted the steps, and paused between the sleeping lions, the door swung upon its hinges, and there stood the little old woman in the neatest of morning toilets. She had expected me, and had prepared to receive me.

"And how is Master Bonnicastle this pleasant morning?" she said as I entered.

I was prepared to be led into any manifestation of respect or affection which her greeting might suggest, and this cheery and flattering address moved me to grasp both her hands, and tell her that I was very well and very happy. It did not move me to kiss her, or to expect a kiss from her. I had never been called "Master" Bonnicastle before, and the new title seemed as if it were intended so to elevate me as to place me at a distance.

Retaining one of my hands, she conducted me to a large drawing-room, into which she had admitted the full glow of the morning light, and, seating me, drew a chair near to me for herself, where she could look me squarely in the face. Then she led me into a talk about Mr. and Mrs. Bird, and my life at school. She played the part of a listener well, and flattered me by her little comments, and her almost deferential attention. I do her the justice to believe that she was not altogether playing a part, thoroughly pre-considered, for I think she was really interested and amused. My presence, and my report of what was going on in one little part of the great world which was so far removed from the pursuits of her lonely life, were refreshing influences. Seeing that she was really interested, my tongue ran on without restraint, until I had told all I had to tell

Many times, when I found myself tempted to exaggerate, I checked my vagrant speech with corrections and qualifications, determined that my old fault should have no further sway.

"Well, my boy," she said at last, in a tone of great kindness, "I find you much improved. Now let us go up-stairs and see what we can discover there."

I followed her up the dark old stairway into a chamber whose windows commanded a view of the morning sun and the town.

"How lovely this is!" I exclaimed.

"You like it, then?" she responded with a gratified look.

"Yes," I said, "I think it is the prettiest room I ever saw."

"Well, Master Bonnicastle, this is your room. This new paper on the walls and all this new furniture I bought for you. Whenever you want a change from your house, which you know is rather small and not exactly the thing for a young gentleman like you, you will find this room ready for you. There are the drawers for your linen, and there is the closet for your other clothes, and here is your mirror, and this is a pin-cushion which I have made for you with my own hands."

She said this, walking from one object named to another, until she had shown me all the appointments of the chamber.

I was speechless and tearful with delight. And this was all mine! And I was a young gentleman, with the prettiest room in the grandest house of Bradford at my command! It was like a dream to me, bred as I had been in the strait simplicity of poverty. Young as I was, I had longed for just this—for something around me in my real life that should correspond with my dreams of life. Already the homely furniture of my father's house, and the life with which it was associated, seemed mean—almost wretched; and I was distressed by my sympathy for those whom I should leave behind in rising to my new estate. By some strange intuition I knew that it would not do to speak to my benefactress of my love for my father. I was full of the thought that my love had been purchased, and fairly paid for. I belonged to Mrs. Sanderson. She who

had expended so much money for me, without any reward, had a right to me, and all of my society and time that she desired. If she had asked me to come to her house and make it my only home, I should have promised to do so without reserve, but she did not do this. She was too wise. She did not intend to exact anything from me; but I have no doubt that she took the keenest delight in witnessing the operation and consummation of her plans for gaining an ascendancy over my affections, my will, and my life.

Her revelations produced in me a strange disposition to silence which neither she nor I knew how to break. I was troubled with the fear that I had not expressed sufficient gratitude for her kindness, yet I did not know how to say more. At length she said: "I saw you under the maple: what were you thinking about there?"

"I was wondering if the world was not made in the fall," I replied.

"Ah?"

"Yes," I continued, "it seemed to me as if God must have stood under that same maple-tree, when the leaves were changing, and saw that it was all very good."

With something of her old asperity she said she wished my boyish fancies would change as well as the leaves.

"I cannot help having them," I replied, "but if you don't like them I shall never speak of them again."

"Now I tell you what I think," said she, assuming her pleasant tone again. "I think you would like to be left alone for a little while."

"Oh! I should like to be alone here in my own room ever so much!" I responded.

"You can stay here until dinner if you wish," she said, and then she bent down and kissed my forehead, and retired.

I listened as she descended the stairs, and when I felt that she was far enough away, I rose, and carefully locked my door. Then I went to the mirror to see whether I knew myself, and to find what there was in me that could be addressed as "Mas-

ter," or spoken of as "a young gentleman." Then I ransacked the closet, and climbed to a high shelf in it, with the vague hope that the portrait which had once excited my curiosity was hidden there. Finding nothing I had not previously seen, I went to the window, and sat down to think.

I looked off upon the town, and felt myself lifted immeasurably above it and all its plodding cares and industries. This was mine. It had been won without an effort. It had come to me without a thought or a care. I believed there was not a boy in the whole town who possessed its equal, and I wondered what there was in me that should call forth such munificence from my benefactress. If my good fortune as a boy were so great, what brilliant future awaited my manhood? Then I thought of my father, working humbly and patiently, day after day, for bread for his family, and of the tender love which I knew his heart held for me; and I wondered why God should lay so heavy a burden upon him and so marvelously favor me. Would it not be mean to take this good fortune and sell my love of him and of home for it? Oh! if I could only bring them all here, to share my sweeter lot, I should be content, but I could not even speak of this to the woman who had bestowed it on me.

It all ended in a sweet and hearty fit of crying, in which I sobbed until the light faded out of my eyes, and I went to sleep. I had probably slept two hours when a loud knock awakened me, and, staggering to my feet, and recognizing at last the new objects around me, I went to the door, and found Jenks, in his white apron, who told me that dinner was waiting for me. I gave a hurried glance at the mirror and was startled to find my eyes still red; but I could not wait. As he made way for me to pass down before him, he whispered: "Come to the stable as soon as you can after dinner. The atlas and compasses are ready."

I remembered then that he had borrowed the former of me on the way home, and secreted it under the seat of the chaise.

Mrs. Sanderson was already seated when I entered the dining-room.

"Your eyes are red," she said quickly.

"I have been asleep, I think," I responded.

Jenks mumbled something, and commenced growling. His mistress regarded me closely, but thought best not to push inquiries further.

Conversation did not promise to be lively, especially in the presence of a third party, between whom and myself there existed a guilty secret which threatened to sap the peace of the establishment.

At length I said: "Oh! I did not think to tell you anything about my chum."

"What is his name?" she inquired.

"His name is Henry Hulm," I replied; and then I went on at length to describe his good qualities and to tell what excellent friends we had been. "He is not a bit like me," I said, "he is so steady and quiet."

"Do you know anything about his people?" inquired the lady.

"No, he never says anything about them, and I am afraid he is poor," I replied.

"How does he dress?"

"Not so well as I do, but he is the neatest and carefulest boy in the school."

"Perhaps you would like to invite him here to spend your vacation with you, when you come home again," she suggested.

"May I? Can I?" I eagerly inquired.

"Certainly. If he is a good, respectable boy, and you would like him for a companion here, I should be delighted to have you bring him."

"Oh! I thank you: I am so glad! I'm sure he'll come, and he can sleep in my room with me."

"That will please you very much, will it not?" and the lady smiled with a lively look of gratification.

I look back now with mingled pity of my simple self and admiration of the old lady who thus artfully wove her toils about me. She knew she must not alarm my father, or in-

prison me, or fail to make me happy in the gilded trap she had set for me. All her work upon me was that of a thorough artist. What she wanted was to sever me and my sympathy from my father and his home, and to make herself and her house the center of my life. She saw that my time would pass slowly if I had no companion; and Henry's coming would be likely to do more than anything to hold me. My pride would certainly move me to bring him to my room, and she would manage the rest.

After dinner, I asked liberty to go to the stable. I was fond of horses and all domestic animals. I made my request in the presence of Jenks, and that whimsical old hypocrite had the hardihood to growl and grumble and mutter as if he regarded the presence of a boy in the stable as a most offensive intrusion upon his special domain. I could not comprehend such duplicity, and looked at him inquiringly.

"Don't mind Jenks," said Madame: "he's a fool."

Jenks went growling out of the room, but, as he passed me, I caught the old cunning look in his little eyes, and followed him. When the door was closed he cut a pigeon-wing, and ended by throwing one foot entirely over my head. Then he whispered: "You go out and stay there until I come. Don't disturb anything." So I went out, thinking him quite the nimblest and queerest old fellow I had ever seen.

I passed half an hour patting the horse's head, calling the chickens around me, and wondering what the plans of Jenks would be. At length he appeared. Walking tiptoe into the stable, he said: "The old woman is down for a nap, and we've got two good hours for a voyage. Now, messmate, let's up sails and be off!"

At this he seized a long rope which depended from one of the great beams above, and pulled away with a "Yo! heave oh!" *sotto voce*, (letting it slide through his hands at every call), as if an immense spread of canvas was to be the result.

"Belay there!" he said at last, in token that his ship was under way, and the voyage begun.

"It's a bit cold, my hearty, and now for a turn on the quarter-deck," he said, as he grasped my hand, and walked with me back and forth across the floor. I was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter, but walked with him, nothing loth. "Now we plough the billow," said Jenks. "This is what I call gay."

After giving our blood a jog, and getting into a glow, he began to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" I inquired.

"She made me promise that I wouldn't tease or trouble you, she did!" and then he laughed again. "Oh yes; Jenks is a fool, he is! Jenks is a tremendous fool!" Then he suddenly sobered, and suggested that it was time to examine our chart. Dropping my hand, he went to a bin of oats, built like a desk, and opening from the top with a falling lid. To this lid he had attached two legs by hinges of leather, which supported it at a convenient angle. Then he brought forth two three-legged milking-stools and placed them before it, and plunging his hand deep down into the oats drew out my atlas, neatly wrapped in an old newspaper. This he opened before me, and we took our seats.

"Now where are we?" said Jenks.

I opened to the map of the world, and said: "Here is New York, and there is Boston. We can't be very far from either of 'em, but I think we are between 'em."

"Very well, let it be between 'em," said Jenks. "Now what?"

"Where will you go?" I inquired.

"I don't care where I go; let us have a big sail, now that we are in for it," he replied.

"Well, then, let's go to Great Britain," I said.

"Isn't there something that they call the English Channel?" inquired Jenks with a doubtful look.

"Yes, there is," and cruising about among the fine type, I found it.

"Well, I don't like this idea of being out of sight of land

It's dangerous, and if you can't sleep, there is no place to go to. Let's steer straight for the English Channel—straight as a ramrod."

"But it will take a month," I said; "I have heard people say so a great many times."

"My! A month? Out of sight of land? No old woman and no curry-comb for a month? Hey de diddle! Very well, let it be a month. Hullo! it's all over! Here we are: now where are we on the map?"

"We seem to be pretty near to Paris," I said, "but we don't quite touch it. There must be some little places along here that are not put down. There's London, too: that doesn't seem to be a great way off, but there's a strip of land between it and the water."

"Why, yes, there's Paris," said Jenks, looking out of the stable window, and down upon the town. "Don't you see? It's a fine city. I think I see just where Napoleon Bonaparte lives. But it's a wicked place; let's get away from it. Bear off now;" and so our imaginary bark, to use Jenks's large phrase, "swept up the channel."

Here I suggested that we had better take a map of Great Britain, and we should probably find more places to stop at. I found it easily, with the "English Channel" in large letters.

"Here we are!" I said: "see the towns!"

"My! Ain't they thick!" responded Jenks. "What is that name running lengthwise there right through the water?"

"That's the 'Strait of Dover,'" I replied.

"Well, then, look out! We're running right into it! It's a confounded narrow place, any way. Bear away there; take the middle course. I've heard of them Straits of Dover before. They are dangerous; but we're through, we're through. Now where are we?"

"We are right at the mouth of the Thames," I replied, "and here is a river that leads straight up to London."

"Cruise off! cruise off!" said Jenks. "We're in an enemy's country. Sure enough, there's London;" and he looked out

of the window with a fixed gaze, as if the dome of St. Paul's were as plainly in sight as his own nose. After satisfying himself with a survey of the great city, he remarked, interrogatively, "Haven't we had about enough of this? I want to go where the spicy breezes blow. Now that we have got our sea-legs on, let us make for the equator. Bring the ship round; here we go; now what?"

"We have got to cross the Tropic of Cancer, for all that I can see," said I.

"Can't we possibly dodge it?" inquired Jenks with concern.

"I don't see how we can," I replied. "It seems to go clean around."

"What is it, any way?" said he.

"It don't seem to be anything but a sort of dotted line," I answered.

"Oh well, never mind; we'll get along with that," he said encouragingly. "Steer between two dots, and hold your breath. My uncle David had one of them things."

Here Jenks covered his mouth and nose with entire gravity, and held them until the imaginary danger was past. At last, with a red face, he inquired, "Are we over?"

"All over," I replied; "and now where do you want to go?"

"Isn't there something that they call the Channel of Mozambique?" said Jenks.

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, I've always thought it must be a splendid sheet of water! Yes: Channel of Mozambique—splendid sheet of water! Mozambique! Grand name, isn't it?"

"Why, here it is," said I, "away round here. We've got to run down the coast of Africa, and around the Cape of Good Hope, and up into the Indian Ocean. Shall we touch anywhere?"

"No, I reckon it isn't best. The niggers will think we are after 'em, and we may get into trouble. But look here, boy! We've forgot the compasses. How we ever managed to get across the Atlantic without 'em is more than I know. That's

one of the carelessst things I ever did. I don't suppose we could do it again in trying a thousand times."

Thereupon he drew from a corner of the oat-bin an old pair of carpenter's compasses, between which and the mariner's compass neither he nor I knew the difference, and said: "Now let us sail by compasses, in the regular way."

"How do you do it?" I inquired.

"There can't be but one way, as I see," he replied. "You put one leg down on the map, where you are, then put the other down where you want to go, and just sail for that leg."

"Well," said I, "here we are, close to the Canary Islands. Put one leg down there, and the other down here at St. Helena."

After considerable questioning and fumbling and adjusting of the compasses, they were held in their place by the ingenious navigator, while we drove for the lonely island. After a considerable period of silence, Jenks broke out with: "Doesn't she cut the water beautiful? It takes the Jane Whittlesey!"

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "I didn't know you had a name for her."

"Yes," said Jenks with a sigh—still holding fast to the compasses, as if our lives depended upon his faithfulness—"Jane Whittlesey has been the name of every vessel I ever owned. You know what I told you about that young woman?"

"Yes," I said; "and was that her name?"

Jenks nodded, and sighed again, still keeping his eye upon the outermost leg of the instrument, and holding it firmly in its place.

"Here we are," he exclaimed at last. "Now let's double over and start again."

So the northern leg came around with a half circle, and went down at the Cape of Good Hope. The Tropic of Capricorn proved less dangerous than the northern corresponding line, and so, at last, sweeping around the cape, we brought that leg of the compasses which we had left behind toward the equator again, and, working up on the map, arrived at our destination.

"Well, here we are in the Channel of Mozambique," I said
 "What's that blue place there on the right hand side of it?"
 he inquired.

"That's the Island of Madagascar.

"You don't tell me!" he exclaimed. "Well! I never expected to be so near that place. The Island of Madagascar! The Island of Mad-a-gas-car! Let's take a look at it."

Thereupon he rose and took a long look out of the window. "Elephants — mountains — tigers — monkeys — golden sands — cannibals," he exclaimed slowly, as he apprehended *seriatim* the objects he named. Then he elevated his nose, and began to sniff the air, as if some far-off odor had reached him on viewless wings. "Spicy breezes, upon my word!" he exclaimed. "Don't you notice 'em, boy? Smell uncommonly like hay; what do you think?"

We had after this a long and interesting cruise, running into various celebrated ports, and gradually working toward home. I was too busy with the navigation to join Jenks in his views of the countries and islands which we passed on the voyage, but he enjoyed every league of the long and eventful sail. At last the Jane Whittlesey ran straight into Mrs. Sanderson's home inclosures, and Jenks cast anchor by dropping a huge stone through a trap-door in the floor.

"It really seems good to be at home again, and to feel everything standing still, doesn't it?" said he. "I wonder if I can walk straight," he went on, and then proceeded to ascertain by actual experiment. I have laughed a hundred times since at the recollection of the old fellow's efforts to adapt himself to the imaginary billows of the stable-floor.

"I hope I shall get over this before supper-time," said Jenks, "for the old woman will know we have been to sea."

I enjoyed the play quite as well as my companion did, but even then I did not comprehend that it was simply play, with him. I supposed it was a trick of his to learn something of geography before cutting loose from service and striking out

into the great world by way of the ocean. So I said to him:
 "What do you do this for?"

"What do I do it for? What does anybody go to sea for?" he inquired with astonishment.

"Well, but you don't go to the real sea, you know," I suggested.

"Don't I! That's what the atlas says, any way, and the atlas ought to know," said Jenks. "At any rate it's as good a sea as I want at this time of year, just before winter comes on. If you only think so, it's a great deal better sailing on an atlas than it is sailing on the water. You have only to go a few inches, and you needn't get wet, and you can't drown. You can see everything there is in the world by looking out of the window, and thinking you do; and what's the use spending so much time as people do travelling to the ends of the earth? The only thing that troubles me is that Bradford's Irishman down here has really come across the ocean, and I don't s'pose he cared any more about it than if he'd been a pig. If I could only have had a real sail on the ocean, and got through with it, I don't know but I should be ready to die."

"But you will have, some time, you know," I said encouragingly.

"Do you think so?"

"When you run away you will," I said.

"I don't know," he responded dubiously. "I think perhaps I'd better run away on an atlas a few times first, just to learn the ropes."

Here we were interrupted by the tinkle of a bell, and it was marvelous to see how quickly the atlas disappeared in the oar and the lid was closed over it. Jenks went to the house and I followed him.

Mrs. Sanderson did not inquire how I had spent my time. It was enough for her that I had in no way disturbed her after dinner nap, and that I came when she wanted me. I told her I had enjoyed the day very much, and that I hoped my father would let me come up soon and occupy my room. Then I

went up-stairs and looked the room all over again, and tried to realize the extent and value of my new possession. When I went home, toward night, she loaded me with nice little gifts for my mother and the children, and I lost no time in my haste to tell the family of the good fortune that had befallen me. My mother was greatly delighted with my representations, but my father was sad. I think he was moved to sever my connection with the artful woman at once, and take the risks of the step, but a doubt of his own ability to do for me what it was her intention and power to do withheld him. He consented at last to lose me because he loved me, and on the following day I went out from my home with an uneasy conviction that I had been bought and paid for, and was little better than an expensive piece of property. What she would do with me I could not tell. I had my doubts and my dreams, which I learned to keep to myself; but in the swift years that followed there was never an unkind word spoken to me in my new home, or any unkind treatment experienced which made me regret the step I had taken.

I learned to regard Mrs. Sanderson as the wisest woman living; and I found, as the time rolled by, that I had adopted her judgments upon nearly every person and every subject that called forth her opinion. She assumed superiority to all her neighbors. She sat on a social throne, in her own imagination. There were few who openly acknowledged her sway, but she was imperturbable. Wherever she appeared, men bowed to her with profoundest courtesy, and women were assiduous in their politeness. They may have flouted her when she was out of sight, but they were flattered by her attentions, and were always careful in her presence to yield her the pre-eminence she assumed. No man or woman ever came voluntarily into collision with her will. Keen, quiet, alert, self-possessed, she lived her own independent life, asking no favors, granting few, and holding herself apart from, and above, all around her. The power of this self-assertion, insignificant as she was in physique, was simply gigantic.

To this height she undertook to draw me, severing one by one the sympathies which bound me to my family and my companions, and making me a part of herself. I remember distinctly the processes of the change, and their result. I grew more silent, more self-contained, more careful of my associations. The change in me had its effect in my own home. I came to be regarded there as a sort of superior being; and when I went there for a day the best things were given me to eat, and certain proprieties were observed by the family, as if a rare stranger had come among them. In the early part of my residence at The Mansion, some of the irreverent little democrats of the street called me "Mother Sanderson's Baby," but even this humiliating and maddening taunt died away when it was whispered about that she was educating her heir, and that I should be some day the richest young man in the town.