## CHAPTER XXIII.

I TAKE ARTHUR BONNICASTLE UPON MY OWN HANDS AND SUCCEED WITH HIM.

In a small town like Bradford, the birds have a way of collecting and carrying news, quite unknown in more considerable cities; and, apparently, a large flock of them had been around The Mansion during the events narrated in the preceding chapter; for, on the following day, the community was alive with rumors concerning them. A daily paper had just been established, whose enterprising editor deemed it his special duty and privilege to bruit such personal and social intelligence as he could gain by button-holing his victims on the street, or by listening to the voluntary tattle of busy-bodies. My good angel, Mr. Bradford, apprehending an unpleasant notoriety for me, and for the occurrences associated with my name, came to me at once and heard my story. Then he visited the editor, and so represented the case to him that, on the second morning after taking up my home with my father, I had the amusement of reading a whole column devoted to it. The paper was very wet and very dirty; and I presume that that column was read with more interest, by all the citizens of Bradford, than anything of national import which it might have contained. I will reproduce only its opening and closing paragraphs:

ROMANCE IN HIGH LIFE.—Our little city was thrown into intense excitement yesterday, by rumors of a most romantic and extraordinary character, concerning occurrences at

A CERTAIN MANSION,

which occupies an elevated position, locally, socially, and historically. It



appears that a certain estimable young man, whose heroic feat cost him so dearly in a recent struggle with

A MIDNIGHT ASSASSIN,

is the natural heir to the vast wealth which he so gallantly rescued from spoliation, and that

A CERTAIN ESTIMABLE LADY,

well known to our citizens as the companion of a certain other lady, also well known, is his mother. Nothing more startling than the developments in this case has occurred in the eventful history of our city.

A MYSTERY

has always hung around these persons, and we are not among those who are surprised at the solution. But the most remarkable part of the story is that which relates to the young man who has been reared with the expectation of becoming the owner of this magnificent estate. Upon learning the relations of the young man previously alluded to, to his benefactress, he at once, in loyalty to his friend and his own personal honor, renounced forever his expectations, surrendered his position to the heir so strangely discovered, and took up his abode in his father's humble home. This act, than which none nobler was ever performed, was, we are assured by as good authority as there is in *Bradford*, wholly voluntary.

WE GIVE THAT YOUNG MAN OUR HAT—

Miller & Sons' best—and assure him that, in whatever position he may choose to take in this community, he will have such support as our humble editorial pen may give him. We feel that no less than this is due to his nobility of character.

After half a dozen paragraphs in this strain, the article closed as follows:—

It is rumored that the newly-found heir has formed

A TENDER ALLIANCE

with a beautiful young lady—a blonde—who is not a stranger in the family of our blue-eyed hero—an alliance which will enable her to

SHARE HIS BONNY CASTLE,

and unite the fortunes of the two families in indissoluble bonds. Long may they wave!

Far be it from us, enthroned upon the editorial tripod, and wielding the scepter of the press, to invade the sanctities of private life, and we therefore withhold all names. It was due to the parties concerned and to the public, however, to state the facts, and put an end to gossip and conjecture among those who have no better business than that of tampering with the secrets of the hearthstone and the heart.

During the day, I broke through the reluctance which I naturally felt to encounter the public gaze, after this exposure of my affairs, and went out upon the street. Of course, I found myself the object of universal curiosity and the subject of universal remark. Never in my life had I been treated with more deference. Something high in position had been won back to the sphere of common life; and common life was profoundly interested. My editorial friend had so represented the case as to win for me something better than sympathy; and a good-natured reticence under all inquiries, on my own part, seemed to enhance the respect of the people for me. But I had something more important on hand than seeking food for my vanity. I had myself on hand and my future; and the gossip of the community was, for the first time in my life, a matter of indifference.

It occurred to me during the day that an academy, which a number of enterprising people had built two or three years before, had been abandoned and closed, with the conclusion of the spring term, for lack of support, and that it would be possible for me to secure it for the field of my future enterprise. I called at once upon those who held the building in charge, and, before I slept, closed a bargain, very advantageous to myself, which placed it at my disposal for a term of three years. The next day I visited my friend the editor, whom I found with bare arms, well smeared with ink, at work at his printer's case, setting up the lucubrations of the previous night. He was evidently flattered by my call, and expressed the hope that what he had written with reference to myself was satisfactory. Assuring him that I had no fault to find with him, I exposed my project, which not only met with his hearty approval, but



the promise of his unstinted support. From his office I went directly to the chambers of the principal lawyer of the city, and entered my name as a student of law. I took no advice, I sought no aid, but spoke freely of my plans to all around me. I realized almost at once how all life and circumstance bend to the man who walks his own determined way, toward an object definitely apprehended. People were surprised by my promptness and energy, and indeed I was surprised by myself. My dreams of luxury and ease were gone, and the fascinations of enterprise and action took strong possession of me. I was busy with my preparations for school and with study all day, and at night, every moment stolen from sleep was filled with planning and projecting. My father was delighted, and almost lived and moved and had his being in me. To him I told everything; and the full measure of his old faith in me was recovered.

When the autumn term of the academy opened, of which I was principal, and my sister Claire the leading assistant, every seat was full. Many of the pupils had come from the towns around, though the principal attendance was from the city, and I entered at once upon a life of the most fatiguing labor and the most grateful prosperity. My purse was filled at the outset with the advanced installment upon the term-bills, so that both Claire and myself had a delightful struggle with my father in our attempt to compel him to receive payment for our board and lodgings. Our little dwelling was full of new life. Even my mother was shaken from her refuge of faithlessness, and compelled to smile. Since those days I have had many pleasant experiences; but I doubt whether I have ever spent three years of purer happiness than those which I passed with Claire beneath the roof of that old academy—old, now, for though put to strange uses, the building is standing still.

There was one experience connected with this part of my history of which it is a pain to speak, because it relates to the most subtle and sacred passage of my inner life; but having led the reader thus far, I should be disloyal to my Christian

confession were I to close my lips upon it and refuse its revelation.

From the hour when I first openly joined a band of Christian disciples, I had been conscious of a mighty arm around me. Within the circuit of that restraining power I had exercised an almost unrestricted liberty. I had violated my conscience in times and ways without number, yet, when tempted to reckless wandering, I had touched the obstacle and recoiled. In whatever direction I might go, I always reached a point where I became conscious of its living pulsations and its unrelaxing embrace. Unseen, impalpable, it was as impenetrable as adamant and as strong as God. The moment I assumed responsibility over other lives, and gave my own life in counsel and labor for the good of those around me, the arm came closer, and conveyed to me the impression of comfort and health and safety. I thanked God for the restraint which that voluntary act of mine had imposed upon me.

But this was not all. My life had come into the line of the divine plan for my own Christian development. I had been a recipient all my life; now I had become an active power. I had all my life been appropriating the food that came to me, and amusing myself with the playthings of fancy and imagination; now I had begun to act and expend in earnest work for worthy objects. The spiritual attitude effected by this change was one which brought me face to face with all that was unworthy in me and my past life, and I felt myself under the operations of a mighty regenerating power, which I had no disposition to resist. I could not tell whence it came or whither it went. If it was born of myself, it was a psychological experience which I could neither analyze nor measure. It was upon me for days and weeks. It was within me like leaven in the lump, permeating, enlivening, lifting me. It was like an eye-stone in the eye, searching for dust in every place and plication, and removing it, until the orb was painless and the vision pure. There was no outcry, no horror of great darkness, no disposition to publish, but a subtle, silent, sweet



revolution. As it went on within me, I grew stronger day by day, and my life and work were flooded with the light of a great and fine significance. Sensibility softened and endurance hardened under it.

Spirit of God! Infinite Mother! Thou didst not thunder on Sinai amidst smoke and tempest; but in the burning bush thou didst appear in a flame that warmed without withering, and illuminated without consuming. Thou didst not hang upon the cross on Calvary, but thou didst stir the hearts of the bereaved disciples as they walked in the way with their risen Lord. All gentle ministries to the spiritual life of men emanate from Thee. Thou brooding, all-pervading presence, holding a weeping world in thy maternal embrace, with counsel and tender chastening and holy inspirations, was it thy arms that had been around me all these years, and came closer and closer, until I felt myself folded to a heart that flooded me with love? I only know that streams rise no higher than their fountain, and that the fountain of spiritual life in me had sunk and ceased to flow long before this time. Could anything but a long, strong rain from the skies have filled it? All the things we see are types of things we do not see—visible expressions of the things and thoughts of God. All the phenomena of nature—the persistent radiance of the sun and moon—the coming, going, and unloading, and the grace and glory of the clouds—the changes of the seasons and of the all-enveloping atmosphere, are revelations to our senses and our souls of those operations and influences which act upon our spiritual natures. I find no miracle in this; only nature speaking without material interpreters—only the God of nature shunning the coarser passages of the senses, and finding his way direct to the Spirit by means and ministries and channels of his own.

Was this conversion? It was not an intellectual matter at all. I had changed no opinions, for the unworthy opinions I had acquired had fallen from me, one by one, as my practice had conformed more and more to the Christian standard. Indeed, they were not my opinions at all, for they had been

assumed in consequence of the necessity of somewhat bringing my spiritual and intellectual natures into harmony. My deepest intellectual convictions remained precisely what they had always been. No, it was a spiritual quickening. It had been winter with me, and I had been covered with snow and locked with ice. Did I melt the bonds which held me, by warmth self-generated? Does the rose do this or the violet? There was a sun in some heaven I could not see that shone upon me. There was a wind from some far latitude that breathed upon me. To be quickened is to be touched by a vital finger. To be quickened is to receive a fructifying flood from the great source of life.

The change was something better than had happened to me under Mr. Bedlow's preaching, long years before; but neither change was conversion. Far back in childhood, at my mother's knee, at my father's side, and in my own secret chamber, those changes were wrought which had directed my life toward a Christian consummation. My little rivulet was flowing toward the sea, increasing as it went, when it was disturbed by the first awful experiences of my life; and its turbid waters were never, until this latter time, wholly clarified. My little plant, tender but upright, was just rising out of its nursing shadows into the light when the great tempest swept over it. If my later experience was conversion, then conversion may come to a man every year of his life. It was simply the revivification and reinforcement of the powers and processes of spiritual life. It was ministry, direct and immediate, to development and growth; and with me it was complete restoration to the track of my Christian boyhood, and a thrusting out of my life of all the ideas, policies and results of that terrible winter which I can never recall without self-pity and humiliation.

The difference in the respective effects of the two great crises of my spiritual history upon my power to work illustrated better than anything else, perhaps, the difference in their nature. The first was a dissipation of power. I could not work while it lasted, and it was a long time before I could



gather and hold in hand my mental forces. The second was an accession of strength and the power of concentration. I am sure that I never worked harder or better than I did during the time that my late change was in progress. It was an uplifting, enlightening and strengthening inspiration. One was a poison, the other was a cure; one disturbed, the other harmonized; one was surcharged with fear, the other brimmed with hope; one exhausted, the other nourished and edified me; one left my spirit halting and ready to stumble, the other left it armed and plumed.

After my days at the academy, came my evening readings of the elementary books of the profession which I had chosen. There were no holidays for me; and during those three years I am sure I accomplished more professional study than nine-tenths of the young men whose every day was at their disposal. I was in high health and in thorough earnest. My physical powers had never been overtasked, and I found myself in the possession of vital resources which enabled me to accomplish an enormous amount of labor. I have no doubt that there were those around me who felt a measure of pity for me, but I had no occasion to thank them for it. I had never before felt so happy, and I learned then, what the world is slow to learn, that there can be no true happiness that is not the result of the action of harmonious powers steadily bent upon pursuits that seek a worthy end. Comfort of a certain sort there may be, pleasure of a certain quality there may be, in ease and in the gratification of that which is sensuous and sensual in human nature; but happiness is never a lazy man's dower nor a sensualist's privilege. That is reserved for the worker, and can never be grasped and held save by true manhood and womanhood. It was a great lesson to learn, and it was learned for a lifetime; for, in this eventide of life, with the power to the rest, I find no joy like that which comes to me at the table on which, day after day, I write the present record.

During the autumn and winter which followed the assump-

tion of my new duties, I was often at The Mansion, and a witness of the happiness of its inmates. Mrs. Sanderson was living in a new atmosphere. Every thought and feeling seemed to be centered upon her lately discovered treasure. She listened to his every word, watched his every motion, and seemed to feel that all her time was lost that was not spent in his presence. The strong, indomitable, self-asserting will which she had exercised during all her life was laid at his feet. With her fortune she gave herself. She was weary with the long strain and relinquished it. She trusted him, leaned upon him, lived upon him. She was in the second childhood of her life, and it was better to her than her womanhood. He became in her imagination the son whom long years before she had lost. His look recalled her boy, his voice was the repetition of the old music, and she found realized in him all the dreams she had indulged in concerning him who so sadly dissipated them in his own self-ruin.

The object of all this trust and tenderness was as happy as she. It always touched me deeply to witness the gentleness of his manner toward her. He anticipated all her wants, deferred to her slightest wish, shaped all his life to serve her own. The sense of kindred blood was strongly dominant within him, and his grandmother was held among the most sacred treasures of his heart. Whether he ever had the influence to lead her to higher sources of joy and comfort than himself, I never knew, but I know that in the old mansion that for so many years had been the home of revelry or of isolated selfishness, an altar was reared from which the incense of Christian hearts rose with the rising sun of morning and the rising stars of night.

Henry passed many days with me at the academy. In truth, my school was his loitering place, though his loitering was of a very useful fashion. I found him so full of the results of experience in the calling in which I was engaged that I won from him a thousand valuable suggestions; and such was his love for the calling that he rarely left me without hearing a recitation, which he had the power to make so vitally interesting to my



pupils that he never entered the study-hall without awakening a smile of welcome from the whole school. Sometimes he went with Claire to her class-rooms; and, as many of her pupils had previously been his own, he found himself at home everywhere. There was no foolish pride in his heart that protested against her employment. He saw that she was not only useful but happy, and knew that she was learning quite as much that would be useful to her as those who engaged her efforts. Her office deepened and broadened her womanhood; and I could see that Henry was every day more pleased and satisfied with her. If she was ill for a day, he took her place, and watched for and filled every opportunity to lighten her burdens.

Mr. Bradford was, perhaps, my happiest friend. He had had so much responsibility in directing and changing the currents of my life, that it was with unbounded satisfaction that he witnessed my happiness, my industry and my modest prosperity. Many an hour did he sit upon my platform with me, with his two hands resting upon his cane, his fine, honest face all aglow with gratified interest, listening to the school in its regular exercises; and once he came in with Mr. Bird who had traveled all the way from Hillsborough to see me. And then my school witnessed such a scene as it had never witnessed before. I rushed to my dear old friend, threw my arms around him and kissed him. The silver had begun to show itself in his beard and on his temples, and he looked weary. I gave him a chair, and then with tears in my eyes I stood out upon the platform before my boys and girls, and told them who he was, and what he had been to me. I pictured to them the life of The Bird's Nest, and assured them that if they had found anything to approve in me, as a teacher and a friend, it was planted and shaped in that little garden on the hill. I told them further that if any of them should ever come to regard me with the affection I felt for him, I should feel myself abundantly repaid for all the labor I had bestowed upon them—nay, for the labor of a life. I was roused to an eloquence and touched to a tenderness which were at least new to

them, and their eyes were wet. When I concluded, poor Mr Bird sat with his head in his hands, unable to say a word.

As we went out from the school that night, arm in arm, he said: "It was a good medicine, Arthur—heroic, but good."

"It was," I answered, "and I can never thank you and Mr. Bradford enough for it."

First I took him to my home, and we had a merry tea-drinking, at which my mother yielded up all her prejudices against him. I showed him my little room, so like in its dimensions and appointments to the one I occupied at The Bird's Nest, and then I took him to The Mansion for a call upon Henry. After this we went to Mr. Bradford's, where we passed the evening, and where he spent the night.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### IN WHICH I LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT LIVINGSTON, MILLIE BRADFORD AND MYSELF.

SINCE the old days of my boyhood, when Millie Bradford and I had been intimate, confidential friends, she had never received me with the cordiality that she exhibited on that evening. I suppose she had listened to the account which her father gave of my meeting with my old teacher, and of the words which that meeting had inspired me to utter. I have no doubt that my later history had pleased her, and done much to awaken her old regard for me. Whatever the reasons may have been, her grasp was hearty, her greeting cordial, and her face was bright with welcome. I need not say that all this thrilled me with pleasure, for I had inwardly determined to earn her respect, and to take no steps for greater intimacy until I had done so, even if it should lead me to abandon all hope of being more to her than I had been.

It was easy that evening to win her to our old corner in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bradford and Aunt Flick were ready listeners to the conversation in progress between Mr. Bradford and Mr. Bird, and we found ourselves at liberty to pursue our own ways, without interruption or observation.

She questioned me with great interest about my school, and as that was a subject which aroused all my enthusiasm, I talked freely, and amused her with incidents of my daily work. She could not but have seen that I was the victim of no vain regrets concerning my loss of position and prospects, and that all my energies and all my heart were in my new life. I saw that she was gratified; and I was surprised to find that she was profoundly interested in my success.

"By the way," I said, after having dwelt too long upon a topic that concerned myself mainly, "I wonder what has become of Livingston? He was going to Europe, but I have not heard a word from him since I parted with him months ago. Do you know anything of him?"

"Have n't heard from him?" she said, with a kind of incredulous gasp.

"Not a word."

"Have n't you seen him?"

"Why, I have n't been out of the town."

"No, but you have seen him here?"

"Not once."

"You are sure?"

"Perfectly sure," I responded, with a smile at her obstinate unbelief.

"I don't understand it," she said, looking away from me.

"Has he been here?" I inquired.

"Twice."

I saw that she was not only puzzled, but deeply moved; and I was conscious of a flush of mingled anger and indignation sweeping over my own tell-tale face.

"Did he call on Henry when he was here?" I inquired.

"He did, on both occasions. Did not Henry tell you?"

"He did not."

"That is strange, too," she remarked.

"Miss Bradford," I responded, "it is not strange at all. I comprehend the whole matter. Henry knew Livingston better than I did, and, doubting whether he would care to continue his acquaintance with me after the change in my circumstances, had not mentioned his calls to me. He knew that if I had met him, I should speak of it; and as I did not speak of it, he concluded that I had not met him, and so covered from me by his silence the presence of my old friend in the city. Livingston did not call upon me because, having nothing further in common with me, he chose to ignore me altogether, and to count all that had appeared like friendship between us for nothing. I was no



longer an heir to wealth. I was a worker for my own bread, with my position to make by efforts whose issue was uncertain. I could be his companion no further; I could be received at his father's home no more. Every attention or courtesy he might render me could be rendered no more except as a matter of patronage. I can at least give him the credit for having honesty and delicacy enough to shun me when he could meet me no more on even terms."

"Even terms!" exclaimed the girl, with a scorn in her manner and voice which verged closely upon rage. "Is that a style of manhood that one may apologize for?"

"Well," I answered, "considering the fact that I was attracted to him at first by the very motives which control him now, I ought to be tolerant and charitable."

"Yes, if that is true," she responded; "but the matter is incredible and incomprehensible."

"It begins to seem so now, to me," I replied, "but it did not then. Our clique in college were all fools together, and fancied that, because we had some worldly advantages not shared by others, we were raised by them above the common level. We took pride in circumstances that were entirely independent of our manhood—circumstances that were gathered around us by other hands. I am heartily ashamed of my old weakness, and despise myself for it; but I can appreciate the strength of the bonds that bind Livingston, and I forgive him with all my heart."

"I do not," she responded. "The slight he has put upon you, and his new friendship for Henry, disgust me more than I can tell you. His conduct is mercenary and unmanly, and offends me from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot."

In the firm, strong passion of this true girl I saw my old self, and realized the wretched slough from which I had been lifted. I could not feel as she did, however, toward Livingston. After the first flush of anger had subsided, I saw that, without some radical change in him, he could not do otherwise than he had done. Though manly in many of his characteristics, his scheme

of life was rotten at its foundation, in that it ignored manliness. His standard of respectability was not natural, it was conventional; and so long as he entertained no plan of life that was based in manliness and manly work, his associations would be controlled by the conventional standard to which he and those around him bowed in constant loyalty.

After her frank expression of indignation, she seemed inclined to drop the subject, and only a few more words were uttered upon either side concerning it. I saw that she was troubled, that she was angry, and that, during the moments devoted to the conversation, she had arrived at some determination whose nature and moment I could not guess. Sometimes she looked at me: sometimes she looked away from me; and then her lips were pressed together with a strange spasm of firmness, as if some new resolution of her life were passing step by step to its final issue.

I did guess afterward, and guessed aright. Livingston had fascinated her, while she had so wholly gained his affection and respect, and so won his admiration, that he was laying siege to her heart by all the arts and appliances of which he was so accustomed and accomplished a master. He was the first man who had ever approached her as a lover. She had but just escaped from the seclusion of her school-life, and this world of love, of which she had only dreamed, had been opened to her by the hands of a prince. He was handsome, accomplished in the arts of society, vivacious and brilliant; and while he had made comparatively little progress in winning her heart, he had carried her fancy captive and excited her admiration, and only needed more abundant opportunity to win her wholly to himself.

The revelation of the real character of the man, and of his graceless dealing with me—the hollow-heartedness of his friendship, and the transfer of his regard and courtesy from me to Henry—offended all that was womanly within her. From the moment when she comprehended his position—its meanness, its injustice and unmanliness—she determined that he should be forever shut out of her heart. She knew that her judgment



and conscience could never approve either his conduct or him—that this one act could never be justified or apologized for. The determination cost her a struggle which called into action all the forces of her nature. I have been a thousand times thankful that I did not know what was passing in her mind, for I was thus saved from all temptation to attempt to turn her heart against him, and turn it toward myself.

She wrote him a letter, as I subsequently learned, which was intended to save him the mortification of visiting her again; but he came again, armed with his old self-possession, determined to win the prize upon which he had set his heart; and then he went away, visiting neither Henry nor myself. Afterward he went to Europe, and severed forever all his relations to the lives of his Bradford acquaintances.

When Millie and I closed our conversation about Livingston, I found her prepossessed and silent; and, as if by mutual impulse and consent, we rose from our seats, and returned to the other end of the drawing-room, where the remainder of the family were gathered. There we found a conversation in progress which I had no doubt had been suggested by my own personality and position; and as it was very fruitfully suggestive to me, and became a source of great encouragement to me, I am sure my readers will be interested in it. We came within hearing of the conversation, just as Mr. Bird was saying:—

"I never saw a man with anything of the real Shakspeare in him—using him as our typical man—who could not be any sort of a man that he chose to be. A genuinely practical man—a man who can adapt himself to any sort of life—is invariably a man of imagination. These young men who have the name of being eminently practical—especially among women, who usually consider all practical gifts to be those which relate to making money and providing for a family—are the least practical, in a wide sense, of anybody. They usually have a strong bent toward a certain industrial or commercial pursuit, and if they follow that bent, persistently, they succeed; but if by any chance they are diverted from it, they fail irrevocably.

Now the man of imagination is he who apprehends and comprehends the circumstances, proprieties and opportunities of every life in which his lot may be cast, and adapts himself to and employs them all. I have a fine chance to notice this in my boys; and whenever I find one who has an imagination, I see ten chances to make a man of him where one exists in those less generously furnished."

"Yet our geniuses," responded Mr. Bradford, "have not been noted for their skill in practical affairs, or for their power to take care of themselves."

"No," said Mr. Bird, "because our geniuses, or what by courtesy we call such, are one-sided men, who have a single faculty developed in exceptionally large proportion. They are practical men only in a single direction, like the man who has a special gift for money-making, or affairs; and the latter is just as truly a genius as the former, and both are necessarily narrow men, and limited in their range of effort. This is not at all the kind of man I mean; I allude to one who has fairly symmetrical powers, with the faculty of imagination among them. Without this latter, a man can never rise above the capacity of a kind of human machine, working regularly or irregularly. A man who cannot see the poetical side of his work, can never achieve the highest excellence in it. The ideal must always be apprehended before one can rise to that which is in the highest possible sense practical. I have known boys who were the despair of their humdrum fathers and mothers, because, forsooth, they had the faculty of writing verses in their youth. They were regarded by these parents with a kind of blind pride, but with no expectation for them except poverty, unsteady purposes and dependence. I have seen these same parents, many times, depending in their old age upon their verse-writing boys for comfort or luxury, while their practical brothers were tugging for their daily bread, unable to help anybody but themselves and their families."

Mr. Bradford saw that I was intensely interested in this talk of Mr. Bird, and said, with the hope of turning it more thoroughly to my own practical advantage: "Well, what have you to say to our young man here? He was so full of imagination when a lad that we could hardly trust his eyes or his conscience."



He said this with a laugh, but Mr. Bird turned toward me with his old affectionate look, and replied: "I have never seen the day since I first had him at my side, when I did not believe that he had the making of a hundred different men in him. He was always a good student when he chose to be. He would have made, after a time, an ideal man of leisure. He is a good teacher to-day. He has chosen to be a lawyer, and it rests entirely with him to determine whether he will be an eminent one. If he had chosen to be a preacher, or an author, or a merchant, he would meet no insurmountable difficulty in rising above mediocrity, in either profession. The faculty of imagination, added to symmetrical intellectual powers, makes it possible for him to be anything that he chooses to become. By this faculty he will be able to see all the possibilities of any profession, and all the possibilities of his powers with relation to it."

"As frankness of speech seems to be in order," said Mr. Bradford, "suppose you tell us whether you do not think that he spends money rather too easily, and that he may find future trouble in that direction."

Mr. Bird at once became my partisan. "What opportunity has the boy had for learning the value of money? When he has learned what a dollar costs, by the actual experiment of labor, he will be corrected. Thus far he has known the value of a dollar only from one side of it. He knows what it will buy, but he does not know what it costs. Some of the best financiers I ever met were once boys who placed little or no value upon money. No man can measure the value of a dollar justly who cannot place by its side the expenditure of time and labor which it costs. Arthur is learning all about it."

"Thank you," I responded, "I feel quite encouraged about myself."

"Now, then, what do you think of Henry, in his new circumstances?" inquired Mr. Bradford.

"Henry," replied Mr. Bird, "never had the faculty to learn the value of a dollar, except through the difficulty of getting it. The real superiority of Arthur over Henry in this matter is in his faculty, not only to measure the value of a dollar by its cost, but to measure it by its power. To know how to win money and at the same time to know how to use it when won, is the prerogative of the highest style of practical financial wisdom. Now that money costs Henry nothing, he will cease to value it; and with his tastes I think the care of his fortune will be very irksome to him. Indeed, it would not be strange if, in five years, that care should be transferred to the very hands that surrendered the fortune to him. So our practical boy is quite likely, in my judgment, to become a mere baby in business, while our boy whose imagination seemed likely to run away with him, will nurse him and his fortune together."

"Why, that will be delightful," I responded. "I shall be certain to send the first business-card I get printed to Henry, and solicit his patronage."

There was much more said at the time about Henry's future as well as my own, but the conversation I have rehearsed was all that was of vital importance to me, and I will not burden the reader with more. I cannot convey to any one an idea of the interest which I took in this talk of my old teacher. It somehow had the power to place me in possession of myself. It recognized, in the presence of those who loved but did not wholly trust me, powers and qualities which, in a half-blind way, I saw within myself. It strengthened my self-respect and my faith in my future.

Ah! if the old and the wise could know how the wisdom won by their experience is taken into the heart of every earnest young man, and how grateful to such a young man recognition is, at the hand of the old and the wise, would they be stingy with their hoard and reluctant with their hand? I do not believe they would. They forget their youth, when they drop peas instead of pearls, and are silly rather than sage.



When I left the house to return to my home, I was charged with thoughts which kept me awake far into the night. The only man from whom I had anything to fear as a rival was in disgrace. My power to win a practical man's place in the world had been recognized in Millie Bradford's presence, by one whose opinion was very highly prized. I had achieved the power of looking at myself and my possibilities through the eyes of a wisdom-winning experience. I was inspired, encouraged and strengthened, and my life had never seemed more full of meaning and interest than it did then.

Early the next morning I went for Mr. Bird, accompanied him to the stage-office, and bade him good-by, grateful for such a friend, and determined to realize all that he had wished and hoped for me.