ALGER HORATIO JR.

RISEN FROM THE RANKS; OR, HARRY WALTON'S SUCCESS

Horatio Alger

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Содержание

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PREFACE

"Risen from the Ranks" contains the further history of Harry Walton, who was first introduced to the public in the pages of "Bound to Rise." Those who are interested in learning how far he made good the promise of his boyhood, may here find their curiosity gratified. For the benefit of those who may only read the present volume, a synopsis of Harry's previous life is given in the first chapter.

In describing Harry's rise from the ranks I have studiously avoided the extraordinary incidents and pieces of good luck, which the story writer has always at command, being desirous of presenting my hero's career as one which may be imitated by the thousands of boys similarly placed, who, like him, are anxious to rise from the ranks. It is my hope that this story, suggested in part by the career of an eminent American editor, may afford encouragement to such boys, and teach them that "where there is a will there is always a way."

New York, October 1874.

CHAPTER I

HARRY WALTON

"I am sorry to part with you, Harry," said Professor Henderson. "You have been a very satisfactory and efficient assistant, and I shall miss you."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry. "I have tried to be faithful to your interests."

"You have been so," said the Professor emphatically. "I have had perfect confidence in you, and this has relieved me of a great deal of anxiety. It would have been very easy for one in your position to cheat me out of a considerable sum of money."

"It was no credit to me to resist such a temptation as that," said Harry.

"I am glad to hear you say so, but it shows your inexperience nevertheless. Money is the great tempter nowadays. Consider how many defalcations and breaches of trust we read of daily in confidential positions, and we are forced to conclude that honesty is a rarer virtue than we like to think it. I have every reason to believe that my assistant last winter purloined, at the least, a hundred dollars, but I was unable to prove it, and submitted to the loss. It may be the same next winter. Can't I induce you to

change your resolution, and remain in my employ? I will advance your pay."

"Thank you, Professor Henderson," said Harry gratefully. "I appreciate your offer, even if I do not accept it. But I have made up mind to learn the printing business."

"You are to enter the office of the 'Centreville Gazette,' I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"How much pay will you get?"

"I shall receive my board the first month, and for the next six months have agreed to take two dollars a week and board."

"That won't pay your expenses."

"It must," said Harry, firmly.

"You have laid up some money while with me, haven't you!"

"Yes, sir; I have fifty dollars in my pocket-book, besides having given eighty dollars at home."

"That is doing well, but you won't be able to lay up anything for the next year."

"Perhaps not in money, but I shall be gaining the knowledge of a good trade."

"And you like that better than remaining with me, and learning my business?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, perhaps you are right. I don't fancy being a magician myself; but I am too old to change. I like moving round, and I make a good living for my family. Besides I contribute to the

innocent amusement of the public, and earn my money fairly."

"I agree with you, sir," said Harry. "I think yours is a useful employment, but it would not suit everybody. Ever since I read the life of Benjamin Franklin, I have wanted to learn to be a printer."

"It is an excellent business, no doubt, and if you have made up your mind I will not dissuade you. When you have a paper of your own, you can give your old friend, Professor Henderson, an occasional puff."

"I shall be glad to do that," said Harry, smiling, "but I shall have to wait some time first."

"How old are you now?"

"Sixteen."

"Then you may qualify yourself for an editor in five or six years. I advise you to try it at any rate. The editor in America is a man of influence."

"I do look forward to it," said Harry, seriously. "I should not be satisfied to remain a journeyman all my life, nor even the half of it."

"I sympathize with your ambition, Harry," said the Professor, earnestly, "and I wish you the best success. Let me hear from you occasionally."

"I should be very glad to write you, sir."

"I see the stage is at the door, and I must bid you good-by. When you have a vacation, if you get a chance to come our way, Mrs. Henderson and myself will be glad to receive a visit from

you. Good-by!" And with a hearty shake of the hand, Professor Henderson bade farewell to his late assistant.

Those who have read "Bound to Rise," and are thus familiar with Harry Walton's early history, will need no explanation of the preceding conversation. But for the benefit of new readers, I will recapitulate briefly the leading events in the history of the boy of sixteen who is to be our hero.

Harry Walton was the oldest son of a poor New Hampshire farmer, who found great difficulty is wresting from his few sterile acres a living for his family. Nearly a year before, he had lost his only cow by a prevalent disease, and being without money, was compelled to buy another of Squire Green, a rich but mean neighbor, on a six months' note, on very unfavorable terms. As it required great economy to make both ends meet, there seemed no possible chance of his being able to meet the note at maturity. Beside, Mr. Walton was to forfeit ten dollars if he did not have the principal and interest ready for Squire Green. The hard-hearted creditor was mean enough to take advantage of his poor neighbor's necessities, and there was not the slightest chance of his receding from his unreasonable demand. Under these circumstances Harry, the oldest boy, asked his father's permission to go out into the world and earn his own living. He hoped not only to do this, but to save something toward paying his father's note. His ambition had been kindled by reading the life of Benjamin Franklin, which had been awarded to him as a school prize. He did not expect to emulate Franklin, but

he thought that by imitating him he might attain an honorable position in the community.

Harry's request was not at first favorably received. To send a boy out into the world to earn his own living is a hazardous experiment, and fathers are less sanguine than their sons. Their experience suggests difficulties and obstacles of which the inexperienced youth knows and possesses nothing. But in the present case Mr. Walton reflected that the little farming town in which he lived offered small inducements for a boy to remain there, unless he was content to be a farmer, and this required capital. His farm was too small for himself, and of course he could not give Harry a part when be came of age. On the whole, therefore, Harry's plan of becoming a mechanic seemed not so bad a one after all. So permission was accorded, and our hero, with his little bundle of clothes, left the paternal roof, and went out in quest of employment.

After some adventures Harry obtained employment in a shoe-shop as pegger. A few weeks sufficed to make him a good workman, and he was then able to earn three dollars a week and board. Out of this sum be hoped to save enough to pay the note held by Squire Green against his father, but there were two unforeseen obstacles. He had the misfortune to lose his pocket-book, which was picked up by an unprincipled young man, by name Luke Harrison, also a shoemaker, who was always in pecuniary difficulties, though he earned much higher wages than Harry. Luke was unable to resist the temptation, and

appropriated the money to his own use. This Harry ascertained after a while, but thus far had succeeded in obtaining the restitution of but a small portion of his hard-earned savings. The second obstacle was a sudden depression in the shoe trade which threw him out of work. More than most occupations the shoe business is liable to these sudden fluctuations and suspensions, and the most industrious and ambitious workman is often compelled to spend in his enforced weeks of idleness all that he had been able to save when employed, and thus at the end of the year finds himself, through no fault of his own, no better off than at the beginning. Finding himself out of work, our hero visited other shoe establishments in the hope of employment. But his search was in vain. Chance in this emergency made him acquainted with Professor Henderson, a well-known magician and conjurer, whose custom it was to travel, through the fall and winter, from town to town, giving public exhibitions of his skill. He was in want of an assistant, to sell tickets and help him generally, and he offered the position to our hero, at a salary of five dollars a week. It is needless to say that the position was gladly accepted. It was not the business that Harry preferred, but he reasoned justly that it was honorable, and was far better than remaining idle. He found Professor Henderson as he called himself, a considerate and agreeable employer, and as may be inferred from the conversation with which this chapter begins, his services were very satisfactory. At the close of the six months, he had the satisfaction of paying the note which his father had

given, and so of disappointing the selfish schemes of the grasping creditor.

This was not all. He met with an adventure while travelling for the Professor, in which a highwayman who undertook to rob him, came off second best, and he was thus enabled to add fifty dollars to his savings. His financial condition at the opening of the present story has already been set forth.

Though I have necessarily omitted many interesting details, to be found in "Bound to Rise," I have given the reader all the information required to enable him to understand the narrative of Harry's subsequent fortunes.

CHAPTER II

THE PRINTING OFFICE

Jotham Anderson, editor and publisher of the "Centreville Gazette," was sitting at his desk penning an editorial paragraph, when the office door opened, and Harry Walton entered.

"Good-morning, Mr. Anderson," said our hero, removing his hat.

"Good-morning, my friend. I believe you have the advantage of me," replied the editor.

Our hero was taken aback. It didn't occur to him that the engagement was a far less important event to the publisher than to himself. He began to be afraid that the place had not been kept open for him.

"My name is Harry Walton," he explained. "I was travelling with Prof. Henderson last winter, and called here to get some bills printed."

"Oh yes, I remember you now. I agreed to take you into the office," said the editor, to Harry's great relief.

"Yes, air."

"You haven't changed your mind, then?—You still want to be a printer?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have left the Professor, I suppose."

"I left him yesterday."

"What did he pay you?"

"Five dollars a week. He offered me six, if I would stay with him."

"Of course you know that I can't pay you any such wages at present."

"Yes, sir. You agreed to give me my board the first month, and two dollars a week for six months afterward."

"That is all you will be worth to me at first. It is a good deal less than you would earn with Professor Henderson."

"I know that, sir; but I am willing to come for that."

"Good. I see you are in earnest about printing, and that is a good sign. I wanted you to understand just what you had to expect, so that you need not be disappointed."

"I sha'n't be disappointed, sir," said Harry confidently. "I have made up my mind to be a printer, and if you didn't receive me into your office, I would try to get in somewhere else."

"Then no more need be said. When do you want to begin?"

"I am ready any time."

"Where is your trunk?"

"At the tavern."

"You can have it brought over to my house whenever you please. The hotel-keeper will send it over for you. He is our expressman. Come into the house now, and I will introduce you

to my wife."

The editor's home was just across the street from his printing office. Followed by Harry he crossed the street, opened the front door, and led the way into the sitting-room, where a pleasant-looking lady of middle age was seated.

"My dear," he said, "I bring you a new boarder."

She looked at Harry inquiringly.

"This young man," her husband explained, "is going into the office to learn printing. I have taken a contract to make a second Benjamin Franklin of him."

"Then you'll do more for him than you have been able to do for yourself," said Mrs. Anderson, smiling.

"You are inclined to be severe, Mrs. Anderson, but I fear you are correct. However, I can be like a guide-post, which points the way which it does not travel. Can you show Harry Walton—for that is his name—where you propose to put him?"

"I am afraid I must give you a room in the attic," said Mrs. Anderson. "Our house is small, and all the chambers on the second floor are occupied."

"I am not at all particular," said Harry. "I have not been accustomed to elegant accommodations."

"If you will follow me upstairs, I will show you your room."

Pausing on the third landing, Mrs. Anderson found the door of a small but comfortable bed-room. There was no carpet on the floor, but it was painted yellow, and scrupulously clean. A bed, two chairs, a bureau and wash-stand completed the list of

furniture.

"I shall like this room very well," said our hero.

"There is a closet," said the lady, pointing to a door in the corner. "It is large enough to contain your trunk, if you choose to put it in there. I hope you don't smoke."

"Oh, no, indeed," said Harry, laughing. "I haven't got so far along as that."

"Mr. Anderson's last apprentice—he is a journeyman now—was a smoker. He not only scented up the room, but as he was very careless about lights, I was continually alarmed lest he should set the house on fire. Finally, I got so nervous that I asked him to board somewhere else."

"Is he working for Mr. Anderson now?"

"Yes; you probably saw him in the office."

"I saw two young men at the case."

"The one I speak of is the youngest. His name is John Clapp."

"There is no danger of my smoking. I don't think it would do me any good. Besides, it is expensive, and I can't afford it."

"I see we think alike," said Mrs. Anderson, smiling. "I am sure we will get along well together."

"I shall try not to give you any trouble," said our hero, and his tone, which was evidently sincere, impressed Mrs. Anderson still more favorably.

"You won't find me very hard to suit, I hope. I suppose you will be here to supper?"

"If it will he quite convenient. My trunk is at the tavern, and

I could stay there till morning, if you wished."

"Oh, no, come at once. Take possession of the room now, if you like, and leave an order to have your trunk brought here."

"Thank you. What is your hour for supper?"

"Half-past five."

"Thank you. I will go over and speak to Mr. Anderson a minute."

The editor looked up as Harry reappeared.

"Well, have you settled arrangements with Mrs. Anderson?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, I believe so."

"I hope you like your room."

"It is very comfortable. It won't take me long to feel at home there."

"Did she ask you whether you smoked?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought she would. That's where Clapp and she fell out."

Harry's attention was drawn to a thin, sallow young man of about twenty, who stood at a case on the opposite side of the room.

"Mrs. Anderson was afraid I would set the house on fire," said the young man thus referred to.

"Yes, she felt nervous about it. However, it is not surprising. An uncle of hers lost his house in that way. I suppose you don't smoke, Walton?"

"No, sir."

"Clapp smokes for his health. You see how stout and robust he is," said the editor, a little satirically.

"It doesn't do me any harm," said Clapp, a little testily.

"Oh, well, I don't interfere with you, though I think you would be better off if you should give up the habit. Ferguson don't smoke."

This was the other compositor, a man of thirty, whose case was not far distant from Clapp's.

"I can't afford it," said Ferguson; "nor could Clapp, if he had a wife and two young children to support."

"Smoking doesn't cost much," said the younger journeyman.

"So you think; but did you ever reckon it up?"

"No."

"Don't you keep any accounts?"

"No; I spend when I need to, and I can always tell how much I have left. What's the use of keeping accounts?"

"You can tell how you stand."

"I can tell that without taking so much trouble."

"You see we must all agree to disagree," said Mr. Anderson. "I am afraid Clapp isn't going to be a second Benjamin Franklin."

"Who is?" asked Clapp.

"Our young friend here," said the editor.

"Oh, is he?" queried the other with a sneer. "It'll be a great honor I'm sure, to have him in the office."

"Come, no chaffing, Clapp," said Mr. Anderson.

Harry hastened to disclaim the charge, for Clapp's sneer

affected him disagreeably.

"I admire Franklin," he said, "but there isn't much danger of my turning out a second edition of him."

"Professional already, I see, Walton," said the editor.

"When shall I go to work, Mr. Anderson?"

"Whenever you are ready."

"I am ready now."

"You are prompt."

"You won't be in such a hurry to go to work a week hence," said Clapp.

"I think I shall," said Harry. "I am anxious to learn as fast as possible."

"Oh, I forgot. You want to become a second Franklin."

"I sha'n't like him," thought our hero. "He seems to try to make himself disagreeable."

"Mr. Ferguson will give you some instruction, and set you to work," said his employer.

Harry was glad that it was from the older journeyman that he was to receive his first lesson, and not from the younger.

CHAPTER III

HARRY STUMBLES UPON AN ACQUAINTANCE

After supper Harry went round to the tavern to see about his trunk. A group of young men were in the bar-room, some of whom looked up as he entered. Among these was Luke Harrison, who was surprised and by no means pleased to see his creditor. Harry recognized him at the same instant, and said, "How are you, Luke?"

"Is that you, Walton?" said Luke. "What brings you to Centreville?

Professor Henderson isn't here, is he?"

"No; I have left him."

"Oh, you're out of a job, are you?" asked Luke, in a tone of satisfaction, for we are apt to dislike those whom we have injured, and for this reason he felt by no means friendly.

"No, I'm not," said Harry, quietly. "I've found work in Centreville."

"Gone back to pegging, have you? Whose shop are you in?"

"I am in a different business."

"You don't say! What is it?" asked Luke, with some curiosity.

"I'm in the office of the 'Centreville Gazette.' I'm going to

learn the printing business."

"You are? Why, I've got a friend in the office,—John Clapp. He never told me about your being there."

"He didn't know I was coming. I only went to work this afternoon."

"So you are the printer's devil?" said Luke, with a slight sneer.

"I believe so," answered our hero, quietly.

"Do you get good pay?"

"Not much at first. However, I can get along with what money I have, *and what is due me*."

Luke Harrison understood the last allusion, and turned away abruptly. He had no wish to pay up the money which he owed Harry, and for this reason was sorry to see him in the village. He feared, if the conversation were continued, Harry would be asking for the money, and this would be disagreeable.

At this moment John Clapp entered the bar-room. He nodded slightly to Harry, but walked up to Luke, and greeted him cordially. There were many points of resemblance between them, and this drew them into habits of intimacy.

"Will you have something to drink, Harrison?" said Clapp.

"I don't mind if I do," answered Luke, with alacrity.

They walked up to the bar, and they were soon pledging each other in a fiery fluid which was not very likely to benefit either of them. Meanwhile Harry gave directions about his trunk, and left the room.

"So you've got a new 'devil' in your office," said Luke, after

draining his glass.

"Yes. He came this afternoon. How did you hear?"

"He told me."

"Do you know him?" asked Clapp, in some surprise.

"Yes. I know him as well as I want to."

"What sort of a fellow is he?"

"Oh, he's a sneak—one of your pious chaps, that 'wants to be an angel, and with the angels stand.'"

"Then he's made a mistake in turning 'devil,'" said Clapp.

"Good for you!" said Luke, laughing. "You're unusually brilliant to-night, Clapp."

"So he's a saint, is he?"

"He set up for one; but I don't like his style myself. He's as mean as dirt. Why I knew him several months, and he never offered to treat in all that time. He's as much afraid of spending a cent as if it were a dollar."

"He won't have many dollars to spend just at present. He's working for his board."

"Oh, he's got money saved up," said Luke. "Fellows like him hang on to a cent when they get it. I once asked him to lend me a few dollars, just for a day or two, but he wouldn't do it. I hate such mean fellows."

"So do I. Will you have a cigar?"

"I'll treat this time," said Luke, who thought it polite to take his turn in treating once to his companion's four or five times.

"Thank you. From what you say, I am sorry Anderson has

taken the fellow into the office."

"You needn't have much to say to him."

"I shan't trouble myself much about him. I didn't like his looks when I first set eyes on him. I suppose old Mother Anderson will like him. She couldn't abide my smoking, and he won't trouble her that way."

"So; he's too mean to buy the cigars."

"He said he couldn't afford it."

"That's what it comes to. By the way, Clapp, when shall we take another ride?"

"I can get away nest Monday afternoon, at three."

"All right. I'll manage to get off at the same time. We'll go to Whiston and take supper at the hotel. It does a fellow good to get off now and then. It won't cost more than five dollars apiece altogether."

"We'll get the carriage charged. The fact is, I'm little low on funds."

"So am I, but it won't matter. Griffin will wait for his pay."

While Harry's character waa being so unfavorably discussed, he was taking a walk by himself, observing with interest the main features of his new home. He had been here before with Professor Henderson, but had been too much occupied at that time to get a very clear idea of Centreville, nor had it then the interest for him which it had acquired since. He went upon a hill overlooking the village, and obtained an excellent view from its summit. It was a pleasant, well-built village of perhaps

three thousand inhabitants, with outlying farms and farm-houses. Along the principal streets the dwellings and stores were closely built, so as to make it seem quite city-like. It was the shire town of the county, and being the largest place in the neighborhood, country people for miles around traded at its stores. Farmers' wives came to Centreville to make purchases, just as ladies living within a radius of thirty miles visit New York and Boston, for a similar purpose. Altogether, therefore, Centreville was quite a lively place, and a town of considerable local importance. The fact that it had a weekly paper of its own, contributed to bring it into notice. Nor was that all. Situated on a little hillock was a building with a belfry, which might have been taken for a church but for a play-ground near by, which indicated that it had a different character. It was in fact the Prescott Academy, so called from the name of its founder, who had endowed it with a fund of ten thousand dollars, besides erecting the building at his own expense on land bought for the purpose. This academy also had a local reputation, and its benefits were not confined to the children of Centreville. There were about twenty pupils from other towns who boarded with the Principal or elsewhere in the town, and made up the whole number of students in attendance —about eighty on an average.

Standing on the eminence referred to, Harry's attention was drawn to the Academy, and he could not help forming the wish that he, too, might share in its advantages.

"There is so much to learn, and I know so little," he thought.

But he did not brood over the poverty which prevented him from gratifying his desire. He knew it would do no good, and he also reflected that knowledge may be acquired in a printing office as well as within the walls of an academy or college.

"As soon as I get well settled," he said to himself, "I mean to get some books and study a little every day. That is the way Franklin did. I never can be an editor, that's certain, without knowing more than I do now. Before I am qualified to teach others, I must know something myself."

Looking at the village which lay below him, Harry was disposed to congratulate himself on his new residence.

"It looks like a pleasant place," he said to himself, "and when I get a little acquainted, I shall enjoy myself very well, I am sure. Of course I shall feel rather lonely just at first."

He was so engrossed by his thoughts that he did not take heed to his steps, and was only reminded of his abstraction by his foot suddenly coming in contact with a boy who was lying under a tree, and pitching headfirst over him.

"Holloa!" exclaimed the latter, "what are you about? You didn't take me for a foot-ball, did you?"

"I beg your pardon," said Harry, jumping up in some confusion. "I was so busy thinking that I didn't see you. I hope I didn't hurt you."

"Nothing serious. Didn't you hurt yourself?"

"I bumped my head a little, but it only struck the earth. If it had been a stone, it might have been different. I had no idea there

was any one up here except myself."

"It was very kind of you to bow so low to a perfect stranger," said the other, his eyes twinkling humorously. "I suppose it would only be polite for me to follow your example."

"I'll excuse you," said Harry laughing.

"Thank you. That takes a great burden off my mind. I don't like to be outdone in politeness, but really I shouldn't like to tumble over you. My head may be softer than yours. There's one thing clear. We ought to know each other. As you've taken the trouble to come up here, and stumble over me, I really feel as if we ought to strike up a friendship. What do you say?"

"With all my heart," said our hero.

CHAPTER IV

OSCAR VINCENT

"Allow me to introduce myself," said the stranger boy. "My name is Oscar Vincent, from Boston, at present a student at the Prescott Academy, at your service."

As he spoke, he doffed his hat and bowed, showing a profusion of chestnut hair, a broad, open brow, and an attractive face, lighted up by a pleasant smile.

Harry felt drawn to him by a feeling which was not long in ripening into friendship.

Imitating the other's frankness, he also took off his hat and replied,—

"Let me introduce myself, in turn, as Harry Walton, junior apprentice in the office of the 'Centreville Gazette,' sometimes profanely called 'printer's devil.'"

"Good!" said Oscar, laughing. "How do you like the business?"

"I think I shall like it, but I have only just started in it. I went into the office for the first time to-day."

"I have an uncle who started as you are doing," said Oscar. "He is now chief editor of a daily paper in Boston."

"Is he?" said Harry, with interest. "Did he find it hard to rise?"

"He is a hard worker. I have heard him say that he used to sit up late of nights during his apprenticeship, studying and improving himself."

"That is what I mean to do," said Harry.

"I don't think he was as lazy as his nephew," said Oscar. "I am afraid if I had been in his place I should have remained in it."

"Are you lazy?" asked Harry, smiling at the other's frankness.

"A little so; that is, I don't improve my opportunities as I might. Father wants to make a lawyer of me so he has put me here, and I am preparing for Harvard."

"I envy you," said Harry. "There is nothing I should like so much as entering college."

"I daresay I shall like it tolerably well," said Oscar; "but I don't *hanker* after it, as the boy said after swallowing a dose of castor oil. I'll tell you what I should like better—"

"What?" asked Harry, as the other paused.

"I should like to enter the Naval Academy, and qualify myself for the naval service. I always liked the sea."

"Doesn't your father approve of your doing this?"

"He wouldn't mind my entering the navy as an officer, but he is not willing to have me enter the merchant service."

"Then why doesn't he send you to the Naval Academy?"

"Because I can't enter without receiving the appointment from a member of Congress. Our member can only appoint one, and there is no vacancy. So, as I can't go where I want to, I am

preparing for Harvard."

"Are you studying Latin and Greek?"

"Yes."

"Have you studied them long?"

"About two years. I was looking over my Greek lesson when you playfully tumbled over me."

"Will you let me look at your book? I never saw a Greek book."

"I sometimes wish I never had," said Oscar; "but that's when I am lazy."

Harry opened the book—a Greek reader—in the middle of an extract from Xenophon, and looked with some awe at the unintelligible letters.

"Can you read it? Can you understand what it means?" he asked, looking up from the book.

"So-so."

"You must know a great deal."

Oscar laughed.

"I wonder what Dr. Burton would say if he heard you," he said.

"Who is he?"

"Principal of our Academy. He gave me a blowing up for my ignorance to-day, because I missed an irregular Greek verb. I'm not exactly a dunce, but I don't think I shall ever be a Greek professor."

"If you speak of yourself that way, what will you think of me? I don't know a word of Latin, of Greek, or any language except

my own."

"Because you have had no chance to learn. There's one language I know more about than Latin or Greek."

"English?"

"I mean French; I spent a year at a French boarding-school, three years since."

"What! Have you been in France?"

"Yes; an uncle of mine—in fact, the editor—was going over, and urged father to send me. I learned considerable French, but not much else. I can speak and understand it pretty well."

"How I wish I had had your advantages," said Harry. "How did you like your French schoolmates?"

"They wouldn't come near me at first. Because I was an American they thought I carried a revolver and a dirk-knife, and was dangerous. That is their idea of American boys. When they found I was tame, and carried no deadly weapons, they ventured to speak with me, and after that we got along pretty well."

"How soon do you expect to go to college?"

"A year from next summer. I suppose I shall be ready by that time.

You are going to stay in town, I suppose?"

"Yes, if I keep my place."

"Oh, you'll do that. Then we can see something of each other. You must come up to my room, and see me. Come almost any evening."

"I should like to. Do you live in Dr. Barton's family?"

"No, I hope not."

"Why not?"

"Oh, the Doctor has a way of looking after the fellows that room in the house, and of keeping them at work all the time. That wouldn't suit me. I board at Mrs. Greyson's, at the south-east corner of the church common. Have you got anything to do this evening?"

"Nothing in particular."

"Then come round and take a look at my den, or sanctum I ought to call it; as I am talking to a member of the editorial profession."

"Not quite yet," said Harry, smiling.

"Oh, well that'll come in due time. Will you come?"

"Sha'n't I be disturbing you?"

"Not a bit. My Greek lesson is about finished, and that's all I've got to do this evening. Come round, and we will sit over the fire, and chat like old friends."

"Thank you, Oscar," said Harry, irresistibly attracted by his bright and lively acquaintance, "I shall enjoy calling. I have made no acquaintances yet, and I feel lonely."

"I have got over that," said Oscar. "I am used to being away from home and don't mind it."

The two boys walked together to Oscar's boarding-place. It was a large house, of considerable pretension for a village, and Oscar's room was large and handsomely furnished. But what attracted Harry's attention was not the furniture, but a collection

of over a hundred books, ranged on shelves at one end of the room. In his father's house it had always been so difficult to obtain the necessaries of life that books had necessarily been regarded as superfluities, and beyond a dozen volumes which Harry had read and re-read, he was compelled to depend on such as he could borrow. Here again his privileges were scanty, for most of the neighbors were as poorly supplied as his father.

"What a fine library you have, Oscar!" he exclaimed.

"I have a few books," said Oscar. "My father filled a couple of boxes, and sent me. He has a large library."

"This seems a large library to me," said Harry. "My father likes reading, but he is poor, and cannot afford to buy books."

He said that in a matter-of-fact tone, without the least attempt to conceal what many boys would have been tempted to hide. Oscar noted this, and liked his new friend the better for it.

"Yes," he said, "books cost money, and one hasn't always the money to spare."

"Have you read all these books?"

"Not more than half of them. I like reading better than studying, I am afraid. I am reading the Waverley novels now. Have you read any of them?"

"So; I never saw any of them before."

"If you see anything you would like to read, I will lend it to you with pleasure," said Oscar, noticing the interest with which Harry regarded the books.

"Will you?" said Harry, eagerly. "I can't tell you how much

obliged I am. I will take good care of it."

"Oh, I am sure of that. Here, try Ivanhoe. I've just read it, and it's tip-top."

"Thank you; I will take it on your recommendation. What a nice room you have!"

"Yes, it's pretty comfortable. Father told me to fix it up to suit me. He said he wouldn't mind the expense if I would only study."

"I should think anybody might study in such a room as this, and with such a fine collection of books."

"I'm rather lazy sometimes," said Oscar, "but I shall turn over a new leaf some of these days, and astonish everybody. To-night, as I have no studying to do, I'll tell you what we'll do. Did you ever pop corn?"

"Sometimes."

"I've got some corn here, and Ma'am Greyson has a popper. Stay here alone a minute, and I'll run down and get it."

Oscar ran down stairs, and speedily returned with a corn-popper.

"Now we'll have a jolly time," said he. "Draw up that arm-chair, and make yourself at home. If Xenophon, or Virgil, or any of those Greek and Latin chaps call, we'll tell 'em we are transacting important business and can't be disturbed. What do you say?"

"They won't be apt to call on me," said Harry. I haven't the pleasure of knowing them."

"It isn't always a pleasure, I can assure you, Harry. Pass over

the corn-popper."

CHAPTER V

A YOUNG F. F. B

As the two boys sat in front of the fire, popping and eating the corn, and chatting of one thing and another, their acquaintance improved rapidly. Harry learned that Oscar's father was a Boston merchant, in the Calcutta trade, with a counting-room on Long Wharf. Oscar was a year older than himself, and the oldest child. He had a sister of thirteen, named Florence, and a younger brother, Charlie, now ten. They lived on Beacon Street, opposite the Common. Though Harry had never lived in Boston, be knew that this was a fashionable street, and he had no difficulty in inferring that Mr. Vincent was a rich man. He felt what a wide gulf there was socially between himself and Oscar; one the son of a very poor country farmer, the other the son of a merchant prince. But nothing in Oscar's manner indicated the faintest feeling of superiority, and this pleased Harry. I may as well say, however, that our hero was not one to show any foolish subserviency to a richer boy; he thought mainly of Oscar's superiority in knowledge; and although the latter was far ahead of Harry on this score, he was not one to boast of it.

Harry, in return for Oscar's confidence, acquainted him with

his own adventures since he had started out to earn his own living. Oscar was most interested in his apprenticeship to the ventriloquist.

"It must have been jolly fun," he said. "I shouldn't mind travelling round with him myself. Can you perform any tricks?"

"A few," said Harry.

"Show me some, that's a good fellow."

"If you won't show others. Professor Henderson wouldn't like to have his tricks generally known. I could show more if I had the articles he uses. But I can do some without."

"Go ahead, Professor. I'm all attention."

Not having served an apprenticeship to a magician, as Harry did, I will not undertake to describe the few simple tricks which he had picked up, and now exhibited for the entertainment of his companion. It is enough to say that they were quite satisfactory, and that Oscar professed his intention to puzzle his Boston friends with them, when his vacation arrived.

About half-past eight, a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" called out Oscar.

The door was opened, and a boy about his own age entered. His name was Fitzgerald Fletcher. He was also a Boston boy, and the son of a retail merchant, doing business on Washington street. His father lived handsomely, and was supposed to be rich. At any rate Fitzgerald supposed him to be so, and was very proud of the fact. He generally let any new acquaintances understand very speedily that his father was a man of property, and that his

family moved in the first circles of Boston Society. He cultivated the acquaintance of those boys who belonged to rich families, and did not fail to show the superiority which he felt to those of less abundant means. For example, he liked to be considered intimate with Oscar, as the social position of Mr. Vincent was higher than that of his own family. It gave him an excuse also for calling on Oscar in Boston. He had tried to ingratiate himself also with Oscar's sister Florence, but had only disgusted her with his airs, so that he could not flatter himself with his success in this direction. Oscar had very little liking for him, but as school-fellows they often met, and Fitzgerald often called upon him. On such occasions he treated him politely enough, for it was not in his nature to be rude without cause.

Fitz was elaborately dressed, feeling that handsome clothes would help convey the impression of wealth, which he was anxious to establish. In particular he paid attention to his neckties, of which he boasted a greater variety than any of his school-mates. It was not a lofty ambition, but, such as it was, he was able to gratify it.

"How are you, Fitz?" said Oscar, when he saw who was his visitor.

"Draw up a chair to the fire, and make yourself comfortable."

"Thank you, Oscar," said Fitzgerald, leisurely drawing off a pair of kid gloves; "I thought I would drop in and see you."

"All right! Will you have some popped corn?"

"No, thank you," answered Fitzgerald, shrugging his

shoulders. "I don't fancy the article."

"Don't you? Then you don't know what's good."

"Fancy passing round popped corn at a party in Boston," said the other. "How people would stare!"

"Would they? I don't know about that. I think some would be more sensible and eat. But, I beg your pardon, I haven't introduced you to my friend, Harry Walton. Harry, this is a classmate of mine. Fitzgerald Fletcher, Esq., of Boston."

Fitzgerald did not appear to perceive that the title Esq. was sportively added to his name. He took it seriously, and was pleased with it, as a recognition of his social superiority. He bowed ceremoniously to our hero, and said, formally, "I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Walton."

"Thank you, Mr. Fletcher," replied Harry, bowing in turn.

"I wonder who he is," thought Fitzgerald.

He had no idea of the true position of our young hero, or he would not have wasted so much politeness upon him. The fact was, that Harry was well dressed, having on the suit which had been given him by a friend from the city. It was therefore fashionably cut, and had been so well kept as still to be in very good condition. It occurred to Fitz—to give him the short name he received from his school-fellows—that it might be a Boston friend of Oscar's, just entering the Academy. This might account for his not having met him before. Perhaps he was from an aristocratic Boston family. His intimacy with Oscar rendered it probable, and it might be well to cultivate his acquaintance. On

this hint he spoke.

"Are you about to enter the Academy, Mr. Walton?"

"No; I should like to do so, but cannot."

"You are one of Oscar's friends from the city, I suppose, then?"

"Oh no; I am living in Centreville."

"Who can he be?" thought Fitz. With considerable less cordiality in his manner, he continued, impelled by curiosity,—

"I don't think I have met you before."

"No: I have only just come to the village."

Oscar understood thoroughly the bewilderment of his visitor, and enjoyed it. He knew the weakness of Fitz, and he could imagine how his feelings would change when be ascertained the real position of Harry.

"My friend," he explained, "is connected with the 'Centreville Gazette.'"

"In what capacity?" asked Fitz, in surprise.

"He is profanely termed the 'printer's devil.' Isn't that so, Harry?"

"I believe you are right," said our hero, smiling. He had a suspicion that this relation would shock his new acquaintance.

"Indeed!" ejaculated Fitz, pursing up his lips, and, I was about to say, turning up his nose, but nature had saved him the little trouble of doing that.

"What in the world brings him here, then?" he thought; but there was no need of saying it, for both Oscar and Harry read it

in his manner. "Strange that Oscar Vincent, from one of the first families of Boston, should demean himself by keeping company with a low printer boy!"

"Harry and I have had a jolly time popping corn this evening!" said Oscar, choosing to ignore his school-mate's changed manner.

"Indeed! I can't see what fun there is in it."

"Oh, you've got no taste. Has he, Harry?"

"His taste differs from ours," said our hero, politely.

"I should think so," remarked Fitz, with significant emphasis. "Was that all you had to amuse yourself?"

In using the singular pronoun, he expressly ignored the presence of the young printer.

"No, that wasn't all. My friend Harry has been amusing me with some tricks which he learned while he was travelling round with Professor Henderson, the ventriloquist and magician."

"Really, he is quite accomplished," said Fitz, with a covert sneer. "Pretty company Oscar has taken up with!" he thought. "How long were you in the circus business?" he asked, turning to Harry.

"I never was in the circus business."

"Excuse me. I should say, travelling about with the ventriloquist."

"About three months. I was with him when he performed here last winter."

"Ah! indeed. I didn't go. My father doesn't approve of my

attending such common performances. I only attend first-class theatres, and the Italian opera."

"That's foolish," said Oscar. "You miss a good deal of fun, then. I went to Professor Henderson's entertainment, and I now remember seeing you there, Harry. You took money at the door, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Now I understand what made your face seem so familiar to me, when I saw it this afternoon. By the way, I have never been into a printing office. If I come round to yours, will you show me round?"

"I should be very glad to, Oscar, but perhaps you had better wait till I have been there a little while, and learned the ropes. I know very little about it yet."

"Won't you come too, Fitz?" asked Oscar.

"You must really excuse me," drawled Fitz. "I have heard that a printing office is a very dirty place. I should be afraid of soiling my clothes."

"Especially that stunning cravat."

"Do you like it? I flatter myself it's something a little extra," said Fitz, who was always gratified by a compliment to his cravats.

"Then you won't go?"

"I haven't the slightest curiosity about such a place, I assure you."

"Then I shall have to go alone. Let me know when you are

ready to receive me, Harry."

"I won't forget, Oscar."

"I wonder he allows such a low fellow to call him by his first name," thought Fitz. "Really, he has no proper pride."

"Well," he said, rising, "I must be going."

"What's your hurry, Fitz?"

"I've got to write a letter home this evening. Besides, I haven't finished my Greek. Good-evening, Oscar."

"Good-evening, Fitz."

"Good-evening, Mr. Fletcher," said Harry.

"Evening!" ejaculated Fitz, briefly; and without a look at the low "printer-boy," he closed the door and went down stairs.

CHAPTER VI

OSCAR BECOMES A PROFESSOR

"I am afraid your friend won't thank you for introducing me to him," said Harry, after Fitz had left the room.

"Fitz is a snob," said Oscar. "He makes himself ridiculous by putting on airs, and assuming to be more than he is. His father is in a good business, and may be rich—I don't know about that—but that isn't much to boast of."

"I don't think we shall be very intimate," said Harry, smiling.

"Evidently a printer's apprentice is something very low in his eyes."

"When you are an influential editor he will be willing to recognize you. Let that stimulate your ambition."

"It isn't easy for a half-educated boy to rise to such a position. I feel that I know very little."

"If I can help you any, Harry, I shall be very glad to do it. I'm not much of a scholar, but I can help you a little. For instance, if you wanted to learn French, I could hear your lessons, and correct your exercises."

"Will you?" said Harry, eagerly. "There is nothing I should like better."

"Then I'll tell you what I'll do. You shall buy a French grammar, and come to my room two evenings a week, and recite what you get time to study at home."

"Won't it give you a great deal of trouble, Oscar?"

"Not a bit of it; I shall rather like it. Until you can buy a grammar, I will lend you mine. I'll set you a lesson out of it now."

He took from the book-shelves a French grammar, and inviting Harry to sit down beside him, gave him some necessary explanations as to the pronunciation of words according to the first lesson.

"It seems easy," said Harry. "I can take more than that."

"It is the easiest of the modern languages, to us at least, on account of its having so many words similar to ours."

"What evening shall I come, Oscar?"

"Tuesday and Friday will suit me as well as any. And remember, Harry, I mean to be very strict in discipline. And, by the way, how will it do to call myself Professor?"

"I'll call you Professor if you want me to."

"We'll leave all high titles to Fitz, and I won't use the rod any oftener than it is absolutely necessary."

"All right, Professor Vincent," said Harry laughing, "I'll endeavor to behave with propriety."

"I wonder what they would say at home," said Oscar, "if they knew I had taken up the profession of teacher. Strange as it may seem to you, Harry, I have the reputation in the home-circle of being decidedly lazy. How do you account for it?"

"Great men are seldom appreciated."

"You hit the nail on the head that time—glad I am not the nail, by the way. Henceforth I will submit with resignation to injustice and misconstruction, since I am only meeting with the common fate of great men."

"What time is it, Oscar?"

"Nearly ten."

"Then I will bid you good-night," and Harry rose to go. "I can't tell how much I am obliged to you for your kind offer."

"Just postpone thanks till you find out whether I am a good teacher or not."

"I am sure of that."

"I am not so sure, but I will do what I can for you. Good-night. I'll expect you Friday evening. I shall see Fitz to-morrow. Shall I give him your love?"

"Never mind!" said Harry, smiling. "I'm afraid it wouldn't be appreciated."

"Perhaps not."

As Harry left his lively companion, he felt that he had been most fortunate in securing his friendship—not only that he found him very agreeable and attractive, but he was likely to be of great use to him in promoting his plans of self-education. He had too much good sense not to perceive that the only chance he had of rising to an influential position lay in qualifying himself for it, by enlarging his limited knowledge and improving his mind.

"I have made a good beginning," he thought. "After I have

learned something of French, I will take up Latin, and I think Oscar will be willing to help me in that too."

The next morning he commenced work in the printing office. With a few hints from Ferguson, he soon comprehended what he had to do, and made very rapid progress.

"You're getting on fast, Harry," said Ferguson approvingly.

"I like it," said our hero. "I am glad I decided to be a printer."

"I wish I wasn't one," grumbled Clapp, the younger journeyman.

"Don't you like it?"

"Not much. It's hard work and poor pay. I just wish I was in my brother's shoes. He is a bookkeeper in Boston, with a salary of twelve hundred a year, while I am plodding along on fifteen dollars week."

"You may do better some day," said Ferguson.

"Don't see any chance of it."

"If I were in your place, I would save up part of my salary, and by and by have an office, and perhaps a paper of my own."

"Why don't you do it, then?" sneered Clapp.

"Because I have a family to support from my earnings—you have only yourself."

"It doesn't help me any; I can't save anything out of fifteen dollars a week."

"You mean you won't," said Ferguson quietly.

"No I don't. I mean I can't."

"How do you expect I get along, then? I have a wife and two

children to support, and only get two dollars a week more than you."

"Perhaps you get into debt."

"No; I owe no man a dollar," said Ferguson emphatically. "That isn't all. I save two dollars a week; so that I actually support four on fifteen dollars a week—your salary. What do you say to that?"

"I don't want to be mean," said Clapp.

"Nor I. I mean to live comfortably, but of course I have to be economical."

"Oh, hang economy!" said Clapp impatiently. "The old man used to lecture me about economy till I got sick of hearing the word."

"It is a good thing, for all that," persisted Ferguson. "You'll think so some day, even if you don't now."

"I guess you mean to run opposition to young Franklin, over there," sneered Clapp, indicating Harry, who had listened to the discussion with not a little interest.

"I think he and I will agree together pretty well," said Ferguson, smiling. "Franklin's a good man to imitate."

"If there are going to be two Franklins in the office, it will be time for me to clear out," returned Clapp.

"You can do better."

"How is that?"

"Become Franklin No. 3."

"You don't catch me imitating any old fogy like that. As

far as I know anything about him, he was a mean, stingy old curmudgeon!" exclaimed Clapp with irritation.

"That's rather strong language, Clapp," said Mr. Anderson, looking up from his desk with a smile. "It doesn't correspond with the general estimate of Franklin's character."

"I don't care," said Clapp doggedly, "I wouldn't be like Franklin if I could. I have too much self-respect."

Ferguson laughed, and Harry wanted to, but feared he should offend the younger journeyman, who evidently had worked himself into a bad humor.

"I don't think you're in any danger," said Ferguson, who did not mind his fellow-workman's little ebullitions of temper.

Clapp scowled, but did not deign to reply, partly, perhaps, because he knew that there was nothing to say.

From the outset Ferguson took a fancy to the young apprentice.

"He's got good, solid ideas," said he to Mr. Anderson, when Harry was absent. "He isn't so thoughtless as most boys of his age. He looks ahead."

"I think you are right in your judgment of him," said Mr. Anderson.

"He promises to be a faithful workman."

"He promises more than that," said Ferguson. "Mark my words, Mr.

Anderson; that boy is going to make his mark some day."

"It is a little too soon to say that, isn't it?"

"No; I judge from what I see. He is industrious and ambitious, and is bound to succeed. The world will hear of him yet."

Mr. Anderson smiled. He liked what he had seen of his new apprentice, but he thought Ferguson altogether too sanguine.

"He's a good, faithful boy," he admitted, "but it takes more than that to rise to distinction. If all the smart boys turned out smart men, they'd be a drug in the market."

But Ferguson held to his own opinion, notwithstanding. Time will show which was right.

The next day Ferguson said, "Harry, come round to my house, and take tea to-night. I've spoken to my wife about you, and she wants to see you."

"Thank you, Mr. Ferguson," said Harry. "I shall be very glad to come."

"I'll wait till you are ready, and you can walk along with me."

"All right; I will be ready in five minutes."

They set out together for Ferguson's modest home, which was about half a mile distant. As they passed up the village street Harry's attention was drawn to two boys who were approaching them. One he recognized at once as Fitzgerald Fletcher. He had an even more stunning necktie than when Harry first met him, and sported a jaunty little cane, which he swung in his neatly gloved hand.

"I wonder if he'll notice me," thought Harry. "At any rate, I won't be wanting in politeness."

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Fletcher," he said, as they met.

Fitzgerald stared at him superciliously, and made the slightest possible nod.

"Who is that?" asked Ferguson.

"It is a boy who has great contempt for printers' devils and low apprentices," answered Harry. "I was introduced to him two evenings ago, but he evidently doesn't care about keeping up the acquaintance."

"Who is that, Fitz?" asked his companion in turn.

"It's a low fellow—a printer's devil," answered Fitz, shortly.

"How do you happen to know him?"

"Oscar Vincent introduced him to me. Oscar's a queer fellow. He belongs to one of the first families in Boston—one of my set, you know, and yet he actually invited that boy to his room."

"He's rather a good-looking boy—the printer."

"Think so?" drawled Fitz. "He's low—all apprentices are. I mean to keep him at a distance."

CHAPTER VII

A PLEASANT EVENING

"This is my house," said Ferguson, pausing at the gate.

Harry looked at it with interest.

It was a cottage, containing four rooms, and a kitchen in the ell part. There was a plot of about a quarter of an acre connected with it. Everything about it was neat, though very unpretentious.

"It isn't a palace," said Ferguson, "but," he added cheerfully, "it's a happy home, and from all I've read, that is more than can be said of some palaces. Step right in and make yourself at home."

They entered a tiny entry, and Mrs. Ferguson opened the door of the sitting-room. She was a pleasant-looking woman, and her face wore a smile st welcome.

"Hannah," said Ferguson, "this is our new apprentice, Harry Walton."

"I am glad to see you," she said, offering her hand. "My husband has spoken of you. You are quite welcome, if you can put up with humble fare."

"That is what I have always been accustomed to," said Harry, beginning to feel quite at home.

"Where are the children, Hannah?"

Two children, a boy and a girl, of six and four years respectively, bounded into the room and answered for themselves. They looked shyly at Harry, but before many minutes their shyness had worn off, and the little girl was sitting on his knee, while the boy stood beside him. Harry was fond of children, and readily adapted himself to his young acquaintances.

Supper was soon ready—a plain meal, but one that Harry enjoyed. He could not help comparing Ferguson's plain, but pleasant home, with Clapp's mode of life.

The latter spent on himself as much as sufficed his fellow-workman to support a wife and two children, yet it was easy to see which found the best enjoyment in life.

"How do you like your new business?" asked Mrs. Ferguson, as she handed Harry a cup of tea.

"I like all but the name," said our hero, smiling.

"I wonder how the name came to be applied to a printer's apprentice any more than to any other apprentice," said Mrs. Ferguson.

"I never heard," said her husband. "It seems to me to be a libel upon our trade. But there is one comfort. If you stick to the business, you'll outgrow the name."

"That is lucky; I shouldn't like to be called the wife of a –. I won't pronounce the word lest the children should catch it."

"What is it, mother?" asked Willie, with his mouth full.

"It isn't necessary for you to know, my boy."

"Do you know Mr. Clapp?" asked Harry.

"I have seen him, but never spoke with him."

"I never asked him round to tea," said Ferguson.

"I don't think he would enjoy it any better than I. His tastes are very different from mine, and his views of life are equally different."

"I should think so," said Harry.

"Now I think you and I would agree very well. Clapp dislikes the business, and only sticks to it because he must get his living in some way. As for me, if I had a sum of money, say five thousand dollars, I would still remain a printer, but in that case I would probably buy out a paper, or start one, and be a publisher, as well as a printer."

"That's just what I should like," said Harry.

"Who knows but we may be able to go into partnership some day, and carry out our plan."

"I would like it," said Harry; "but I am afraid it will be a good while before we can raise the five thousand dollars."

"We don't need as much. Mr. Anderson started on a capital of a thousand dollars, and now he is in comfortable circumstances."

"Then there's hopes for us."

"At any rate I cherish hopes of doing better some day. I shouldn't like always to be a journeyman. I manage to save up a hundred dollars a year. How much have we in the savings bank, Hannah?"

"Between four and five hundred dollars, with interest."

"It has taken me four years to save it up. In five more,

if nothing happens, I should be worth a thousand dollars. Journeymen printers don't get rich very fast."

"I hope to have saved up something myself, in five years," said Harry.

"Then our plan may come to pass, after all. You shall be editor, and I publisher."

"I should think you would prefer to be an editor," said his wife.

"I am diffident of my powers in the line of composition," said Ferguson. "I shouldn't be afraid to undertake local items, but when it comes to an elaborate editorial, I should rather leave it in other hands."

"I always liked writing," said Harry. "Of course I have only had a school-boy's practice, but I mean to practise more in my leisure hours."

"Suppose you write a poem for the 'Gazette,' Walton."

Harry smiled.

"I am not ambitious enough for that," he replied. "I will try plain prose."

"Do so," said Ferguson, earnestly. "Our plan may come to something after all, if we wait patiently. It will do no harm to prepare yourself as well as you can. After a while you might write something for the 'Gazette.' I think Mr. Anderson would put it in."

"Shall I sign it P. D.?" asked Harry.

"P. D. stands for Doctor of Philosophy."

"I don't aspire to such a learned title. P. D. also stands for

Printer's Devil."

"I see. Well, joking aside, I advise you to improve yourself in writing."

"I will. That is the way Franklin did."

"I remember. He wrote an article, and slipped it under the door of the printing office, not caring to have it known that he was the author."

"Shall I give you a piece of pie, Mr. Walton?" said Mrs. Ferguson.

"Thank you.".

"Me too," said Willie, extending his plate.

"Willie is always fond of pie," said his father, "In a printing office *pi* is not such a favorite."

When supper was over, Mr. Ferguson showed Harry a small collection of books, about twenty-five in number, neatly arranged on shelves.

"It isn't much of a library," he said, "but a few books are better than none. I should like to buy as many every year; but books are expensive, and the outlay would make too great an inroad upon my small surplus."

"I always thought I should like a library," said Harry, "but my father is very poor, and has fewer books than you. As for me, I have but one book besides the school-books I studied, and that I gained as a school prize—The Life of Franklin."

"If one has few books he is apt to prize them more," said Ferguson, "and is apt to profit by them more."

"Have you read the History of China?" asked Harry, who had been looking over his friend's books.

"No; I have never seen it."

"Why, there it is," said our hero, "In two volumes."

"Take it down," said Ferguson, laughing.

Harry did so, and to his surprise it opened in his hands, and revealed a checker-board.

"You see appearances are deceitful. Can you play checkers?"

"I never tried."

"You will easily learn. Shall I teach you the game?"

"I wish you would."

They sat down; and Harry soon became interested in the game, which requires a certain degree of thought and foresight.

"You will make a good player after a while," said his companion.

"You must come in often and play with me."

"Thank you, I should like to do so. It may not be often, for I am taking lessons in French, and I want to get on as fast as possible."

"I did not know there was any one in the village who gave lessons in French."

"Oh, he's not a professional teacher. Oscar Vincent, one of the Academy boys, is teaching me. I am to take two lessons a week, on Tuesday and Friday evenings."

"Indeed, that is a good arrangement. How did it come about?"

Harry related the particulars of his meeting with Oscar.

"He's a capital fellow," he concluded. "Very different from

another boy I met in his room. I pointed him out to you in the street. Oscar seems to be rich, but he doesn't put on any airs, and he treated me very kindly."

"That is to his credit. It's the sham aristocrats that put on most airs. I believe you will make somebody, Walton. You have lost no time in getting to work."

"I have no time to lose. I wish I was in Oscar's place. He is preparing for Harvard, and has nothing to do but to learn."

"I heard a lecturer once who said that the printing office is the poor man's college, and he gave a great many instances of printers who had risen high in the world, particularly in our own country."

"Well, that is encouraging. I should like to have heard the lecture."

"I begin to think, Harry, that I should have done well to follow your example. When I was in your position, I might have studied too, but I didn't realize the importance as I do now. I read some useful books, to be sure, but that isn't like studying."

"It isn't too late now."

Ferguson shook his head.

"Now I have a wife and children," he said. "I am away from them during the day, and the evening I like to pass socially with them."

"Perhaps you would like to be divorced," said his wife, smiling.

"Then you would get time for study."

"I doubt if that would make me as happy, Hannah. I am not ready to part with you just yet. But our young friend here is not quite old enough to be married, and there is nothing to prevent his pursuing his studies. So, Harry, go on, and prepare yourself for your editorial duties."

Harry smiled thoughtfully. For the first time he had formed definite plans for his future. Why should not Ferguson's plans be realized?

"If I live long enough," he said to himself, "I will be an editor, and exert some influence in the world."

At ten o'clock he bade good-night to Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson, feeling that he had passed a pleasant and what might prove a profitable evening.

CHAPTER VIII

FLETCHER'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL POSITION

"You are getting on finely, Harry," said Oscar Vincent, a fortnight later. "You do credit to my teaching. As you have been over all the regular verbs now, I will give you a lesson in translating."

"I shall find that interesting," said Harry, with satisfaction.

"Here is a French Reader," said Oscar, taking one down from the shelves. "It has a dictionary at the end. I won't give you a lesson. You may take as much as you have time for, and at the same time three or four of the irregular verbs. You are going about three times as fast as I did when I commenced French."

"Perhaps I have a better teacher than you had," said Harry, smiling.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Oscar. "That explains it to my satisfaction. Well, now the lesson is over, sit down and we'll have a chat. Oh, by the way, there's one thing I want to speak to you about. We've got a debating society at our school. It is called 'The Clionian Society.' Most of the students belong to it. How would you like to join?"

"I should like it very much. Do you think they would admit

me?"

"I don't see why not. I'll propose you at the next meeting, Thursday evening. Then the nomination will lie over a week, and be acted upon at the next meeting."

"I wish you would. I never belonged to a debating society, but I should like to learn to speak."

"It's nothing when you're used to it. It's only the first time you know, that troubles you. By Jove! I remember how my knees trembled when I first got up and said Mr. President. I felt as if all eyes were upon me, and I wanted to sink through the floor. Now I can get up and chatter with the best of them. I don't mean that I can make an eloquent speech or anything of that kind, but I can talk at a minute's notice on almost any subject."

"I wish I could."

"Oh, you can, after you've tried a few times. Well, then, it's settled. I'll propose you at the next meeting."

"How lucky I am to have fallen in with you, Oscar."

"I know what you mean. I'm your guide, philosopher, and friend, and all that sort of thing. I hope you'll have proper veneration for me. It's rather a new character for me. Would you believe it, Harry,—at home I am regarded as a rattle-brained chap, instead of the dignified Professor that you know me to be. Isn't it a shame?"

"Great men are seldom appreciated at home, Oscar."

"I know that. I shall have to get a certificate from you, certifying to my being a steady and erudite young man."

"I'll give it with the greatest pleasure."

"Holloa, there's a knock. Come in!" shouted Oscar.

The door opened, and Fitzgerald Fletcher entered the room.

"How are you, Fitz?" said Oscar. "Sit down and make yourself comfortable. You know my friend, Harry Walton, I believe?"

"I believe I had the honor to meet him here one evening," said Fitzgerald stiffly, slightly emphasizing the word "honor."

"I hope you are well, Mr. Fletcher," said Harry, more amused than disturbed by the manner of the aristocratic visitor.

"Thank you, my health is good," said Fitzgerald with equal stiffness, and forthwith turned to Oscar, not deigning to devote any more attention to Harry.

Our hero had intended to remain a short time longer, but, under the circumstances, as Oscar's attention would be occupied by Fletcher, with whom he was not on intimate terms, he thought he might spend the evening more profitably at home in study.

"If you'll excuse me, Oscar," he said, rising, "I will leave you now, as I have something to do this evening."

"If you insist upon it, Harry, I will excuse you. Come round Friday evening."

"Thank you."

"Do you have to work at the printing office in the evening?" Fletcher deigned to inquire.

"No; I have some studying to do."

"Reading and spelling, I suppose," sneered Fletcher.

"I am studying French."

"Indeed!" returned Fletcher, rather surprised. "How can you study it without a teacher?"

"I have a teacher."

"Who is it?"

"Professor Vincent," said Harry, smiling.

"You didn't know that I had developed into a French Professor, did you, Fitz? Well, it's so, and whether it's the superior teaching or not, I can't say, but my scholar is getting on famously."

"It must be a great bore to teach," said Fletcher.

"Not at all. I like it."

"Every one to his taste," said Fitzgerald unpleasantly.

"Good-night, Oscar. Good-night, Mr. Fletcher," said Harry, and made his exit.

"You're a strange fellow, Oscar," said Fletcher, after Harry's departure.

"Very likely, but what particular strangeness do you refer to now?"

"No one but you would think of giving lessons to a printer's devil."

"I don't know about that."

"No one, I mean, that holds your position in society."

"I don't know that I hold any particular position in society."

"Your family live on Beacon Street, and move in the first circles. I am sure my mother would be disgusted if I should demean myself so far as to give lessons to any vulgar apprentice."

"I don't propose to give lessons to any vulgar apprentice."

"You know whom I mean. This Walton is only a printer's devil."

"I don't know that that is any objection to him. It isn't morally wrong to be a printer's devil, is it?"

"What a queer fellow you are, Oscar. Of course I don't mean that. I daresay he's well enough in his place, though he seems to be very forward and presuming, but you know that he's not your equal."

"He is not my equal in knowledge, but I shouldn't be surprised if he would be some time. You'd be astonished to see how fast he gets on."

"I daresay. But I mean in social position."

"It seems to me you can't think of anything but social position."

"Well, it's worth thinking about."

"No doubt, as far as it is deserved. But when it is founded on nothing but money, I wouldn't give much for it."

"Of course we all know that the higher classes are more refined—"

"Than printers' devils and vulgar apprentices, I suppose," put in Oscar, laughing,

"Yes."

"Well, if refinement consists in wearing kid gloves and stunning neckties, I suppose the higher classes, as you call them, are more refined."

"Do you mean me?" demanded Fletcher, who was noted for the character of his neckties.

"Well, I can't say I don't. I suppose you regard yourself as a representative of the higher classes, don't you?"

"To be sure I do," said Fletcher, complacently.

"So I supposed. Then you see I had a right to refer to you. Now listen to my prediction. Twenty-five years from now, the boy whom you look down upon as a vulgar apprentice will occupy a high position, and you will be glad to number him among your acquaintances."

"Speak for yourself, Oscar," said Fletcher, scornfully.

"I speak for both of us."

"Then I say I hope I can command better associates than this friend of yours."

"You may, but I doubt it."

"You seem to be carried away by him," said Fitzgerald, pettishly. "I don't see anything very wonderful about him, except dirty hands."

"Then you have seen more than I have."

"Of course a fellow who meddles with printer's ink must have dirty hands. Faugh!" said Fletcher, turning up his nose.

At the same time he regarded complacently his own fingers, which he carefully kept aloof from anything that would soil or mar their aristocratic whiteness.

"The fact is, Fitz," said Oscar, argumentatively, "our upper ten, as we call them, spring from just such beginnings as my

friend Harry Walton. My own father commenced life in a printing office. But, as you say, he occupies a high position at present."

"Really!" said Fletcher, a little taken aback, for he knew that Vincent's father ranked higher than his own.

"I daresay your own ancestors were not always patricians."

Fletcher winced. He knew well enough that his father commenced life as a boy in a country grocery, but in the mutations of fortune had risen to be the proprietor of a large dry-goods store on Washington Street. None of the family cared to look back to the beginning of his career. They overlooked the fact that it was creditable to him to have risen from the ranks, though the rise was only in wealth, for Mr. Fletcher was a purse-proud parvenu, who owed all the consideration he enjoyed to his commercial position. Fitz liked to have it understood that he was of patrician lineage, and carefully ignored the little grocery, and certain country relations who occasionally paid a visit to their wealthy relatives, in spite of the rather frigid welcome they received.

"Oh, I suppose there are exceptions," Fletcher admitted reluctantly.

"Your father was smart."

"So is Harry Walton. I know what he is aiming at, and I predict that he will be an influential editor some day."

"Have you got your Greek lesson?" asked Fletcher, abruptly, who did not relish the course the conversation had taken.

"Yes."

"Then I want you to translate a passage for me. I couldn't make it out."

"All right."

Half an hour later Fletcher left Vincent's room.

"What a snob he is!" thought Oscar.

And Oscar was right.

CHAPTER IX

THE CLIONIAN SOCIETY

On Thursday evening the main school of the Academy building was lighted up, and groups of boys, varying in age from thirteen to nineteen, were standing in different parts of the room. These were members of the Clionian Society, whose weekly meeting was about to take place.

At eight o'clock precisely the President took his place at the teacher's desk, with the Secretary at his side, and rapped for order. The presiding officer was Alfred DeWitt, a member of the Senior Class, and now nearly ready for college. The Secretary was a member of the same class, by name George Sanborn.

"The Secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting," said the President, when order had been obtained.

George Sanborn rose and read his report, which was accepted.

"Are any committees prepared to report?" asked the President.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.