ALGER HORATIO JR.

BOUND TO RISE; OR, UP THE LADDER

Horatio Alger

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Alger H.

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Содержание

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BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Horatio Alger, Jr., an author who lived among and for boys and himself remained a boy in heart and association till death, was born at Revere, Mass., January 18, 1884. He was the son of a clergyman; was graduated at Harvard College in 1852, and at its Divinity School in 1860; and was pastor of the Unitarian Church at Brewster, Mass., in 1862-66. In the latter year he settled in New York and began drawing public attention to the condition and needs of street boys. He mingled with them, gained their confidence, showed a personal concern in their affairs, and stimulated them to honest and useful living. With his first story he won the hearts of all red-blooded boys every-where, and of the seventy or more that followed over a million copies were sold during the author's lifetime.

In his later life he was in appearance a short, stout, bald-headed man, with cordial manners and whimsical views of things that amused all who met him. He died at Natick, Mass., July 18, 1899.

Mr. Alger's stories are as popular now as when first published, because they treat of real live boys who were always up and about—just like the boys found everywhere to-day. They are pure in tone and inspiring in influence, and many reforms in the juvenile life of New York may be traced to them. Among the best known are:

Strong and Steady; Strive and Succeed; Try and Trust: Bound to Rise; Risen from the Ranks; Herbert Carter's Legacy; Brave and Bold; Jack's Ward; Shifting for Himself; Wait and Hope; Paul the Peddler; Phil the Fiddler: Slow and Sure: Julius the Street Boy; Tom the Bootblack; Struggling Upward; Facing the World; The Cash Boy; Making His Way; Tony the Tramp; Joe's Luck; Do and Dare: Only an Irish Boy; Sink or Swim; A Cousin's Conspiracy; Andy Gordon; Bob Burton; Harry Vane; Hector's Inheritance; Mark Manson's Triumph; Sam's Chance; The Telegraph Boy; The Young Adventurer; The Young Outlaw; The Young Salesman, and Luke Walton..

CHAPTER I

"Sit up to the table, children, breakfast's ready."

The speaker was a woman of middle age, not good-looking in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but nevertheless she looked good. She was dressed with extreme plainness, in a cheap calico; but though cheap, the dress was neat. The children she addressed were six in number, varying in age from twelve to four. The oldest, Harry, the hero of the present story, was a broad-shouldered, sturdy boy, with a frank, open face, resolute, though good-natured.

"Father isn't here," said Fanny, the second child.

"He'll be in directly. He went to the store, and he may stop as he comes back to milk."

The table was set in the center of the room, covered with a coarse tablecloth. The breakfast provided was hardly of a kind to tempt an epicure. There was a loaf of bread cut into slices, and a dish of boiled potatoes. There was no butter and no meat, for the family were very poor.

The children sat up to the table and began to eat. They were blessed with good appetites, and did not grumble, as the majority of my readers would have done, at the scanty fare. They had not been accustomed to anything better, and their appetites were not pampered by indulgence.

They had scarcely commenced the meal when the father entered. Like his wife, he was coarsely dressed. In personal appearance he resembled his oldest boy. His wife looking up as he entered perceived that he looked troubled.

"What is the matter, Hiram?" she asked. "You look as if something had happened."

"Nothing has happened yet," he answered; "but I am afraid we are going to lose the cow."

"Going to lose the cow!" repeated Mrs. Walton in dismay.

"She is sick. I don't know what's the matter with her."

"Perhaps it is only a trifle. She may get over it during the day."

"She may, but I'm afraid she won't. Farmer Henderson's cow was taken just that way last fall, and he couldn't save her."

"What are you going to do?"

"I have been to Elihu Perkins, and he's coming over to see what he can do for her. He can save her if anybody can."

The children listened to this conversation, and, young as they were, the elder ones understood the calamity involved in the possible loss of the cow. They had but one, and that was relied upon to furnish milk for the family, and, besides a small amount of butter and cheese, not for home consumption, but for sale at the store in exchange for necessary groceries. The Waltons were too poor to indulge in these luxuries.

The father was a farmer on a small scale; that is, he cultivated ten acres of poor land, out of which he extorted a living for his family, or rather a partial living. Besides this he worked for his neighbors by the day, sometimes as a farm laborer, sometimes at odd jobs of different kinds, for he was a sort of Jack at all trades. But his income, all told, was miserably small, and required the utmost economy and good management on the part of his wife to make it equal to the necessity of a growing family of children.

Hiram Walton was a man of good natural abilities, though of not much education, and after half an hour's conversation with him one would say, unhesitatingly, that he deserved a better fate than his hand-to-hand struggle with poverty. But he was one of those men who, for some unaccountable reason, never get on in the world. They can do a great many things creditably, but do not have the knack of conquering fortune. So Hiram had always been a poor man, and probably always would be poor. He was discontented at times, and often felt the disadvantages of his lot, but he was lacking in energy and ambition, and perhaps this was the chief reason why he did not succeed better.

After breakfast Elihu Perkins, the "cow doctor," came to the door. He was an old man with iron-gray hair, and always wore steel-bowed spectacles; at least for twenty years nobody in the town could remember ever having seen him without them. It was the general opinion that he wore them during the night. Once when questioned on the subject, he laughingly said that he "couldn't see to go to sleep without his specs".

"Well, neighbor Walton, so the cow's sick?" he said, opening the outer door without ceremony.

"Yes, Elihu, she looks down in the mouth. I hope you can save her."

"I kin tell better when I've seen the critter. When you've got through breakfast, we'll go out to the barn."

"I've got through now," said Mr. Walton, whose anxiety for the cow had diminished his appetite.

"May I go too, father?" asked Harry, rising from the table.

"Yes, if you want to."

The three went out to the small, weather-beaten building which served as a barn for the want of a better. It was small, but still large enough to contain all the crops which Mr. Walton could raise. Probably he could have got more out of the land if he had had means to develop its resources; but it was naturally barren, and needed much more manure than he was able to spread over it.

So the yield to an acre was correspondingly small, and likely, from year to year, to grow smaller rather than larger.

They opened the small barn door, which led to the part occupied by the cow's stall. The cow was lying down, breathing with difficulty. Elihu Perkins looked at her sharply through his "specs."

"What do you think of her, neighbor Perkins?" asked the owner, anxiously.

The cow doctor shifted a piece of tobacco from one cheek to the other, and looked wise.

"I think the critter's nigh her end," he said, at last.

"Is she so bad as that?"

"Pears like it. She looks like Farmer Henderson's that died a while ago. I couldn't save her."

"Save my cow, if you can. I don't know what I should do without her."

"I'll do my best, but you mustn't blame me if I can't bring her round. You see there's this about dumb critters that makes 'em harder to cure than human bein's. They can't tell their symptoms, nor how they feel; and that's why it's harder to be a cow doctor than a doctor for humans. You've got to go by the looks, and looks is deceivin'. If I could only ask the critter how she feels, and where she feels worst, I might have some guide to go by. Not but I've had my luck. There's more'n one of 'em I've saved, if I do say it myself."

"I know you can save her if anyone can, Elihu," said Mr. Walton, who appreciated the danger of the cow, and was anxious to have the doctor begin.

"Yes, I guess I know about as much about them critters as anybody," said the garrulous old man, who had a proper appreciation of his dignity and attainments as a cow doctor. "I've had as good success as anyone I know on. If I can't cure her, you may call her a gone case. Have you got any hot water in the house?"

"I'll go in and see."

"I'll go, father," said Harry.

"Well, come right back. We have no time to lose."

Harry appreciated the need of haste as well as his father, and speedily reappeared with a pail of hot water.

"That's right, Harry," said his father. "Now you'd better go into the house and do your chores, so as not to be late for school."

Harry would have liked to remain and watch the steps which were being taken for the recovery of the cow; but he knew he had barely time to do the "chores" referred to before school, and he was far from wishing to be late there. He had an ardent thirst for learning, and, young as he was, ranked first in the district school which he attended. I am not about to present my young hero as a

marvel of learning, for he was not so. He had improved what opportunities he had enjoyed, but these were very limited. Since he was nine years of age, his schooling had been for the most part limited to eleven weeks in the year. There was a summer as well as a winter school; but in the summer he only attended irregularly, being needed to work at home. His father could not afford to hire help, and there were many ways in which Harry, though young, could help him. So it happened that Harry, though a tolerably good scholar, was deficient in many respects, on account of the limited nature of his opportunities.

He set to work at once at the chores. First he went to the woodpile and sawed and split a quantity of wood, enough to keep the kitchen stove supplied till he came home again from school in the afternoon. This duty was regularly required of him. His father never touched the saw or the ax, but placed upon Harry the general charge of the fuel department.

After sawing and splitting what he thought to be sufficient, he carried it into the house by armfuls, and piled it up near the kitchen stove. He next drew several buckets of water from the well, for it was washing day, brought up some vegetables from the cellar to boil for dinner, and then got ready for school.

CHAPTER II. A CALAMITY

Efforts for the recovery of the cow went on. Elihu Perkins exhausted all his science in her behalf. I do not propose to detail his treatment, because I am not sure whether it was the best, and possibly some of my readers might adopt it under similar circumstances, and then blame me for its unfortunate issue. It is enough to say that the cow grew rapidly worse in spite of the hot-water treatment, and about eleven o'clock breathed her last. The sad intelligence was announced by Elihu, who first perceived it.

"The critter's gone," he said. "'Tain't no use doin' anything more."

"The cow's dead!" repeated Mr. Walton, sorrowfully. He had known for an hour that this would be the probable termination of the disease. Still while there was life there was hope. Now both went out together.

"Yes, the critter's dead!" said Elihu, philosophically, for he lost nothing by her. "It was so to be, and there wa'n't no help for it. That's what I thought from the fust, but I was willin' to try."

"Wasn't there anything that could have saved her?"

Elihu shook his head decidedly.

"If she could a-been saved, I could 'ave done it," he said. "What I don't know about cow diseases ain't wuth knowin'."

Everyone is more or less conceited. Elihu's conceit was as to his scientific knowledge on the subject of cows and horses and their diseases. He spoke so confidently that Mr. Walton did not venture to dispute him.

"I s'pose you're right, Elihu," he said; "but it's hard on me."

"Yes, neighbor, it's hard on you, that's a fact. What was she wuth?"

"I wouldn't have taken forty dollars for her yesterday."

"Forty dollars is a good sum."

"It is to me. I haven't got five dollars in the world outside of my farm."

"I wish I could help you, neighbor Walton, but I'm a poor man myself."

"I know you are, Elihu. Somehow it doesn't seem fair that my only cow should be taken, when Squire Green has got ten, and they're all alive and well. If all his cows should die, he could buy as many more and not feel the loss."

"Squire Green's a close man."

"He's mean enough, if he is rich."

"Sometimes the richest are the meanest."

"In his case it is true."

"He could give you a cow just as well as not. If I was as rich as he, I'd do it."

"I believe you would, Elihu; but there's some difference between you and him."

"Maybe the squire would lend you money to buy a cow. He always keeps money to lend on high interest."

Mr. Walton reflected a moment, then said slowly, "I must have a cow, and I don't know of any other way, but I hate to go to him."

"He's the only man that's likely to have money to lend in town."

"Well, I'll go."

"Good luck to you, neighbor Walton."

"I need it enough," said Hiram Walton, soberly. "If it comes, it'll be the first time for a good many years."

"Well, I'll be goin', as I can't do no more good."

Hiram Walton went into the house, and a look at his face told his wife the news he brought before his lips uttered it.

"Is she dead, Hiram?"

"Yes, the cow's dead. Forty dollars clean gone," he said, rather bitterly.

"Don't be discouraged, Hiram. It's bad luck, but worse things might happen."

"Such as what?"

"Why, the house might burn down, or—or some of us might fall sick and die. It's better that it should be the cow."

"You're right there; but though it's pleasant to have so many children round, we shan't like to see them starving."

"They are not starving yet, and please God they won't yet awhile. Some help will come to us."

Mrs. Walton sometimes felt despondent herself, but when she saw her husband affected, like a good wife she assumed cheerfulness, in order to raise his spirits. So now, things looked a little more hopeful to him, after he had talked to his wife. He soon took his hat, and approached the door.

"Where are you going, Hiram?" she asked.

"Going to see if Squire Green will lend me money; enough to buy another cow."

"That's right, Hiram. Don't sit down discouraged, but see what you can do to repair the loss."

"I wish there was anybody else to go to. Squire Green is a very mean man, and he will try to take advantage of any need."

"It is better to have a poor resource than none at all."

"Well, I'll go and see what can be done."

Squire Green was the rich man of the town. He had inherited from his father, just as he came of age, a farm of a hundred and fifty acres, and a few hundred dollars.

The land was not good, and far from productive; but he had scrimped and saved and pinched and denied himself, spending almost nothing, till the little money which the farm annually yielded him had accumulated to a considerable sum. Then, too, as there were no banks near at hand to accommodate borrowers, the squire used to lend money to his poorer neighbors. He took care not to exact more than six per cent. openly, but it was generally understood that the borrower must pay a bonus besides to secure a loan, which, added to the legal interest, gave him a very handsome consideration for the use of his spare funds. So his money rapidly increased, doubling every five or six years through his shrewd mode of management, and every year he grew more economical. His wife had died ten years before. She had worked hard for very poor pay, for the squire's table was proverbially meager, and her bills for dress, judging from her appearance, must have been uncommonly small.

The squire had one son, now in the neighborhood of thirty, but he had not been at home for several years. As soon as he attained his majority he left the homestead, and set out to seek his fortune elsewhere. He vowed he wouldn't any longer submit to the penurious ways of the squire. So the old man was left alone, but he did not feel the solitude. He had his gold, and that was company enough. A time was coming when the two must part company, for when death should come he must leave the gold behind; but he did not like to think of that, putting away the idea as men will unpleasant subjects. This was the man to whom Hiram Walton applied for help in his misfortune.

"Is the squire at home?" he asked, at the back door. In that household the front door was never used. There was a parlor, but it had not been opened since Mrs. Green's funeral.

"He's out to the barn," said Hannah Green, a niece of the old man, who acted as maid of all work.

"I'll go out there."

The barn was a few rods northeast of the house, and thither Mr. Walton directed his steps.

Entering, he found the old man engaged in some light work.

"Good morning, Squire Green."

"Good morning, Mr. Walton," returned the squire.

He was a small man, with a thin figure, and a face deep seamed with wrinkles, more so than might have been expected in a man of his age, for he was only just turned of sixty; but hard work, poor and scanty food and sharp calculation, were responsible for them.

"How are you gettin' on?" asked the squire.

This was rather a favorite question of his, it being so much the custom for his neighbors to apply to him when in difficulties, so that their misfortune he had come to regard as his harvests..

"I've met with a loss," answered Hiram Walton.

"You don't say so," returned the squire, with instant attention. "What's happened?"

"My cow is dead."

"When did she die?"

"This morning."

"What was the matter?"

"I don't know. I didn't notice but that she was welt enough last night; but this morning when I went out to the barn, she was lying down breathing heavily."

"What did you do?"

"I called in Elihu Perkins, and we worked over her for three hours; but it wasn't of any use; she died half an hour ago."

"I hope it isn't any disease that's catchin'," said the squire in alarm, thinking of his ten. "It would be a bad job if it should get among mine."

"It's a bad job for me, squire. I hadn't but one cow, and she's gone."

"Just so, just so. I s'pose you'll buy another."

"Yes, I must have a cow. My children live on bread and milk mostly. Then there's the butter and cheese, that I trade off at the store for groceries."

"Just so, just so. Come into the house, neighbor Walton."

The squire guessed his visitor's business in advance, and wanted to take time to talk it over. He would first find out how great his neighbor's necessity was, and then he accommodated him, would charge him accordingly.

CHAPTER III. HIRAM'S MOTTO

There was a little room just off the kitchen, where the squire had an old-fashioned desk. Here it was that he transacted his business, and in the desk he kept his papers. It was into this room that he introduced Mr. Walton.

"Set down, set down, neighbor Walton," he said. "We'll talk this thing over. So you've got to have a cow?"

"Yes, I must have one."

The squire fixed his eyes cunningly on his intended victim, and said, "Goin' to buy one in town?"

"I don't know of any that's for sale."

"How much do you calc'late to pay?"

"I suppose I'll have to pay thirty dollars."

Squire Green shook his head.

"More'n that, neighbor Walton. You can't get a decent cow for thirty dollars. I hain't got one that isn't wuth more, though I've got ten in my barn."

"Thirty dollars is all I can afford to pay, squire."

"Take my advice, and get a good cow while you're about it. It don't pay to get a poor one."

"I'm a poor man, squire. I must take what I can get."

"I ain't sure but I've got a cow that will suit you, a red with white spots. She's a fust-rate milker."

"How old is she?"

"She's turned of five."

"How much do you ask for her?"

"Are you going to pay cash down?" asked the squire, half shutting his eyes, and looking into the face of his visitor.

"I can't do that. I'm very short of money."

"So am I," chimed in the squire. He had two hundred dollars in his desk at that moment waiting for profitable investment; but then he didn't call it exactly a lie to misrepresent for a purpose. "So am I. Money's tight, neighbor."

"Money's always tight with me, squire," returned Hiram Walton, with a sigh.

"Was you a-meanin' to pay anything down?" inquired the squire.

"I don't see how I can."

"That alters the case, you know. I might as well keep the cow, as to sell her without the money down."

"I am willing to pay interest on the money."

"Of course that's fair. Wall, neighbor, what do you say to goin' out to see the cow?"

"Is she in the barn?"

"No, she's in the pastur'. 'Tain't fur."

"I'll go along with you."

They made their way by a short cut across a cornfield to the pasture—a large ten-acre lot, covered with a scanty vegetation. The squire's cows could not be said to live in clover.

"That's the critter," he said, pointing out one of the cows which was grazing near by. "Ain't she a beauty?"

"She looks pretty well," said Mr. Walton, dubiously, by no means sure that she would equal his lost cow.

"She's one of the best I've got. I wouldn't sell ef it wasn't to oblige. I ain't at all partic'lar, but I suppose you've got to hev a cow."

"What do you ask for her, squire?"

"She's wuth all of forty dollars," answered the squire, who knew perfectly well that a fair price would be about thirty. But then his neighbor must have a cow, and had no money to pay, and so was at his mercy.

"That seems high," said Hiram.

"She's wuth every cent of it; but I ain't nowise partic'lar about sellin' her."

"Couldn't you say thirty-seven?"

"I couldn't take a dollar less. I'd rather keep her. Maybe I'd take thirty-eight, cash down."

Hiram Walton shook his head.

"I have no cash," he said. "I must buy on credit."

"Wall, then, there's a bargain for you. I'll let you have her for forty dollars, giving you six months to pay it, at reg'lar interest, six per cent. Of course I expect a little bonus for the accommodation."

"I hope you'll be easy with me—I'm a poor man, squire."

"Of course, neighbor; I'm always easy."

"That isn't your reputation," thought Hiram; but he knew that this was a thought to which he must not give expression.

"All I want is a fair price for my time and trouble. We'll say three dollars extra for the accommodation—three dollars down."

Hiram Walton felt that it was a hard bargain the squire was driving with him, but there seemed no help for it.

He must submit to the imposition, or do without a cow. There was no one else to whom he could look for help on any terms. As to the three dollars, his whole available cash amounted to but four dollars, and it was for three quarters of this sum that the squire called. But the sacrifice must be made.

"Well, Squire Green, if that is your lowest price, I suppose I must come to it," he answered, at last.

"You can't do no better," said the squire, with alacrity.

"If so be as you've made up your mind, we'll make out the papers."

"Very well."

"Come back to the house. When do you want to take the cow?"

"I'll drive her along now, if you are willing."

"Why, you see," said the squire, hesitating, while a mean thought entered his, mind, "she's been feedin' in my pastur' all the mornin', and I calc'late I'm entitled to the next milkin', you'd better come 'round to-night, just after milkin', and then you can take her."

"I didn't think he was quite so mean," passed through Hiram Walton's mind, and his lip curved slightly in scorn, but he knew that this feeling must be concealed.

"Just as you say," he answered. "I'll come round tonight, or send Harry."

"How old is Harry now?"

"About fourteen."

"He's got to be quite a sizable lad—ought to earn concid'able. Is he industrious?"

"Yes, Harry is a good worker—always ready to lend a hand."

"That's good. Does he go to school?"

"Yes, he's been going to school all the term."

"Seems to me he's old enough to give up larnin' altogether. Don't he know how to read and write and cipher?"

"Yes, he's about the best scholar in school."

"Then, neighbor Walton, take my advice and don't send him any more. You need him at home, and he knows enough to get along in the world."

"I want him to learn as much as he can. I'd like to send him to school till he is sixteen."

"He's had as much schoolin' now as ever I had," said the squire, "and I've got along pooty well. I've been seleckman, and school committy, and filled about every town office, and I never wanted no more schoolin'. My father took me away from school when I was thirteen."

"It wouldn't hurt you if you knew a little more," thought Hiram, who remembered very well the squire's deficiencies when serving on the town school committee.

"I believe in learning," he said. "My father used to say, 'Live and learn.' That's a good motto, to my thinking."

"It may be carried too far. When a boy's got to be of the age of your boy, he'd ought to be thinking of workin.' His time is too valuable to spend in the schoolroom."

"I can't agree with you, squire. I think no time is better spent than the time that's spent in learning. I wish I could afford to send my boy to college."

"It would cost a mint of money; and wouldn't pay. Better put him to some good business."

That was the way he treated his own son, and for this and other reasons, as soon as he arrived at man's estate, he left home, which had never had any pleasant associations with him. His father wanted to convert him into a money-making machine—a mere drudge, working him hard, and denying him, as long as he could, even the common recreations of boyhood—for the squire had an idea that the time devoted in play was foolishly spent, inasmuch as it brought him in no pecuniary return. He was willfully blind to the faults and defects of his system, and their utter failure in the case of his own son, and would, if could, have all the boys in town brought up after severely practical method. But, fortunately for Harry, Mr. Walton had very different notions. He was compelled to keep his son home the greater part of the summer, but it was against his desire.

"No wonder he's a poor man," thought the squire, after his visitor returned home. "He ain't got no practical idees. Live and learn! that's all nonsense. His boy looks strong and able to work, and it's foolish sendin' him school any longer. That wa'n't my way, and see where I am," he concluded, with complacent remembrance of bonds and mortgages and money out at interest. "That was a pooty good cow trade," he concluded. "I didn't calc' late for to get more'n thirty-five dollars for the critter; but then neighbor Walton had to have a cow, and had to pay my price."

Now for Hiram Walton's reflections.

"I'm a poor man," he said to himself, as he walked slowly homeward, "but I wouldn't be as mean as Tom Green for all the money he's worth. He's made a hard bargain with me, but there was no help for it."

CHAPTER IV. A SUM IN ARITHMETIC

Harry kept on his way to school, and arrived just the bell rang. Many of my readers have seen a country schoolhouse, and will not be surprised to learn that the one in which our hero obtained his education was far from stately or ornamental, architecturally speaking. It was a one-story structure, about thirty feet square, showing traces of having been painted once, but standing greatly in need of another coat. Within were sixty desks, ranged in pairs, with aisles running between them. On one side sat the girls, on the other the boys. These were of all ages from five to sixteen. The boys' desks had suffered bad usage, having been whittled and hacked, and marked with the initials of the temporary occupants, with scarcely an exception. I never knew a Yankee boy who was not the possessor of a knife of some kind, nor one who could resist the temptation of using it for such unlawful purposes. Even our hero shared the common weakness, and his desk was distinguished from the rest by "H. W." rudely carved in a conspicuous place.

The teacher of the school for the present session was Nathan Burbank, a country teacher of good repute, who usually taught six months in a year, and devoted the balance of the year to surveying land, whenever he could get employment in that line, and the cultivation of half a dozen acres of land, which kept him in vegetables, and enabled him to keep a cow. Altogether he succeeded in making a fair living, though his entire income would seem very small to many of my readers. He was not deeply learned, but his education was sufficient to meet the limited requirements of a country school.

This was the summer term, and it is the usual custom in New England that the summer schools should be taught by females. But in this particular school the experiment had been tried, and didn't work. It was found that the scholars were too unruly to be kept in subjection by a woman, and the school committee had therefore engaged Mr. Burbank, though, by so doing, the school term was shortened, as he asked fifty per cent. higher wages than a female teacher would have done. However, it was better to have a short school than an unruly school, and so the district acquiesced.

Eight weeks had not yet passed since the term commenced, and yet this was the last day but one. To-morrow would be examination day. To this Mr. Burbank made reference in a few remarks which he made at the commencement of the exercises.

He was rather a tall, spare man, and had a habit of brushing his hair upward, thus making the most of a moderate forehead. Probably he thought it made him look more intellectual.

"Boys and girls," he said, "to-morrow is our examination day. I've tried to bring you along as far as possible toward the temple of learning, but some of you have held back, and have not done as well as I should like—John Plympton, if you don't stop whispering I'll keep you after school—I want you all to remember that knowledge is better than land or gold. What would you think of a man who was worth a great fortune, and couldn't spell his name?—Mary Jones, can't you sit still till I get through?—It will be well for you to improve your opportunities while you are young, for by and by you will grow up, and have families to support, and will have no chance to learn—Jane Quimby, I wish you would stop giggling, I see nothing to laugh at—There are some of you who have studied well this term, and done the best you could. At the beginning of the term I determined to give a book to the most deserving scholar at the end of the term. I have picked out the boy, who, in my opinion, deserves it—Ephraim Higgins, you needn't move round in your seat. You are not the one."

There was a general laugh here, for Ephraim was distinguished chiefly for his laziness.

The teacher proceeded:

"I do not mean to tell you to-day who it is. To-morrow I shall call out his name before the school committee, and present him the prize. I want you to do as well as you can to-morrow. I want you to do yourselves credit, and to do me credit, for I do not want to be ashamed of you. Peter Shelby, put back that knife into your pocket, and keep it there till I call up the class in whittling."

There was another laugh here at the teacher's joke, and Peter himself displayed a broad grin on his large, good-humored face.

"We will now proceed to the regular lessons," said Mr. Burbank, in conclusion. "First class in arithmetic will take their places."

The first class ranked as the highest class, and in it was Harry Walton.

"What was your lesson to-day?" asked the teacher.

"Square root," answered Harry.

"I will give you out a very simple sum to begin with. Now, attention all! Find the square root of 625. Whoever gets the answer first may hold up his hand."

The first to hold up his hand was Ephraim Higgins.

"Have you got the answer?" asked Mr. Burbank in some surprise. "Yes, sir."

"State it."

"Forty-five."

"How did you get it?"

Ephraim scratched his head, and looked confused. The fact was, he was entirely ignorant of the method of extracting the square root, but had slyly looked at the slate of his neighbor, Harry Walton, and mistaken the 25 for 45, and hurriedly announced the answer, in the hope of obtaining credit for the same.

"How did you get it?" asked the teacher again.

Ephraim looked foolish.

"Bring me your slate."

Ephraim reluctantly left his place, and went up to Mr. Burbank.

"What have we here?" said the teacher. "Why, you have got down the 625, and nothing else, except 45. Where did you get that answer?"

"I guessed at it," answered Ephraim, hard pressed for an answer, and not liking to confess the truth—namely, that he had copied from Harry Walton.

"So I supposed. The next time you'd better guess a little nearer right, or else give up guessing altogether. Harry Walton, I see your hand up. What is your answer?"

"Twenty-five, sir."

"That is right."

Ephraim looked up suddenly. He now saw the explanation of his mistake.

"Will you explain how you did it? You may go to the blackboard, and perform the operation once more, explaining as you go along, for the benefit of Ephraim Higgins, and any others who guessed at the answer. Ephraim, I want you to give particular attention, so that you can do yourself more credit next time. Now Harry, proceed."

Our hero explained the sum in a plain, straightforward way, for he thoroughly understood it.

"Very well," said the schoolmaster, for this, rather than teacher, is the country name of the office. "Now, Ephraim, do you think you can explain it?"

"I don't know, sir," said Ephraim, dubiously.

"Suppose you try. You may take the same sum."

Ephraim advanced to the board with reluctance, for he was not ambitious, and had strong doubts about his competence for the task.

"Put down 625."

Ephraim did so.

"Now extract the square root. What do you do first?"

"Divide it into two figures each."

"Divide it into periods of two figures each, I suppose you mean. Well, what will be the first period?"

"Sixty-two," answered Ephraim.

"And what will be the second?"

"I don't see but one other figure."

"Nor I. You have made a mistake. Harry, show to point it off."

Harry Walton did so.

"Now what do you do next?"

"Divide the first figure by three."

"What do you do that for?"

Ephraim didn't know. It was only a guess of his, because he knew that the first figure of the answer was two, and this would result from dividing the first figure by three.

"To bring the answer," he replied.

"And I suppose you divide the next period by five, for the same reason, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may take your seat, sir. You are an ornament to the class, and you may become a great mathematician, if you live to the age of Methuselah. I rather think it will take about nine hundred years for you to reach that, point."

The boys laughed. They always relish a joke at the expense of a companion, especially when perpetrated by the teacher.

"Your method of extracting the square root is very original. You didn't find it in any arithmetic, did you?"

"No, sir."

"So I thought. You'd better take out a patent for it. The next boy may go to the board."

I have given a specimen of Mr. Burbank's method of conducting the school, but do not propose to enter into further details at present. It will doubtless recall to some of my readers experiences of their own, as the school I am describing is very similar to hundreds of country schools now in existence, and Mr. Burbank is the representative of a large class.

CHAPTER V. THE PRIZE WINNER

"Are you going to the examination to-day, mother?" asked Harry, at breakfast.

"I should like to go," said Mrs. Walton, "but I don't see how I can. To-day's my bakin' day, and somehow my work has got behindhand during the week."

"I think Harry'll get the prize," said Tom, a boy of ten, not heretofore mentioned. He also attended the school, but was not as promising as his oldest brother.

"What prize?" asked Mrs. Walton, looking up with interest.

"The master offered a prize, at the beginning of the term, to the scholar that was most faithful to his studies."

"What is the prize?"

"A book."

"Do you think you will get it, Harry?" asked his mother.

"I don't know," said Harry, modestly. "I think I have some chance of getting it."

"When will it be given?"

"Toward the close of the afternoon."

"Maybe I can get time to come in then; I'll try."

"I wish you would come, mother," said Harry earnestly. "Only don't be disappointed if I don't get it. I've been trying, but there are some other good scholars."

"You're the best, Harry," said Tom.

"I don't know about that. I shan't count my chickens before they are hatched. Only if I am to get the prize I should like to have mother there."

"I know you're a good scholar, and have improved your time," said Mrs. Walton. "I wish your father was rich enough to send you to college."

"I should like that very much," said Harry, his eyes sparkling at merely the suggestion.

"But it isn't much use hoping," continued his mother, with a sigh. "It doesn't seem clear whether we can get a decent living, much less send our boy to college. The cow is a great loss to us."

Just then Mr. Walton came in from the barn.

"How do you like the new cow, father?" asked Harry.

"She isn't equal to our old one. She doesn't give as much milk within two quarts, if this morning's milking is a fair sample."

"You paid enough for her," said Mrs. Walton.

"I paid too much for her," answered her husband, "but it was the best I could do. I had to buy on credit, and Squire Green knew I must pay his price, or go without."

"Forty-three dollars is a great deal of money to pay for a cow."

"Not for some cows. Some are worth more; but this one isn't."

"What do you think she is really worth?"

"Thirty-three dollars is the most I would give if I had the cash to pay."

"I think it's mean in Squire Green to take such advantage of you," said Harry.

"You mustn't say so, Harry, for it won't do for me to get the squire's ill will. I am owing him money. I've agreed to pay for the cow in six months."

"Can you do it?"

"I don't see how; but the money's on interest, and it maybe the squire'll let it stay. I forgot to say, though, that last evening when I went to get the cow he made me agree to forfeit ten dollars if I was not ready with the money and interest in six months. I am afraid he will insist on that if I can't keep my agreement."

"It will be better for you to pay, and have done with it."

"Of course. I shall try to do it, if I have to borrow the money. I suppose I shall have to do that."

Meantime Harry was busy thinking. "Wouldn't it be possible for me to earn money enough to pay for the cow in six months? I wish I could do it, and relieve father."

He began to think over all the possible ways of earning money, but there was nothing in particular to do in the town except to work for the farmers, and there was very little money to earn ill that way. Money is a scarce commodity with farmers everywhere. Most of their income is in the shape of farm produce, and used in the family. Only a small surplus is converted into money, and a dollar, therefore, seems more to them than to a mechanic, whose substantial income is perhaps less. This is the reason, probably, why farmers are generally loath to spend money. Harry knew that if he should hire out to a farmer for the six months the utmost he could expect would be a dollar a week, and it was not certain he could earn that. Besides, he would probably be worth as much to his father as anyone, and his labor in neither case provide money to pay for the cow. Obviously that would not answer. He must think of some other way, but at present none seemed open. He sensibly deferred thinking till after the examination.

"Are you going to the school examination, father?" asked our hero.

"I can't spare time, Harry. I should like to, for I want to know how far you have progressed. 'Live and learn,' my boy. That's a good motto, though Squire Green thinks that 'Live and earn' is a better."

"That's the rule he acts on," said Mrs. Walton. "He isn't troubled with learning."

"No, he isn't as good a scholar probably as Tom, here."

"Isn't he?" said Tom, rather complacently.

"Don't feel too much flattered, Tom," said his mother.

"You don't know enough to hurt you."

"He never will," said his sister, Jane, laughing.

"I don't want to know enough to hurt me," returned Tom, good humoredly. He was rather used to such compliments, and didn't mind them.

"No," said Mr. Walton; "I am afraid I can't spare time to come to the examination. Are you going, mother?"

It is quite common in the country for husbands to address wives in this manner.

"I shall try to go in the last of the afternoon," said Mrs. Walton.

"If you will come, mother," said Harry, "we'll all help you afterwards, so you won't lose anything by it."

"I think I will contrive to come."

The examination took place in the afternoon. Mr. Burbank preferred to have it so, for two reasons. It allowed time to submit the pupils to a previous private examination in the morning, thus insuring a better appearance in the afternoon. Besides, in the second place, the parents were more likely to be at liberty to attend in the afternoon, and he naturally liked to have as many visitors as possible. He was really a good teacher, though his qualifications were limited; but as far as his knowledge went, he was quite successful in imparting it to others.

In the afternoon there was quite a fair attendance of parents and friends of the scholars, though some did not come in till late, like Mrs. Walton. It is not my intention to speak of the examination in detail. My readers know too little of the scholars to make that interesting. Ephraim Higgins made some amusing mistakes, but that didn't excite any surprise, for his scholarship was correctly estimated in the village. Tom Walton did passably well, but was not likely to make his parents proud of his performances. Harry, however, eclipsed himself. His ambition had been stirred by the offer of a prize, and he was resolved to deserve it. His recitations were prompt and correct, and his answers were given with confidence. But perhaps he did himself most credit in declamation. He had always been very fond of that, and though he had never received and scientific instruction in it, he possessed a natural grace and a deep feeling of earnestness which made success easy. He had selected an extract from Webster—the reply to the Hayne—and this was the showpiece of the afternoon. The rest of the declamation was crude enough, but Harry's impressed even the most ignorant of his listeners as

superior for a boy of his age. When he uttered his last sentence, and made a parting bow, there was subdued applause, and brought a flush of gratification to the cheek of our young hero.

"This is the last exercise," said the teacher "except one. At the commencement of the term, I offered a prize to the scholar that would do the best from that time till the close of the school. I will now award the prize. Harry Walton, come forward."

Harry rose from his seat, his cheeks flushed again with gratification, and advanced to where the teacher was standing.

"Harry," said Mr. Burbank, "I have no hesitation in giving you the prize. You have excelled all the other scholars, and it is fairly yours. The book is not of much value, but I think you will find it interesting and instructive. It is the life of the great American philosopher and statesman, Benjamin Franklin. I hope you will read and profit by it, and try like him to make your life a credit to yourself and a blessing to mankind."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, bowing low. "I will try to do so."

There was a speech by the chairman of the school committee, in which allusion was made to Harry and the prize, and the exercises were over. Harry received the congratulations of his schoolmates and others with modest satisfaction, but he was most pleased by the evident pride and pleasure which his mother exhibited, when she, too, was congratulated on his success. His worldly prospects were very uncertain, but he had achieved the success for which he had been laboring, and he was happy.

CHAPTER VI. LOOKING OUT ON THE WORLD

It was not until evening that Harry had a chance to look at his prize. It was a cheap book, costing probably not over a dollar; but except his schoolbooks, and a ragged copy of "Robinson Crusoe," it was the only book that our hero possessed. His father found it difficult enough to buy him the necessary books for use in school, and could not afford to buy any less necessary. So our young hero, who was found of reading, though seldom able to gratify his taste, looked forward with great joy to the pleasure of reading his new book. He did not know much about Benjamin Franklin, but had a vague idea that he was a great man.

After his evening "chores" were done, he sat down by the table on which was burning a solitary tallow candle, and began to read. His mother was darning stockings, and his father had gone to the village store on an errand.

So he began the story, and the more he read the more interesting he found it. Great as he afterwards became, he was surprised to find that Franklin was a poor boy, and had to work for a living. He started out in life on his own account, and through industry, frugality, perseverance, and a fixed determination to rise in life, he became a distinguished an in the end, and a wise man also, though his early opportunities were very limited. It seemed to Harry that there was a great similarity between his own circumstances and position in life and those of the great man about whom he was reading, and this made the biography the more fascinating. The hope came to him that, by following Franklin's example, he, too, might become a successful man.

His mother, looking up at intervals from the stockings which had been so repeatedly darned that the original texture was almost wholly lost of sight of, noticed how absorbed he was.

"Is your book interesting, Harry?" she asked.

"It's the most interesting book I ever read," said Harry, with a sigh of intense enjoyment.

"It's about Benjamin Franklin, isn't it?"

"Yes. Do you know, mother, he was a poor boy, and he worked his way up?"

"Yes, I have heard so, but I never read his life."

"You'd better read this when I have finished it. I've been thinking that there's a chance for me, mother."

"A chance to do what?"

"A chance to be somebody when I get bigger. I'm poor now, but so was Franklin. He worked hard, and tried to learn all he could. That's the way he succeeded. I'm going to do the same."

"We can't all be Franklins, my son," said Mrs. Walton, not wishing her son to form high hopes which might be disappointed in the end.

"I know that, mother, and I don't expect to be a great man like him. But if I try hard I think I can rise in the world, and be worth a little money."

"I hope you wont' be as poor as your father, Harry," said Mrs. Walton, sighing, as she thought of the years of pain privation and pinching poverty reaching back to the time of their marriage. They had got through it somehow, but she hoped that their children would have a brighter lot.

"I hope not," said Harry. "If I ever get rich, you shan't have to work any more."

Mrs. Walton smiled faintly. She was not hopeful, and thought it probable that before Harry became rich, both she and her husband would be resting from their labor in the village churchyard. But she would not dampen Harry's youthful enthusiasm by the utterance of such a thought.

"I am sure you won't let your father and mother want, if you have the means to prevent it," she said aloud.

"We can't any of us tell what's coming, but I hope you may be well off some time."

"I read in the country paper the other day that many of the richest men in Boston and New York were once poor boys," said Harry, in a hopeful tone.

"So I have heard," said his mother.

"If they succeeded I don't see why I can't."

"You must try to be something more than a rich man. I shouldn't want you to be like Squire Green."

"He is rich, but he is mean and ignorant. I don't think I shall be like him. He has cheated father about the cow."

"Yes, he drove a sharp trade with him, taking advantage of his necessities. I am afraid your father won't be able to pay for the cow six months from now."

"I am afraid so, too."

"I don't see how we can possibly save up forty dollars. We are economical now as we can be."

"That is what I have been thinking of, mother. There is no chance of father's paying the money."

"Then it won't be paid, and we shall be worse off when the note comes due, than now."

"Do you think," said Harry, laying down the book on the table, and looking up earnestly, "do you think, mother, I could any way earn the forty dollars before it is to be paid?"

"You, Harry?" repeated his mother, in surprise, "what could you do to earn the money?"

"I don't know, yet," answered Harry; "but there are a great many things to be done."

"I don't know what you can do, except to hire out to a farmer, and they pay very little. Besides, I don't know of any farmer in the town that wants a boy. Most of them have boys of their own, or men."

"I wasn't thinking of that," said Harry. "There isn't much chance there."

"I don't know of any work to do here."

"Nor I, mother. But I wasn't thinking of staying in town."

"Not thinking of staying in town!" repeated Mrs. Walton, in surprise. "You don't want to leave home, do you?"

"No, mother, I don't want to leave home, or I wouldn't want to, if there was anything to do here. But you know there isn't. Farm work wont' help me along, and I don't' like it as well as some other kinds of work. I must leave home if I want to rise in the world."

"But your are too young, Harry."

This was touching Harry on a tender spot. No boy of fourteen likes to be considered very young. By that time he generally begins to feel a degree of self-confidence and self-reliance, and fancies he is almost on the threshold of manhood. I know boys of fourteen who look in the glass daily for signs of a coming mustache, and fancy they can see plainly what is not yet visible. Harry had not got as far as that, but he no longer looked upon himself as a young boy. He was stout and strong, and of very good height for his age, and began to feel manly. So he drew himself up, upon this remark of his mother's, and said proudly: "I am going on fifteen"—that sounds older than fourteen—"and I don't call that very young."

"It seems but a little while since you were a baby," said his mother, meditatively.

"I hope you don't think me anything like a baby now, mother," said Harry, straightening up, and looking as large as possible.

"No, you're quite a large boy, now. How quick the years have passed!"

"And I am strong for my age, too, mother. I am sure I am old enough to take care of myself."

"But you are young to go out into the world."

"I don't believe Franklin was much older than I, and he got along. There are plenty of boys who leave home before they are as old as I am."

"Suppose you are sick, Harry?"

"If I am I'll come home. But you know I am very healthy, mother, and if I am away from home I shall be very careful."

"But you would not be sure of getting anything to do."

"I'll risk that, mother," said Harry, in a confident tone.

"Did you think of this before you read that book?"

"Yes, I've been thinking of it for about a month; but the book put it into my head to-night. I seem to see my way clearer than I did. I want most of all, to earn money enough to pay for the cow in six months. You know yourself, mother, there isn't any chance of father doing it himself, and I can't earn anything if I stay at home."

"Have you mentioned the matter to your father yet, Harry?"

"No, I haven't. I wish you would speak about it tonight, mother. You can tell him first what makes me want to go."

"I'll tell him that you want to go; but I won't promise to say I think it a good plan."

"Just mention it, mother, and then I'll talk with him about it to-morrow."

To this Mrs. Walton agreed, and Harry, after reading a few pages more in the "Life of Franklin," went up to bed; but it was some time before he slept. His mind was full of the new scheme on which he had set his heart.

CHAPTER VII. IN FRANKLIN'S FOOTSTEPS

"Father," said Harry, the next morning, as Mr. Walton was about to leave the house, "there's something I want to say to you."

"What is it?" asked his father, imagining it was some trifle.

"I'll go out with you, and tell you outside."

"Very well, my son."

Harry put on his cap, and followed his father into the open air.

"Now, my son, what is it?"

"I want to go away from home."

"Away from home! Where?" asked Mr. Walton, in surprise.

"I don't know where; but somewhere where I can earn my own living."

"But you can do that here. You can give me your help on the farm, as you always have done."

"I don't like farming, father."

"You never told me that before. Is it because of the hard work?"

"No," said Harry, earnestly. "I am not afraid of hard work; but you know how it is, father. This isn't a very good farm, and it's all you can do to make a living for the rest of us out of it. If I could go somewhere, where I could work at something else, I could send you home my wages."

"I am afraid a boy like you couldn't earn very large wages."

"I don't see why not, father. I'm strong and stout, and willing to work."

"People don't give much for boys' work."

"I don't expect much; but I know I can get something, and by and by it will lead to more. I want to help you to pay for that cow you've just bought of Squire Green."

"I don't see how I'm going to pay for it," said Mr. Walton, with a sigh. "Hard money's pretty scarce, and we farmers don't get much of it."

"That's just what I'm saying, father. There isn't much money to be got in farming. That's why I want to try something else."

"How long have you been thinking of this plan, Harry?"

"Only since last night."

"What put it into your head?"

"That book I got as a prize."

"It is the life of Franklin, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Did he go away from home when he was a boy?"

"Yes, and he succeeded, too."

"I know he did. He became a famous man. But it isn't every boy that is like Franklin."

"I know that. I never expect to become a great man like him; but I can make something."

Harry spoke those words in a firm, resolute tone, which seemed to indicate a consciousness of power. Looking in his son's face, the elder Walton, though by no means a sanguine man, was inclined to think favorably of the scheme, But he was cautious, and he did not want Harry to be too confident of success.

"It's a new idea to me," he said. "Suppose you fail?"

"I don't mean to."

"But suppose you do—suppose you get sick?"

"Then I'll come home. But I want to try. There must be something for me to do in the world."

"There's another thing, Harry. It takes money to travel round, and I haven't got any means to give you."

"I don't want any, father. I mean to work my way. I've got twenty-five cents to start with. Now, father, what do you say?"

"I'll speak to your mother about it."

"To-day?"

"Yes, as soon as I go in."

With this Harry was content. He had a good deal of confidence that he could carry his point with both parents. He went into the house, and said to his mother:

"Mother, father's going to speak to you about my going away from home. Now don't you oppose it."

"Do you really think it would be a good plan, Harry?"

"Yes, mother."

"And if you're sick will you promise to come right home?"

"Yes, I'll promise that."

"Then I won't oppose your notion, though I ain't clear about its being wise."

"We'll talk about that in a few months, mother."

"Has Harry spoken to you about his plan of going away from home?" asked the farmer, when he reentered the house.

"Yes," said Mrs. Walton.

"What do you think?"

"Perhaps we'd better let the lad have his way. He's promised to come home if he's taken sick."

"So let it be, then, Harry. When do you want to go?"

"As soon as I can."

"You'll have to wait till Monday. It'll take a day or two to fix up your clothes," said his mother.

"All right, mother."

"I don't know but you ought to have some new shirts. You haven't got but two except the one you have on."

"I can get along, mother. Father hasn't got any money to spend for me. By the time I want some new shirts, I'll buy them myself."

"Where do you think of going, Harry? Have you any idea?"

"No, mother. I'm going to trust to luck. I shan't go very far. When I've got fixed anywhere I'll write, and let you know."

In the evening Harry resumed the "Life of Franklin," and before he was ready to go to bed he had got two thirds through with it. It possessed for him a singular fascination. To Harry it was no alone the "Life of Benjamin Franklin." It was the chart by which he meant to steer in the unknown career which stretched before him. He knew so little of the world that he trusted implicitly to that as a guide, and he silently stored away the wise precepts in conformity with which the great practical philosopher had shaped and molded his life.

During that evening, however, another chance was offered to Harry, as I shall now describe.

As the family were sitting around the kitchen table, on which was placed the humble tallow candle by which the room was lighted, there was heard a scraping at the door, and presently a knock. Mr. Walton answered it in person, and admitted the thin figure and sharp, calculating face of Squire Green.

"How are you, neighbor?" he said, looking about him with his parrotlike glance. "I thought I'd just run in a minute to see you as I was goin' by."

"Sit down, Squire Green. Take the rocking-chair."

"Thank you, neighbor. How's the cow a-doin'?"

"Middling well. She don't give as much milk as the one I lost."

"She'll do better bymeby. She's a good bargain to you, neighbor."

"I don't know," said Hiram Walton, dubiously. "She ought to be a good cow for the price you asked."

"And she is a good cow," said the squire, emphatically; "and you're lucky to get her so cheap, buyin' on time. What are you doin' there, Harry? School through, ain't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hear you're a good scholar. Got the prize, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Walton; "Harry was always good at his books."

"I guess he knows enough now. You'd ought to set him to work."

"He is ready enough to work," said Mr. Walton. "He never was lazy."

"That's good. There's a sight of lazy, shiftless boys about in these days. Seems as if they expected to earn their bread 'n butter a-doin' nothin'. I've been a thinkin', neighbor Walton, that you'll find it hard to pay for that cow in six months."

"I am afraid I shall," said the farmer, thinking in surprise, "Can he be going to reduce the price?"

"So I thought mebbe we might make an arrangement to make it easier."

"I should be glad to have it made easier, squire. It was hard on me, losing that cow by disease."

"Of course. Well, what I was thinkin' was, you might hire out your boy to work for me. I'd allow him two dollars a month and board, and the wages would help pay for the cow."

Harry looked up in dismay at this proposition. He knew very well the meanness of the board which the squire provided, how inferior it was even to the scanty, but well-cooked meals which he got at home; he knew, also that the squire had the knack of getting more work out of his men than any other farmer in the town; and the prospect of being six months in his employ was enough to terrify him. He looked from Squire Green's mean, crafty face to his father's in anxiety and apprehension. Were all his bright dreams of future success to terminate in this?

CHAPTER VIII. HARRY'S DECISION

Squire Green rubbed his hands as if he had been proposing a plan with special reference to the interest of the Waltons. Really he conceived that it would save him a considerable sum of money. He had in his employ a young man of eighteen, named Abner Kimball, to whom he was compelled to pay ten dollars a month. Harry, he reckoned, could be made to do about as much, though on account of his youth he had offered him but two dollars, and that not to be paid in cash.

Mr. Walton paused before replying to his proposal.

"You're a little too late," he said, at last, to Harry's great relief.

"Too late!" repeated the squire, hastily. "Why, you hain't hired out your boy to anybody else, have you?"

"No; but he has asked me to let him leave home, and I've agreed to it."

"Leave home? Where's he goin'?"

"He has not fully decided. He wants to go out and seek his fortune."

"He'll fetch up at the poorhouse," growled the squire.

"If he does not succeed, he will come home again."

"It's a foolish plan, neighbor Walton. Take my word for't. You'd better keep him here, and let him work for me."

"If he stayed at home, I should find work for him on my farm."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.