JACOB ABBOTT

STUYVESANT: A FRANCONIA STORY

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The development of the moral sentiments in the human heart, in early life, – and every thing in fact which relates to the formation of character, – is determined in a far greater degree by sympathy, and by the influence of example, than by formal precepts and didactic instruction. If a boy hears his father speaking kindly to a robin in the spring, – welcoming its coming and offering it food, – there arises at once in his own mind, a feeling of kindness toward the bird, and toward all the animal creation, which is produced by a sort of sympathetic action, a power somewhat similar to what in physical philosophy is called *induction*. On the other hand, if the father, instead of feeding the bird, goes eagerly for a gun, in order that he may shoot it, the boy will sympathize in that desire, and growing up under such an influence, there will be gradually formed within him, through the mysterious tendency of the youthful heart to vibrate in unison with hearts that are near, a disposition to kill and destroy all helpless beings that come within his power. There is no need of any formal instruction in either case. Of a thousand children brought up under the former of the above-described influences, nearly every one, when he sees a bird, will wish to go and get crumbs to feed it, while in the latter case, nearly every one will just as certainly look for a stone. Thus the growing up in the right atmosphere, rather than the receiving of the right instruction, is the condition which it is most important to secure, in plans for forming the characters of children.

It is in accordance with this philosophy that these stories, though written mainly with a view to their moral influence on the hearts and dispositions of the readers, contain very little formal exhortation and instruction. They present quiet and peaceful pictures of happy domestic life, portraying generally such conduct, and expressing such sentiments and feelings, as it is desirable to exhibit and express in the presence of children.

The books, however, will be found, perhaps, after all, to be useful mainly in entertaining and amusing the youthful readers who may peruse them, as the writing of them has been the amusement and recreation of the author in the intervals of more serious pursuits.

SCENE OF THE STORY

Franconia, a place among the mountains at the North. The time is summer.

PRINCIPAL PERSONS

Mrs. Henry, a lady residing at Franconia.

Alphonzo, commonly called Phonny, about nine years old.

Malleville, Phonny's cousin from New York, seven years old.

Wallace, Malleville's brother, a college student, visiting Franconia at this season.

Stuyvesant, Wallace's brother, about nine years old.

Antoine Bianchinette, commonly called Beechnut, a French boy, now about fourteen years old, living at Mrs. Henry's.

Chapter I
The Cavern

One pleasant summer morning Alphonzo was amusing himself by swinging on a gate in front of his mother's house. His cousin Malleville, who was then about eight years old, was sitting upon a stone outside of the gate, by the roadside, in a sort of corner that was formed between the wall and a great tree which was growing there. Malleville was employed in telling her kitten a story.

The kitten was sitting near Malleville, upon a higher stone. Malleville was leaning upon this stone, looking the kitten in the face. The kitten was looking down, but she seemed to be listening very attentively.

"Now, Kitty," said Malleville, "if you will sit still and hark, I will tell you a story, – a story about a mouse. I read it in a book. Once there was a mouse, and he was white, and he lived in a cage. No I forgot, – there were three mice. I'll begin again.

"Once there was a boy, and he had three white mice, and he kept them in a cage."

Here Malleville's story was interrupted by Phonny, who suddenly called out:

"Here comes Beechnut, Malleville."

"I don't care," said Malleville, "I'm telling a story to Kitty, and you must not interrupt me."

Here the kitten jumped down from the stone and ran away.

"Now Phonny!" said Malleville, "see what you have done; – you have made my Kitty go away."

"I didn't make her go away," said Phonny.

"Yes you did," said Malleville, "you interrupted my story, and that made her go away."

Phonny laughed aloud at this assertion, though Malleville continued to look very serious. Phonny then repeated that he did not make the kitten go away, and besides, he said, he thought that it was very childish to pretend to tell a story to a kitten.

Malleville said that she did not think it was childish at all; for *her* kitten liked to hear stories. Phonny, at this, laughed again, and then Malleville, appearing to be still more displeased, said that she was not any more childish than Phonny himself was.

By this time Beechnut, as Phonny called him, had come up. He was driving a cart. The cart was loaded with wood. The wood consisted of small and dry sticks, which Beechnut had gathered together in the forest.

"Beechnut," said Phonny, "are you going into the woods again for another load?"

"Yes," said Beechnut.

"And may I go with you?" said Phonny.

"Yes," said Beechnut.

"And I?" said Malleville.

"Yes," said Beechnut.

Beechnut drove on into the yard, and at length stopped near a great woodpile. Beechnut began to throw off the wood. Phonny climbed up into the cart too, to help Beechnut unload. Malleville sat down upon a log lying near to see.

While they were at work thus, throwing off the wood, Phonny, instead of taking the smallest sticks that came in his way, tried always to get hold of the largest. He had three motives for doing this, all mingled together. The first was a pleasure in exercising his own strength; the second, a desire to show Malleville that he was no child; and the third, to make a display of his strength to Beechnut.

After a while, when the load had been about half thrown off, Phonny stopped his work, straightened himself up with an air of great self-satisfaction and said,

"Malleville says I am childish; do you think I am, Beechnut?"

"No," said Malleville, "I did not say so." She began to be a little frightened at this appeal to Beechnut.

"Yes," said Phonny, "you certainly did."

"No," said Malleville.

"What did you say?" asked Phonny.

"I said I was not childish myself, any more than you."

"Well, that is the same thing," said Phonny.

Malleville was silent. She thought that it was a different thing, but she did not know very well how to explain the difference.

In the mean time Beechnut went on unloading the wood.

"Do *you* think I am childish at all, Beechnut," said Phonny.

"Why I don't know," said Beechnut, doubtfully. "I don't know how many childish things it is necessary for a boy to do, in order to be considered as childish in character; but I have known you to do *two* childish things within half an hour."

Phonny seemed a little surprised and a little confused at this, and after a moment's pause he said:

"I know what one of them is, I guess."

"What?" asked Beechnut.

"Swinging on the gate."

"No," said Beechnut, "I did not mean that. You have done things a great deal more childish than that."

"What?" said Phonny.

"The first was," said Beechnut, "making a dispute with Malleville, by appealing to me to decide whether you were childish."

"Why I ought to know if I am childish," said Phonny, "so that if I am, I may correct the fault."

"I don't think that that was your motive," said Beechnut, "in asking. If you had wished to know my opinion in order to correct yourself of the fault, you would have asked me some time privately. I think that your motive was a wish to get a triumph over Malleville."

"Oh, Beechnut!" said Phonny.

Although Phonny said Oh Beechnut, he still had a secret conviction that what Beechnut had said was true. He was silent a moment, and then he asked what was the other childishness which Beechnut had seen within half an hour.

"In unloading this wood," said Beechnut, "you tried to get hold of the biggest sticks, even when they were partly buried under the little ones, and thus worked to great disadvantage. *Men* take the smaller ones off first, and so clear the way to get at the larger ones. But boys make a great ado in getting hold of the largest ones they can see, by way of showing the by-standers how strong they are."

"Well," said Phonny, "I will throw off the little ones after this."

So Phonny went to work again, and in throwing off the remainder of the load, he acted in a much more sensible and advantageous manner than he had done before. The cart was soon empty. Beechnut then went into the house and brought out a small chair; this he placed in the middle of the cart, for Malleville. He also placed a board across the cart in front, in such a manner that the ends of the board rested upon the sides of the cart. The board thus formed a seat for Beechnut and Phonny. Beechnut then gave the reins to Phonny, who had taken his seat upon the board, while he, himself, went to help Malleville in.

He led Malleville up to the cart behind, and putting his hands under her arms, he said "Jump!" Malleville jumped – Beechnut at the same time lifting to help her. She did not however quite get up, and so Beechnut let her down to the ground again.

"Once more," said Beechnut.

So Malleville tried again. She went a little higher this time than before, but not quite high enough.

"That makes twice," said Beechnut. "The rule is,

"Try it once, try it twice,
And then once more, and that makes thrice."

The third time Malleville seemed to be endowed with some new and supernatural strength in her jumping: for she bounded so high that her feet rose almost to a level with the top of the seat, and then, as she came down gently upon the floor of the cart, Beechnut released his hold upon her, and she walked to her chair and sat down. Beechnut then mounted to his place by the side of Phonny, and the whole party rode away.

After riding along for some distance, Phonny asked Beechnut if he really thought that he was childish.

"Why no," said Beechnut, "not particularly. You are a little boyish sometimes, and I suppose that that is to be expected, since you are really a boy. But you are growing older every year, and I see some marks of manliness in you, now and then. How old are you now?"

"I am nine years and five months," said Phonny. "That is, I am about half-past nine."

"That is pretty old," said Beechnut, "but then I suppose I must expect you to be a boy some time longer."

"Beechnut," said Phonny, "did you know that my cousin Wallace was coming here pretty soon?"

"Is he?" said Beechnut. "From college?"

"Yes," said Phonny, "it is his vacation. He is coming here to spend his vacation."

"I am glad of that," said Beechnut. "I like to have him here."

"And my cousin Stuyvesant is coming too," said Phonny.

"Stuyvesant is my brother," said Malleville.

"How old is he?" asked Beechnut.

"He is only nine," said Phonny.

"Then he is not so old as you are," said Beechnut.

"Not quite," said Phonny.

"And I suppose of course, he will be more of a boy than you," said Beechnut.

"I don't know," said Phonny.

"We shall see," said Beechnut.

Just then, Phonny heard the sound of wheels behind him. He turned round and saw a wagon coming along the road.

"Here comes a wagon," said he. "I am going to whip up, so that they shall not go by us."

"No," said Beechnut, "turn out to one side of the road, and walk the horse, and let them go by."

"Why?" asked Phonny.

"I'll tell you presently," said Beechnut, "after the wagon has got before us."

Phonny turned out of the road and let the wagon drive by, and then Beechnut told him that the reason why he was not willing to have him whip up and keep ahead was, that he wanted to use the strength of the horse that day, in hauling wood, and not to waste it in galloping along the road, racing with a wagon.

At length the party reached a place where there was a pair of bars by the roadside, and a way leading in, to a sort of pasture. Phonny knew that this was where Beechnut was going, and so he turned in. The road was rough, and Malleville had to hold on very carefully to the side of the cart as they went along. Presently the road went into a wood, and after going on some way in this wood, Beechnut directed Phonny to stop, and they all got out.

"Now, Phonny," said Beechnut, "you can have your choice either to work or play."

"What do you think that I had better do?" said Phonny.

"Play, I rather think," said Beechnut.

"I thought you would say work," said Phonny.

"You had better play, in order to keep Malleville company," said Beechnut.

"Well," said Phonny, "I will."

So while Beechnut went to work to get a new load of wood, Phonny and Malleville went away to play.

There was a precipice of rocks near the place where Beechnut was loading his cart, with a great many large rocks at the foot of it. The top of the precipice was crowned with trees, and there were also a great many bushes and trees growing among the rocks below. It was a very wild and romantic place, and Phonny and Malleville liked to play there very much indeed.

After a time Phonny called out to Beechnut to inquire whether he had any matches in his pocket. He said that he and Malleville were going to build a fire.

"Yes," said Beechnut, "I have. Come here and I will give you some."

So Phonny sent Malleville after the matches, while he collected dry wood for a fire. When Malleville returned, she gave Phonny the matches, and told him that Beechnut said that they must make the fire on the *rocks* somewhere, or in some other safe place, so that it should not spread into the woods.

"Well," said Phonny, "I will look about and find a good place."

Accordingly, he began to walk along at the foot of the precipice, examining every recess among the rocks, and all the nooks and corners which seemed to promise well, as places of encampment. Malleville could not quite keep up with him on account of the roughnesses and inequalities of the way.

At last Malleville, who had fallen a little behind, heard Phonny calling to her in tones of great delight. She hastened on. In a moment she saw Phonny before her just coming out from among the bushes and calling to her,

"Malleville! Malleville! come here quick! – I have found a cavern."

Malleville went on, and presently she came in view of what Phonny called a cavern. It was a place where two immense fragments of rock leaned over toward each other, so as to form a sort of roof, beneath which was an inclosure which Phonny called a cavern. He might perhaps have more properly called it a grotto. There was a great flat stone at the bottom of the cavern, which made an excellent floor, and there was an open place in the top behind, where Phonny thought that the smoke would go out if he should make a fire.

"There, Malleville," said Phonny, when she came where she could see the cavern, "that is what I call a discovery. We will play that we are savages, and that we live in a cavern."

Phonny rolled two large stones into the cavern, and placed them in the back part of it, where he intended to build his fire. These stones were for andirons. Then he began to bring in logs, and sticks, and branches of trees, such as he found lying upon the ground dead and dry. These he piled up inside of the cavern in a sort of corner, where there was a deep recess or crevice, which was very convenient for holding the wood.

Malleville helped him do all this. When a sufficient supply of wood was gathered, Phonny laid some of it across his stone andirons, and then prepared to light the fire.

He rubbed one of his matches against a dry log, and the match immediately kindled. Phonny looked at the blue flame a moment, and then, as if some sudden thought had struck him, he blew it out again, and said,

"On the whole, I will go and ask Beechnut. We may as well be sure."

So he ran down from the entrance of the cavern, and thence along by the way that they had come, through the thicket, until he came in sight of Beechnut.

"Beechnut," said he, calling out very loud, "we have found a cavern; – may we build a fire in it?"

"Yes," said Beechnut.

Then Phonny went back, and telling Malleville that Beechnut had said yes, he proceeded to kindle his fire.

It happened that there were two large stones, tolerably square in form, each of them, and flat upon the upper side, which were lying in the cavern in such places as to be very convenient for seats. When the fire began to burn, Phonny sat down upon one of these seats, and gave Malleville the other. The fire blazed up very cheerily, and the smoke and sparks, winding their way up the side of the rock, which formed the back of the cavern, escaped out through the opening at the top in a very satisfactory manner.

"There," said Phonny, "this is what I call comfortable. If we only now had something to eat, it is all I should want."

"I'll tell you what," said he again, after a moment's pause, "we will send home by Beechnut, when he goes with his next load, to get us something to eat."

"Well," said Malleville, "so we will."

Beechnut very readily undertook the commission of bringing Phonny and Malleville something to eat. Accordingly, when his cart was loaded he went away, leaving Phonny and Malleville in their cavern. While he was gone the children employed themselves in bringing flat stones, and making a fireplace by building walls on each side of their fire.

In due time Beechnut returned, bringing with him a large round box, which he said that Mrs. Henry had sent to Phonny and Malleville. It was too heavy for Phonny to lift easily, and so Beechnut drove his cart along until it was nearly opposite the cavern. Then he took the box out of the cart and carried it into the cavern, and laid it down upon Malleville's seat.

Phonny opened it, and he found that it contained a variety of stores. There were four potatoes and four apples, each rolled up in a separate paper. There were also two crackers. These crackers were in a tin mug, just big enough to hold them, one on the top of the other. The mug, Phonny said, was for them to drink from, and as there was a spring by the side of the cavern they had plenty of water.

"One cracker is for me," said Phonny, "and the other for you, Malleville. I mean to split my cracker in two, and toast the halves."

At the bottom of the box there was half a pie.

Beechnut stopped to see what the box contained, and then he went away to his work again. As he went away, he told the children that Mrs. Henry said that they need not come home to dinner that day, unless they chose to do so, – but might make their dinner, if they pleased, in the cavern, from what she had sent them in the box.

The children were very much pleased with this plan. They remained in the cavern a long time. They roasted their potatoes in the fire, and their apples in front of it. They toasted their crackers and warmed their pie, by placing them against a stone between the andirons; and they got water, whenever they were thirsty, in the dipper from the spring.

At length, about the middle of the afternoon, when their interest in the cavern was beginning to decline, their thoughts were suddenly turned away from it altogether, by the news which Beechnut announced to them on his return from the house, after his eighth load, that Wallace had arrived.

"And has my brother Stuyvesant come too?" asked Malleville.

"I suppose so," said Beechnut, "there was a boy with him, about as large as Phonny, but I did not hear what his name was."

"Oh, it is he! it is he!" said Malleville, clapping her hands.

Phonny and Malleville mounted upon the top of the load as soon as Beechnut got it ready, and rode home. They ran into the house, while Beechnut went to unload his wood. Just as Beechnut was ready to go out of the yard again with his empty cart, Phonny came out.

"Cousin Wallace has really come," said Phonny.

"Ah!" said Beechnut, "and what does he have to say?"

"Why, he says," replied Phonny, "that he is going to make a man of me."

"Is he?" said Beechnut. "Well, I hope he will take proper time for it. I have no great opinion of the plan of making men out of boys before their time."

So saying, Beechnut drove away, and Phonny went in.

Chapter II
Boyishness

Two or three days after Wallace arrived at Franconia, he and Phonny formed a plan to go and take a ride on horseback. They invited Stuyvesant to go with them, but Stuyvesant said that Beechnut was going to plow that day, and had promised to teach him to drive oxen. He said that he should like better to learn to drive oxen than to take a ride on horseback.

There was another reason which influenced Stuyvesant in making this decision, and that was, that he had observed that there were only two horses in the stable, and although he knew that Beechnut could easily obtain another from some of the neighbors, still he thought that this would make some trouble, and he was always very considerate about making trouble. This was rather remarkable in Stuyvesant, for he was a city boy, and city boys are apt to be very inconsiderate.

So Wallace and Phonny concluded to go by themselves. They mounted their horses and rode together out through the great gate.

"Now," said Phonny, when they were fairly on the way, "we will have a good time. This is just what I like. I would rather have a good ride on horseback than any thing else. I wish that they would let me go alone sometimes."

"Won't they?" asked Wallace.

"No, not very often," said Phonny.

"Do you know what the reason is?" asked Wallace.

"I suppose because they think that I am not old enough," replied Phonny, "but I am."

"I don't think that that is the reason," said Wallace. "Stuyvesant is not quite so old as you are, and yet I shall let *him* go and ride alone whenever he pleases."

"What *is* the reason then?" asked Phonny.

"Because you are not *man* enough I suppose," said Wallace. "You might be more manly, without being any older, and then people would put more trust in you, and you would have a great many more pleasures."

Phonny was rather surprised to hear his cousin Wallace speak thus. He had thought that he *was* manly – very manly; but it was evident that his cousin considered him boyish.

"I do not know," continued Wallace, "but that you are as manly as other boys of your years."

"Except Stuyvesant," said Phonny.

"Yes, except Stuyvesant," said Wallace, "I think that he is rather remarkable. I do not think that you are *very* boyish, – but you are growing up quite fast and you are getting to be pretty large. It is time for you to begin to evince some degree of the carefulness, and considerateness, and sense of responsibility, that belong to men.

"There are two kinds of boyishness," continued Wallace. "One kind is very harmless."

"What kind is that?" asked Phonny.

"Why if a boy continues," said Wallace, "when he is quite old, to take pleasure in amusements which generally please only young children, that is boyishness of a harmless kind. For example, suppose we should see a boy, eighteen years old, playing marbles a great deal, we should say that he was boyish. So if *you* were to have a rattle or any other such little toy for a plaything, and should spend a great deal of time in playing with it, we should say that it was very boyish or childish. Still that kind of boyishness does little harm, and we should not probably do any thing about it, but should leave you to outgrow it in your own time."

"What kind of boyishness do you mean then, that is not harmless?" asked Phonny.

"I mean that kind of want of consideration, by which boys when young, are always getting themselves and others into difficulty and trouble, for the sake of some present and momentary

pleasure. They see the pleasure and they grasp at it. They do not see the consequences, and so they neglect them. The result is, they get into difficulty and do mischief. Other people lose confidence in them, and so they have to be restricted and watched, and subjected to limits and bounds, when if they were a little more considerate and manly, they might enjoy a much greater liberty, and many more pleasures."

"I don't think that I do so," said Phonny.

"No," rejoined Wallace, "I don't think that you do; that is I don't think that you do so more than other boys of your age. But to show you exactly what I mean, I will give you some cases. Perhaps they are true and perhaps they are imaginary. It makes no difference which they are.

"Once there was a boy," continued Wallace, "who came down early one winter morning, and after warming himself a moment by the sitting-room fire, he went out in the kitchen. It happened to be ironing day, and the girl was engaged in ironing at a great table by the kitchen fire. We will call the girl's name Dorothy.

"The boy seeing Dorothy at this work, wished to iron something, himself. So Dorothy gave him a flat-iron and also something to iron."

"What was it that she gave him to iron?" said Phonny.

"A towel," said Wallace.

"Well," said Phonny, "go on."

"The boy took the flat-iron and went to work," continued Wallace. "Presently, however, he thought he would go out into the shed and see if the snow had blown in, during the night. He found that it had, and so he stopped to play with the drift a few minutes. At last he came back into the kitchen, and he found, when he came in, that Dorothy had finished ironing his towel and had put it away. He began to complain of her for doing this, and then, in order to punish her, as he said, he took two of her flat-irons and ran off with them, and put them into the snow drift."

"Yes," said Phonny, "that was me. But then I only did it for fun."

"Was the fun for yourself or for Dorothy?" asked Wallace.

"Why, for me," said Phonny.

"And it made only trouble for Dorothy," said Wallace.

"Yes," said Phonny, "I suppose it did."

"That is the kind of boyishness I mean," said Wallace, "getting fun for yourself at other people's expense; and so making them dislike you, and feel sorry when they see you coming, and glad when you go away."

Phonny was silent. He saw the folly of such a course of proceeding, and had nothing to say.

"There is another case," said Wallace. "Once I knew a boy, and his name was – I'll call him Johnny."

"What was his other name?" asked Phonny.

"No matter for that, now," said Wallace. "He went out into the barn, and he wanted something to do, and so the boy who lived there, gave him a certain corner to take charge of, and keep in order."

"What was that boy's name?" asked Phonny.

"Why, I will call him Hazelnut," said Wallace.

"Ah!" exclaimed Phonny, "now I know you are going to tell some story about me and Beechnut." Here Phonny threw back his head and laughed aloud. He repeated the words Johnny and Hazelnut, and then laughed again, until he made the woods ring with his merriment.

Wallace smiled, and went on with his story.

"Hazelnut gave him the charge of a corner of the barn where some harnesses were kept, and Johnny's duty was to keep them in order there. One day Hazelnut came home and found that Johnny had taken out the long reins from the harness, and had fastened them to the branches of two trees in the back yard, to make a swing, and then he had loaded the swing with so many children, as to break it down."

"Yes," said Phonny, "that was me too; but I did not think that the reins would break."

"I know it," said Wallace. "You did not think. That is the nature of the kind of boyishness that I am speaking of. The boy does not *think*. Men, generally, before they do any new or unusual thing, stop to consider what the results and consequences of it are going to be; but boys go on headlong, and find out what the consequences are when they come."

While Wallace and Phonny had been conversing thus, they had been riding through a wood which extended along a mountain glen. Just at this time they came to a place where a cart path branched off from the main road, toward the right. Phonny proposed to go into this path to see where it would lead. Wallace had no objection to this plan, and so they turned their horses and went in.

The cart path led them by a winding way through the woods for a short distance, along a little dell, and then it descended into a ravine, at the bottom of which there was a foaming torrent tumbling over a very rocky bed. The path by this time became quite a road, though it was a very wild and stony road. It kept near the bank of the brook, continually ascending, until at last it turned suddenly away from the brook, and went up diagonally upon the side of a hill. There were openings in the woods on the lower side of the road, through which Wallace got occasional glimpses of the distant valleys. Wallace was very much interested in these prospects, but Phonny's attention was wholly occupied as he went along, in looking over all the logs, and rocks, and hollow trees, in search of squirrels.

At last, at a certain turn of the road, the riders came suddenly upon a pair of bars which appeared before them, – directly across the road.

"Well," said Wallace, "here we are, what shall we do now?"

"It is nothing but a pair of bars," said Phonny. "I can jump off and take them down."

"No," said Wallace, "I think we may as well turn about here, and go back. We have come far enough on this road."

Just then Phonny pointed off under the trees of the forest, upon one side, and said in a very eager voice,

"See there!"

"What is it?" said Wallace.

"A trap," said Phonny. "It is a squirrel trap! and it is sprung! There's a squirrel in it, I've no doubt. Let me get off and see."

"Well," said Wallace, "give me the bridle of your horse."

So Phonny threw the bridle over his horse's head and gave it to Wallace. He then dismounted – sliding down the side of the horse safely to the ground.

As soon as he found himself safely down, he threw his riding-stick upon the grass, and ran off toward the trap.

The trap was placed upon a small stone by the side of a larger one. It was in a very snug and sheltered place, almost out of view. In fact it probably would not have been observed by any ordinary passer-by.

Phonny ran up to the trap, and took hold of it. He lifted it up very cautiously. He shook it as well as he could, and then listened. He thought that he could hear or feel some slight motion within. He became very much excited.

He put the trap down upon the high rock, and began opening up the lid a little, very gently.

The trap was of the kind called by the boys a box-trap. It is in the form of a box, and the back part runs up high, to a point. The lid of the box has a string fastened to it, which string is carried up, over the high point, and thence down, and is fastened to an apparatus connected with the spindle.

The spindle is a slender rod of wood which passes through the end of the box into the interior. About half of the spindle is within the box and half without. There is a small notch in the outer part of the spindle, and another in the end of the box, a short distance above the spindle. There is a small bar of wood, with both ends sharpened, and made of such a length as just to reach from the notch

in the end of the box, to the notch in the spindle. This bar is the apparatus to which the end of the string is fastened, as before described.

When the trap is to be set, the bar is fitted to the notches in such a manner as to catch in them, and then the weight of the lid, being sustained by the string, the lid is held up so that the squirrel can go in. The front of the box is attached to the lid, and rises with it, so that when the lid is raised a little the squirrel can creep directly in. The bait, which is generally a part of an ear of corn, is fastened to the end of the spindle, which is within the trap. The squirrel sees the bait, and creeps in to get it. He begins to nibble upon the corn. The ear is tied so firmly to the spindle that he can not get it away. In gnawing upon it to get off the corn, he finally disengages the end of the spindle from the bar, by working the lower end of the bar out of its notch; this lets the string up, and of course the lid comes down, and the squirrel is shut in, a captive.

When the lid first comes down, it makes so loud a noise as to terrify the poor captive very much. He runs this way and that, around the interior of the box, wondering what has happened, and why he can not get out as he came in. He has no more appetite for the corn, but is in great distress at his sudden and unaccountable captivity.

After trying in vain on all sides to escape, by forcing his way, and finding that the box is too strong for him in every part, he finally concludes to gnaw out. He accordingly selects the part of the box where there is the widest crack, and where consequently the brightest light shines through. He selects this place, partly because he supposes that the box is thinnest there, and partly because he likes to work in the light.[1]

There was a squirrel in the trap which Phonny had found. It was a large and handsome gray squirrel. He had been taken that morning. About an hour after the trap sprung upon him, he had begun to gnaw out, and he had got about half through the boards in the corner when Phonny found him. When Phonny shook the trap the squirrel clung to the bottom of it by his claws, so that Phonny did not shake him about much.

When Phonny had put the trap upon the great stone, he thought that he would lift up the lid a little way, and peep in. This is a very dangerous operation, for a squirrel will squeeze out through a very small aperture, and many a boy has lost a squirrel by the very means that he was taking to decide whether he had got one.

Phonny was aware of this danger, and so he was very careful. He raised the lid but very little, and looked under with the utmost caution. He saw two little round and very brilliant eyes peeping out at him.

“Yes, Wallace,” said he. “Yes, yes, here he is. I see his eyes.”

Wallace sat very composedly upon his horse, holding Phonny’s bridle, while Phonny was uttering these exclamations, without appearing to share the enthusiasm which Phonny felt, at all.

“He is here, Wallace,” said Phonny. “He is, truly.”

“I do not doubt it,” said Wallace, “but what are we to do about it?”

“Why – why – what would you do?” asked Phonny.

“I suppose that the best thing that we could do,” said Wallace, “is to ride along.”

“And leave the squirrel?” said Phonny, in a tone of surprise.

“Yes,” said Wallace. “I don’t see any thing else that we can do.”

“Why, he will gnaw out,” said Phonny. “He will gnaw out in half an hour. He has gnawed half through the board already. Espy ought to have tinned his trap.” So saying, Phonny stooped down and peeped into the trap again, through the crack under the lid.

“Who is Espy?” asked Wallace.

“Espy Ransom,” said Phonny. “He lives down by the mill. He is always setting traps for squirrels. I suppose that this road goes down to the mill, and that he came up here and set his trap. But it won’t

[1] To prevent the squirrels that are caught from gnawing out, the boys sometimes line the inside of their traps with tin.

do to leave the squirrel here," continued Phonny, looking at Wallace in a very earnest manner. "It never will do in the world."

"What shall we do, then?" asked Wallace.

"Couldn't we carry him down to Espy?" said Phonny.

"I don't think that we have any right to carry him away. It is not our squirrel, and it may be that it is not Espy's."

Phonny seemed perplexed. After a moment's pause he added, "Couldn't we go down and tell Espy that there is a squirrel in his trap?"

"Yes," said Wallace, "that we can do."

Phonny stooped down and peeped into the trap again.

"The rogue," said he. "The moment that I am gone, he will go to gnawing again, I suppose, and so get out and run away. What a little fool he is."

"Do you think he is a fool for trying to gnaw out of that trap?" asked Wallace.

"Why no," – said Phonny, "but I wish he wouldn't do it. We will go down quick and tell Espy."

So Phonny came back to the place where Wallace had remained in the road, holding the horses. Phonny let down the bars, and Wallace went through with the horses. Phonny immediately put the bars up again, took the bridle of his own horse from Wallace's hands, threw it up over the horse's head, and then by the help of a large log which lay by the side of the road, he mounted. He did all this in a hurried manner, and ended with saying:

"Now, Cousin Wallace, let's push on. I don't think it's more than half a mile to the mill."

Chapter III
The Plowing

While Wallace and Phonny were taking their ride, as described in the last chapter, Stuyvesant and Beechnut were plowing.

Beechnut told Stuyvesant that he was ready to yoke up, as he called it, as soon as the horses had gone.

"Well," said Stuyvesant, "I will come. I have got to go up to my room a minute first."

So Stuyvesant went up to his room, feeling in his pockets as he ascended the stairs, to find the keys of his trunk. When he reached his room, he kneeled down before his trunk and unlocked it.

He raised the lid and began to take out the things. He took them out very carefully, and laid them in order upon a table which was near the trunk. There were clothes of various kinds, some books, and several parcels, put up neatly in paper. Stuyvesant stopped at one of these parcels, which seemed to be of an irregular shape, and began to feel of what it contained through the paper.

"What is this?" said he to himself. "I wonder what it can be. Oh, I remember now, it is my watch-compass."

What Stuyvesant called his watch-compass, was a small pocket-compass made in the form of a watch. It was in a very pretty brass case, about as large as a lady's watch, and it had a little handle at the side, to fasten a watch-ribbon to. Stuyvesant's uncle had given him this compass a great many years before. Stuyvesant had kept it very carefully in his drawer at home, intending when he should go into the country to take it with him, supposing that it would be useful to him in the woods. His sister had given him a black ribbon to fasten to the handle. The ribbon was long enough to go round Stuyvesant's neck, while the compass was in his waistcoat pocket.

Stuyvesant untied the string, which was around the paper that contained his compass, and took it off. He then wound up this string into a neat sort of coil, somewhat in the manner in which fishing-lines are put up when for sale in shops. He put this coil of twine, together with the paper, upon the table. He looked at the compass a moment to see which was north in his chamber, and then putting the compass itself in his pocket, he passed the ribbon round his neck, and afterward went on taking the things out of his trunk.

When he came pretty near to the bottom of his trunk, he said to himself,

"Ah! here it is."

At the same moment he took out a garment, which seemed to be a sort of frock. It was made of brown linen. He laid it aside upon a chair, and then began to put the things back into his trunk again. He laid them all in very carefully, each in its own place. When all were in, he shut down the lid of the trunk, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. Then he took the frock from the chair, and opening it, put it on.

It was made somewhat like a cartman's frock. Stuyvesant had had it made by the seamstress at his mother's house, in New York, before he came away. He was a very neat and tidy boy about his dress, and always felt uncomfortable if his clothes were soiled or torn. He concluded, therefore, that if he had a good, strong, serviceable frock to put on over his other clothes, it would be very convenient for him at Franconia.

As soon as his frock was on, he hastened down stairs and went out to the barn in search of Beechnut. He found him yoking up the cattle.

"Why, Stuyvesant," said Beechnut, when he saw him, "that is a capital frock that you have got. How much did it cost?"

"I don't know," said Stuyvesant; "Mary made it for me."

"Who is Mary?" asked Beechnut.

"She is the seamstress," said Stuyvesant. "She lives at our house in New York."

"Do you have a seamstress there all the time?" said Beechnut.

"Yes," said Stuyvesant.

"And her name is Mary," said Beechnut.

"Yes," said Stuyvesant.

"Well, I wish she would take it into her head to make me such a frock as that," said Beechnut.

During this conversation, Beechnut had been busily employed in yoking up the oxen. Stuyvesant looked on, watching the operations carefully, in order to see how the work of yoking up was done. He wished to see whether the process was such that he could learn to yoke up oxen himself; or whether any thing that was required was beyond his strength.

"Can *boys* yoke up cattle?" said Stuyvesant at length.

"It takes a pretty stout boy," said Beechnut.

"Could a boy as stout as I am do it?" asked Stuyvesant.

"It would be rather hard work for you," said Beechnut, "the yoke is pretty heavy."

The yoke was indeed quite heavy, and it was necessary to lift it – one end at a time – over the necks of the oxen. Stuyvesant observed that the oxen were fastened to the yoke, by means of bows shaped like the letter U. These bows were passed up under the necks of the oxen. The ends of them came up through the yokes and were fastened there by little pegs, which Beechnut called keys. There was a ring in the middle of the yoke on the under side to fasten the chain to, by which the cattle were to draw.

When the oxen were yoked, Beechnut drove them to the corner of the yard, where there was a drag with a plow upon it. Beechnut put an axe also upon the drag.

"What do you want an axe for," asked Stuyvesant, "in going to plow?"

"We always take an axe," said Beechnut, "when we go away to work. We are pretty sure to want it for something or other."

Beechnut then gave Stuyvesant a goad stick, and told him that he might drive. Stuyvesant had observed very attentively what Beechnut had done in driving, and the gestures which he had made, and the calls which he had used, in speaking to the oxen, and though he had never attempted to drive such a team before, he succeeded quite well. His success, however, was partly owing to the sagacity of the oxen, who knew very well where they were to go and what they were to do.

At length, after passing through one or two pairs of bars, they came to the field.

"Which is the easiest," said Stuyvesant, "to drive the team or hold the plow?"

"That depends," said Beechnut, "upon whether your capacity consists most in your strength or your skill."

"Why so?" asked Stuyvesant.

"Because," said Beechnut, "it requires more skill to drive, than to hold the plow, and more strength to hold the plow, than to drive. I think, therefore, that you had better drive, for as between you and I, it is I that have the most strength, and you that have the most skill."

Stuyvesant laughed.

"Why you *ought* to have the most skill," said Beechnut – "coming from such a great city."

Beechnut took the plow off from the drag, and laid the drag on one side. He then attached the cattle to the plow. They were standing, when they did this, in the middle of one side of the field.

"Now," said Beechnut, "we are going first straight through the middle of the field. Do you see that elm-tree, the other side of the fence?"

"I see a large tree," said Stuyvesant.

"It is an elm," said Beechnut.

"There is a great bird upon the top of it," said Stuyvesant.

"Yes," said Beechnut, "it is a crow. Now you must keep the oxen headed directly for that tree. Go as straight as you can, and I shall try to keep the plow straight behind you. The thing is to make a straight furrow."

When all was ready, Stuyvesant gave the word to his oxen to move on, and they began to draw. Stuyvesant went on, keeping his eye alternately upon the oxen and upon the tree. He had some curiosity to look round and see how Beechnut was getting along with the furrow, but he recollected that his business was to drive, and so he gave his whole attention to his driving, in order that he might go as straight as possible across the field.

The crow flew away when he had got half across the field. He had a strong desire to know where she was going to fly to, but he did not look round to follow her in her flight. He went steadily on attending to his driving.

When he was about two thirds across the field, he saw a stump at a short distance before him, with a small hornet's nest upon one side of it. His course would lead him, he saw, very near this nest. His first impulse was to stop the oxen and tell Beechnut about the hornet's nest. He did in fact hesitate a moment, but he was instantly reassured by hearing Beechnut call out to him from behind, saying,

"Never mind the hornet's nest, Stuyvesant. Drive the oxen right on. I don't think the hornets will sting them."

Stuyvesant perceived by this, that Beechnut thought only of the oxen, when he saw a hornet's nest, and he concluded to follow his example in this respect. So he drove steadily on.

When they got to the end of the field the oxen stopped. Beechnut and Stuyvesant then looked round to see the furrow. It was very respectably straight.

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