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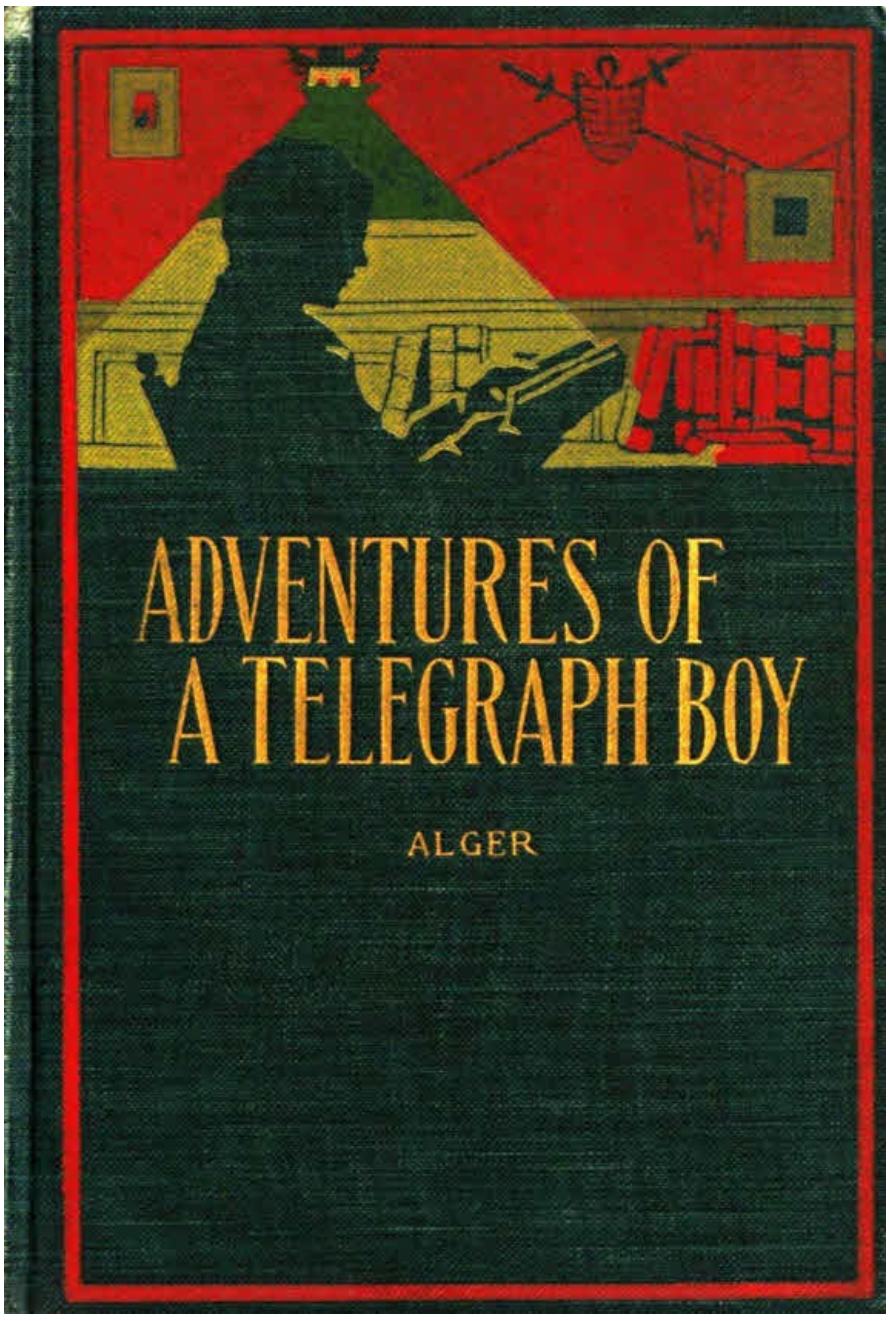

# CONTENTS

# Adventures of a Telegraph Boy


**"FORTY DOLLARS!" EXCLAIMED OLD JERRY. "I'M IN LUCK FOR ONCE."**



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OR

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By

Horatio Alger, Jr.

Author of
"Tom Tracy," "Ned Newton,"
"Walter Griffith," etc.

New York and Boston
H. M. Caldwell Company
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# ADVENTURES OF A NEW YORK TELEGRAPH BOY.

## CHAPTER I.

### PAUL, THE TELEGRAPH BOY.

On Broadway, not far from the St. Nicholas Hotel, is an office of the American District Telegraph. Let us enter.

A part of the office is railed off, within which the superintendent has a desk, and receives orders for boys to be sent to different parts of the city. On benches in the back part of the office are sitting perhaps a dozen boys varying in age from fifteen to eighteen, clad in the well known blue uniform prescribed by the company. Each wears a cap on which may be read the initials of the company, with the boy's number.

At the end of the benches sat a stout, well made boy, apparently sixteen years of age. He had a warm, expressive face, and would generally be considered good looking.

On his cap we read this inscription:

A. D. T.
91.

Some of the boys were smaller, two or three larger than Number 91. But among them all, he was the most attractive in appearance. The boys sat on the benches in patience waiting for a call from the superintendent. They were usually selected in turn, but sometimes the fitness of a particular [6] boy for the errand required was taken into consideration.

"Number 87!" called the superintendent.

A small boy of fifteen, but not looking over thirteen, left his seat and advanced to the desk.

"No, I don't think you'll do," said the superintendent "There's a man at the New England Hotel who wants a boy to go down with him to the Cortlandt Street Ferry, and carry his valise. A larger boy will be required."

He glanced at the boys in waiting and called:

"Number 91!"

The boy of whom we have spoken rose with alacrity, and stepped up to the desk. He had been sitting on the bench for an hour, and was glad of an opportunity to go out on an errand.

The superintendent wrote on a card the name "D. L. Meacham, New England Hotel," and handed it to the boy.

"Go at once to the New England Hotel, and call for that gentleman," he said. "If he is not in, wait for him."

"Yes, sir."

Paul Parton, for this was his name, did not need any further directions. He was perfectly acquainted with the city, especially in the lower part, where he had lived for years. He crossed Broadway, and, taking an easterly course, made his way to the Bowery, on which, at the corner of Bayard Street, the New England Hotel stands. This is a very respectable inn, and by its fair accommodations and moderate prices attracts a large number of patrons.

Entering, Paul advanced to the desk.

"Is Mr. D. L. Meacham in?" he asked, referring to the card given him by the superintendent.

"Here he is!" replied, not the clerk to whom the question was addressed, but a tall, elderly man [7] with gray hair, clad in a rusty suit, evidently a gentleman from the rural districts.

"Are you the telegraph boy?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I want to go down to the ferry to take the train to Philadelphia."

"All right, sir. Is this your valise?" asked Paul, pointing to a shabby traveling bag that might, from its appearance, have been used by Noah when he was on board the ark.

"Yes, that's mine."

"Do you want to start now, Mr. Meacham?"

"Well, I might as well. I hain't got nothing to keep me here. How fur is it?"

"About a mile. Perhaps a little more."

Paul took the valise in his hand, and went out of the hotel, followed by the old man.

"Do you know the way all round here, sonny?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it beats me. I get turned round, and don't know where I am. If it wasn't for that, I could

have gone to the ferry alone. But land's sake! I might wander all round till tomorrow morning without finding it."

"Then I guess it's better to have a boy with you," said Paul, laughingly.

"You look like a smart boy," said the old man, attentively examining Number 91. "Do you like your business?"

"Pretty well," answered Paul.

"Is the pay pretty good?"

"I get four dollars a week."

"That's more than I got when I was your age, sonny."

"It doesn't go very far in the city, when you have your board and clothes to pay for," replied the young telegraph messenger. [8]

"That's so. I didn't think of that. I was reared on a farm, where they didn't make much account of the victuals you ate."

"We have to make account of it here, sir."

"So you don't have much left out of your four dollars?"

"No, sir; but I get rather more than four dollars. Sometimes the gentlemen I am working for give me a little extra for myself."

"How much does that come to—in a week?"

"Well, sometimes I make a dollar or two extra. It depends a good deal on whether I fall in with liberal gentlemen or not. I don't mean this as a hint, sir," added Paul, smiling. "I am not entitled to anything extra, but, of course, when it is offered I take it."

Paul had a motive in saying this. He abhorred the idea of seeming to beg for a gratuity. Besides, judging from the appearance and rusty attire of the old man, he decided that he was poor, and could not afford to pay anything over the regular charges.

"I see," said the old farmer, as Paul supposed him to be, with a responsive smile. "You're right there, sonny. If you're offered a little extra money, it's all right to take it."

By this time they had reached the City Hall Park, and were crossing it. Then, as now, the Park swarmed with bootblacks of all sizes, provided with the implements of their trade.

Frequently, in the rivalry which results from active competition, the little fellows are pushed aside, and the bigger and stronger boys take possession of the customers they have secured. There was a case of this sort which fell under the attention of Paul and his elderly companion.

A pale, delicate looking boy of twelve was signaled by a gentleman, a rod or two from the City Hall. He hastened eagerly to secure a job, but unhappily the signal had also been seen by a bigger boy, larger, if anything, than Paul, and he, too, ran to get in ahead of the smaller boy. Without ceremony, he put out his foot and tripped little Jack, and with a triumphant laugh sped on to the expectant customer. The little boy, who had been bruised by the fall, rose crying and disappointed. [9]

"That's mean, Tom Rafferty," he said. "The gentleman called me."

Tom only responded by another laugh. With him, might made right, and the dominating law was the will of the stronger.

"Oh, you'll get another soon," he said.

He got down on his knees, and placed his box in position. But all was not to be as smooth sailing as he expected. Paul, with a blaze of honest indignation, had seen the outrage. He was not surprised, for he knew both boys.

"Never mind, Jack," he said. "I'll fix it all right.

"Please mind the valise a minute, sir," he added, and rather to the surprise of Mr. Meacham, he left him standing in the park, while he darted forward, seized Tom Rafferty by the collar, pulled him over backwards, and called, "Now, Jack!"

The little boy, emboldened by this unexpected help, ran up, and took Tom's place at the foot of the customer.

"I'm the boy you called, sir," he said.

"That's true, my boy. Go ahead! Only be quick!" said the gentleman.

Tom Rafferty was furious.

"Don't you know any better, you overgrown bully, than to get away little boys' jobs?" asked Paul, indignantly.

"I'll mash yer!" roared Tom. [10]

"You mean if you can," said the undaunted Paul.

"You think you're a gentleman, just because you're a telegraph boy. I could be a telegraph boy myself if I wanted ter."

"Go ahead—I have no objection."

“I’ll give that little kid the worst lickin’ he ever had, soon as he gets through, see ef I don’t.”

“Do it if you dare!” said Paul, his eyes flashing. “If you do, I’ll thrash you.”

“You dassn’t.”

“Remember what I say, Tom Rafferty. Now, Mr. Meacham, we’ll go on. I hope you’ll excuse me for keeping you waiting.”

“Yes, I will, sonny. It did me good to see you pitching into that young bully. I’d like to have done it myself.”

“I know both boys, sir. Little Jack is the son of a widow, who sews for a living, and she can’t make enough to support the family, and he has to go out and earn what he can by shines. He is small and weak, and the big boys impose upon him.”

“I’m glad he has some friends; Number 91, you’re a brave boy.”

“I don’t know about that, sir. But I can’t stand still and see a little kid like that imposed upon by a big brute like Tom Rafferty.”

They crossed Broadway, and presently neared Cortlandt Street. Just at the corner stood an old man, with bent form and white hair, dressed with extreme shabbiness. His hand was extended, and he was silently asking for alms.

Paul’s cheek flushed, and an expression of mortification swept over his face.

“Grandfather!” he said, reproachfully. “Please go home! Don’t beg in the streets. You make me ashamed!”

# CHAPTER II. [11]

## THE CORTLANDT STREET FERRY.

The old man turned, and, recognizing Paul, looked somewhat ashamed.

“I—I couldn’t help it,” he whined. “I’m so poor.”

“There is no need for you to beg. I’ll bring you some money tonight.”

“Just for a little while. See, a kind gentleman gave me that,” and he displayed a silver dime.

Paul looked very much annoyed.

“If you don’t stop begging, grandfather,” he said, “I won’t come home at all. I’ll go and sleep at the Newsboys’ Lodge.”

The old man looked frightened. Paul turned in every week two dollars and a half of his wages, and old Jerry had no wish to lose so considerable a sum.

“I’ll go—I’ll go right away,” he said, hastily.

“Be sure you do. If you don’t I shall hear of it, and you won’t see me any more.”

Just then a policeman of the Broadway squad, whose business it was to pilot passengers across through the maze of vehicles, took the old man in tow, and led him carefully across the great thoroughfare.

Mr. Meacham had watched in attentive silence this interview between Paul and the old man.

“So that is your grandfather,” he said.

“I call him so,” answered Paul, slowly.

“You call him so!” repeated his companion, puzzled. “Isn’t he really your grandfather?”

“No, sir; but as I have lived with him ever since I was very small, I have got into the habit of [12] calling him so.”

“When did your father die?”

“When I was about six years old. He only left a hundred dollars or so, which Jerry took charge of, and took me to live with him. We were living in the same tenement house, and that’s how it came about.”

“Is he so very poor?”

“I used to think so,” answered Paul, “till one day I found out that he got a monthly pension from some quarter in the city. I don’t know how much it is, but I know he has money deposited in the Bowery Savings Bank.”

“How did you find that out, Number 91?”

“I was walking along the Bowery one day on an errand, when, as I was passing the bank, I saw grandfather going up the steps. That made me curious, and I beckoned to a friend of mine, Johnny Woods, and asked him to go in and see what the old man’s business appeared to be. I met Johnny that evening and he told me that he saw grandfather write out a deposit check and pay in money. I couldn’t find out how much it was, but Johnny said there were several bills in the sum.”

“Then your grandfather, as you call him, is a miser.”

“Yes, sir, that’s about what it comes to.”

“In what way does he live?”

“We have a poor, miserable room in a tenement on Pearl Street that costs us four dollars a month. Grandfather is always groaning about having to pay so much.”

“I suppose he doesn’t live very luxuriously?”

“Dry bread, and sometimes a little cheese, is what he lives on. Sometimes Mrs. O’Connor, an Irish washerwoman, living in the room below, brings up a plate of meat out of charity.” [13]

Paul uttered the last word bitterly, as if he felt keenly the mortification of the confession.

“But how can you look so well and strong on such fare?” asked the old farmer, gazing not unadmiringly at the red cheeks and healthy complexion of the young telegraph boy.

“I don’t take my meals with grandfather. He wanted me to hand in all my money, and share his meals, but I told him I should die in a week if I had to live like him, so he agreed to let me pay him two dollars and a half a week, and use the rest for myself. I generally eat at some restaurant on the Bowery.”

“But that must cost you more than a dollar and a half a week.”

“So it does, sir, but I get a dollar or two extra on fees from parties that employ me.”

“Even then, at the prices I paid at the New England Hotel, I shouldn’t think you could buy three meals a day.”

“What do you take me for, Mr. Meacham—a Vanderbilt or an Astor?” asked Paul, smiling. “I might as well go to Delmonico’s or the Fifth Avenue Hotel as to the New England House.”

“Where do you eat, then?”

“Generally at the Jim Fisk restaurant on Chatham Street.”

“Is that a cheap restaurant?”

“I can get a good breakfast there for eight cents, and a good dinner for eleven.”

Mr. Meacham looked surprised.

“What on earth can you get for those prices?” he asked.

“I can get a cup of coffee, eggs, fish balls, or mutton stew, with bread and butter, for eight cents,” said Paul. “The coffee costs three cents, the other five. Then, for dinner, all kinds of meat [14] cost eight cents a plate, and bread and butter thrown in.”

“That’s cheap enough certainly. Is it good?”

“It’ll do,” said Paul, briefly. “Last Sunday I got roast turkey. That cost twelve cents.”

“Great Scott!” ejaculated the farmer. “I never dreamed of how people live here in this great city.”

“You see we can’t all of us eat at Delmonico’s.”

“Did your grandfather ever eat at your restaurant?”

“Once I invited him, and told him I would pay the bill. He ate a square meal, meat, coffee, and pie, costing sixteen cents. He seemed to relish it very much, but when we were going away he groaned over my extravagance, and predicted that I would die in the poorhouse. I’ve never succeeded in getting him there since.”

“Well, well,” said the farmer, “of all the fools on the footstool, I believe the biggest is the man who deprives himself of vittles to save up money for somebody else to spend. I’m too selfish, for my part.”

“There isn’t a day that grandfather doesn’t groan over my foolish extravagance,” continued Paul. “Sometimes it makes me laugh, but oftener it makes me ashamed.”

“You don’t feel much attachment to him, then?”

“No, sir; perhaps I ought, as he has been my guardian so long, but you saw him yourself, sir—a poor, shabby, dirty old man! How can I feel attached to him?”

“I confess it must be hard.”

“You don’t think me much to blame, do you?”

“I don’t think you to blame at all. Affection must be natural, and there seems to be no ground for it in this case. But isn’t that the ferry?”

“Yes, sir.” [15]

They crossed the street and entered the ticket office of the Cortlandt Street Ferry. Paul set down the valise, while Mr. Meacham secured a ticket.

“Now, Number 91,” said the old man, “how much do I owe you?”

Paul stated the sum, and Mr. Meacham put it in his hand.

“Thank you, sir,” said Paul, touching his cap.

“Stop a minute; here is something for yourself,” said his companion, taking out a silver dollar from his purse.

Paul regarded the old man with undisguised amazement.

“Are you surprised to get so much?” asked the old man with a smile.

“Yes, sir; I—” and he hesitated.

“You thought me a poor man, perhaps a mean man?”

“No, sir, not that; but I thought you not rich.”

“Don’t always judge by the clothes a man wears, Number 91. I own a large farm, and fifty thousand dollars in railroad stocks. That is rich for the country.”

“I don’t often get so much as this, sir.”

“I suppose not. But I have got a good deal of information out of you. I have heard much that surprised me, that I couldn’t have learned in any other way. So you are welcome to the dollar, and I think I have got my money’s worth.”

“I am very much obliged to you, sir.”

“That’s all right. Now, Number 91—by the way, what is your real name?”

“Paul Parton, sir.”

“Then, Paul, if you ever come my way, I should like to have you spend a week or a month on my [16] farm, as a visitor. I live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, about a couple of miles from the city, and I’ll promise to give you enough to eat at less than you have to pay at the Jim Fisk restaurant.”

Paul thanked him with a smile, and turned to leave the ferry.

In the waiting room was a tall, bearded man, who looked something like a miner, as indeed he was, just returned from a long sojourn in California.

“Excuse me, boy,” he said, advancing towards our hero. “Do you mind telling me your name?”

“My name is Paul Parton,” answered the telegraph boy, with a glance of surprise.

“Were you ever in California?”

“Not that I know of, sir.”

“It’s strange!” said the miner, reflectively.

“What is strange, sir?”

“You are the living image of a man I used to know a dozen or fourteen years since in California. Were you born in New York?”

“I think so, sir—I don’t know.”

“Is your father living?”

“No, sir; I live with an old man who is not related to me.”

“Was your father ever in California?”

“He may have been, sir; but I was so young when he died that I don’t know much about his history.”

“What is that number on your cap?”

“I am Number 91, and work for the District Telegraph Company.”

“Number 91? Well, my boy, I hope you’ll excuse the liberty I took in addressing you. The California miners are rather unceremonious. I suppose you think it strange?”

“No, sir, not at all,” returned Paul, politely. “I am glad to have made your acquaintance.”

As he left the ferry, and lost sight of his questioner, he regretted that he had not at least inquired his name. [17]

“He may have known my father,” thought Paul, “and I should be glad to meet some of his friends. I don’t think old Jerry knows much about him. I am getting tired of living with the old man, and should like to meet some relative or friend of whom I need not be ashamed.”

# CHAPTER III.

[18]

## OLD JERRY THE MISER.

At six o’clock every other day Paul was let off from the office, other days he stayed much later.

On this particular day he was dismissed at six, and bent his steps homeward. He paused in front of a tall, shabby brick tenement house, unsightly in its surroundings, and abounding inside in unsavory smells, and took his way up the creaking staircase to a room on the fourth floor. He opened the door and entered.

The room was bare and cheerless in the extreme. The floor was uncarpeted, and if it had ever been painted it retained no vestiges of it. Two chairs, one broken, a small table which would have been dear at fifty cents, a low bedstead in one corner with a dirty covering—there were no sheets—and a small cot bed which Paul occupied—these were about all that could claim the name of furniture. There was, however, a wooden chest, originally a sailor’s, probably, which the telegraph boy used to hold the few extra clothes he possessed.

Old Jerry was sitting on one side of the bedstead.

“Good evening, grandfather,” said Paul, cheerfully.

“It isn’t a good ev’ning,” answered the old man, querulously. “I—I haven’t made a cent today.”

“I thought you got ten cents by begging,” said Paul.

[19]

“I—I forgot that. I might have got more if you hadn’t interfered. You are very hard on your poor old grandfather, Paul.”

“I can’t bear to have you beg,” said Paul, his brows contracting. “I don’t want to have it said that I live with a beggar.”

“It isn’t my fault that I am very poor, Paul.”

“Are you so very poor?” asked Paul, pointedly.

“I—of course I am. What do you mean, Paul?” asked the old man, his manner indicating alarm. “Don’t you *know* I am very poor?”

“I know you say so.”

“Of course I am. Did any one ever tell you I wasn’t?”

“This room looks like it at any rate,” answered Paul, looking about with ill concealed disgust.

He didn’t choose to say anything of the discovery he had made, through his friend Johnny Woods, of old Jerry’s deposit in the Bowery Savings Bank.

“Yes, yes, and it is more than I can afford. Four dollars a month is an awful price. I have often thought I must find a cheaper room.”

“You couldn’t easily find a poorer one,” said Paul, moodily. “Well, grandfather, have you had your supper?”

“Yes, I have eaten a piece of bread.”

“That isn’t enough for you, grandfather. If you will come out with me I will get you some supper at the Jim Fisk restaurant.”

“No, no, Paul; I can’t afford it. It is sinful extravagance.”

“I can get you a cup of tea and some corn beef hash for eight cents. That isn’t much. Don’t you think you would enjoy a cup of tea?”

“Yes, Paul, it would do me good, if I could afford it.”

“But I will pay for it.”

[20]

“Oh, Paul, you will die in the poorhouse if you are so wasteful. The money that you have spent at that eating house would bring joy to the heart of your old grandfather.”

“Look here,” said Paul, who could not bring his mind to calling the old man grandfather, as he had often done before. “It’s no use talking. You may starve yourself if you want to, but I don’t mean to. I’m going out to supper now. If you go with me I’ll pay for your supper, and it shan’t cost you a cent. I am sure you would like a good cup of tea.”

For an instant an expression of longing crept over the face of the old miser, but it was soon succeeded by a look of cunning and greed.

“It would cost eight cents, wouldn’t it, Paul?” he said.

“Yes, but that isn’t much. If you’d like a plate of roast beef and a cup of tea, I’ll buy it for you. They will cost only eleven cents. So put on your hat, and we will go out together.”

“Wait a minute, Paul,” said the old man. “Would you mind giving me the money instead—eleven cents?”

“No, I don’t mind, but I would rather you would go out with me. How do you expect to keep soul and body together without anything but dry bread and cold water?”

“I’m so poor, Paul; I can’t afford anything better,” whined old Jerry.

“I see it’s no use talking to you,” said Paul, in a vexed tone. “Well, if you prefer to have me give

you the money, here it is.”

He took from his pocket a dime and a penny, and passed it over to the old man.

Old Jerry chuckled, and a smile crept over his wrinkled features, as he eagerly clutched the coins.

“Good boy, Paul!” he said. “That’s right, to be kind to your poor old grandfather.”

“Well, I’m going out to supper,” said Paul, abruptly, for it was painful to him to witness this [21]
evidence of the old man’s infatuation. “I’ll be back soon.

“That’s a guardian to be proud of,” he said, bitterly, as he made his way carefully down the rickety staircase. “Who can blame me for not liking him? I don’t believe I can make up my mind to call him grandfather again. After all, why should I? He is no relation of mine, and I am glad of it.”

# CHAPTER IV.

[22]

## A STRANGE COMMISSION.

The life of a telegraph boy is full of variety and excitement. He never knows when he goes to the office in the morning on what errands he may be sent, or what duties he may be called upon to discharge. He may be sent to Brooklyn, or Jersey City, with a message—sometimes even farther away. He may be detained to supply the place of an absent office boy, or sent up town to go out and walk with a child. In the evening he may be directed to accompany a lady to the theater as escort. These are a few of the uses to which telegraph messenger boys are put.

Of course Paul had had his share of varied commissions. But the day after that on which our story opens, a new duty awaited him.

It was about five o'clock that the superintendent called "Number 91."

"Yes, sir," answered Paul, promptly.

"You are to go up to No. ——, West Fifty First Street, to spend the night."

Paul looked surprised.

"To spend the night?" he repeated.

"Yes, the head of the household has been called away for a day or two, and there is no man in the house. Mrs. Cunningham is timid, and has sent for a boy to protect the house against possible burglars."

The superintendent smiled, and so did Paul.

"I guess I can do it," he said.

"Very well, you will report at the house about seven o'clock."

[23]

"Can I go home and tell grandfather? He might be alarmed if I didn't come home."

"Yes; I will give you an extra half hour for supper."

At seven o'clock Paul rang the bell of a handsome brown stone mansion on West Fifty First Street.

The door was opened by a servant girl.

"I was sent for by Mrs. Cunningham," said Paul.

"Yes, the missis is expecting you. Come right in!"

Paul observed, as he followed the girl upstairs into a sitting room on the second floor, that the house was very handsomely furnished—and came to the natural conclusion that the occupants were rich.

"Just take a seat, and I'll tell the missis," said the girl.

Paul sat down in a plush covered arm chair, and looked about him admiringly. "I wonder how it must seem to live in such a house as this," he reflected. And then his thoughts went back to the miserable tenement house in which he and his grandfather lived, and he felt more disgusted with it than ever, after the sight of this splendor.

His reflections were interrupted by the entrance of a pleasant faced lady.

"Are you the boy I sent for?" she asked, with a smile.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Paul, respectfully, rising as he spoke.

"I suppose you know why I want you," proceeded the lady.

"Yes, ma'am; I was told there were only ladies in the house, and you wanted a man to sleep here."

"I am afraid you can hardly be called a man," said the lady with another smile. "Still you are not a woman or girl, and I shall feel safer for having you here. I am afraid I am a sad coward. What is your name?"

[24]

"Paul—Paul Parton."

"That is a nice name."

"My husband has been called to Washington," she added, after a pause, "and will be absent possibly ten nights. Knowing my timidity, he recommended my sending for a messenger boy. I may say, however, that I have some reason for alarm. Two houses in this block have been entered at night within a month. Besides, through a thieving servant, who was probably a confederate of thieves, it has become known that we keep some valuables in a safe in the library, and this may prove a temptation."

At this moment an extremely pretty girl of fourteen entered the room, and looked inquiringly at Paul.

"Jennie," said Mrs. Cunningham, "this is Paul Parton, who is to protect and defend us tonight, if necessary."

Jennie regarded Paul with a smile.

"Won't you be afraid?" she asked.

“No, miss,” answered Paul, who was instantly impressed in favor of the pretty girl whose acquaintance he was just making.

“I’m not easily frightened,” he answered.

“Then you’re different from mamma and me. We are regular scarecrows—no, that isn’t the word. I mean we are regular cowards. Still, with a brave and strong man in the house,” she added, with an arch smile, “we shall feel safe.”

“I hope you will be,” said Paul

“It is still early,” said Mrs. Cunningham. “Have you had your supper, Paul?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“We shall not retire before ten—Jennie, you can entertain this young gentleman, if you like.”

“All right, mamma—if I can—that is, if he isn’t hard to entertain. Do you play dominoes, Paul?” [25]

“Yes, miss.”

“O, don’t call me miss—I don’t mind your calling me Jennie.”

The two sat down to a game of dominoes, and were soon on the friendliest possible terms.

After a while, seeing a piano in the room, Paul asked the young lady if she played.

“Yes; would you like to hear me?”

“If you please.”

After three or four pieces, she asked—“Don’t you sing?”

“Not much,” answered Paul, bashfully.

“Sing me something, won’t you?”

Paul blushed, and tried to excuse himself.

“I don’t sing any but common songs,” he said.

“That’s what I want to hear.”

After a while Paul mustered courage enough to sing “Baby Mine,” and another song which he had heard at Harry Miner’s.

They were not classical, but the young lady seemed to enjoy them immensely. They were quite unlike what she had been accustomed to hear, and perhaps for that reason she enjoyed them the more.

“I think you sing splendidly,” she said.

Of course Paul blushed, and put in a modest disclaimer. Still he felt pleased, and decided that Jennie Cunningham was the nicest girl he had ever met.

“But what would she say,” he thought, “if she could see the miserable place I live in?” and the perspiration gathered on his face at the mere thought.

At ten o’clock Mrs. Cunningham suggested that it was time to go to bed.

“Paul, you will sleep in a little bedroom adjoining the library,” she said.

“All right, ma’am.” [26]

“Come with me and I will show you your bedroom.”

It was a pleasant room, though small, and seemed to Paul the height of luxury.

“Shall I leave with you my husband’s revolver?” asked the lady.

“Yes, ma’am, I would like it.”

“Do you understand the use of revolvers?”

“Yes; I have practiced some with them in a shooting gallery.”

“I hope there will be no occasion to use it. I don’t think there will. But it is best to be prepared.”

Paul threw himself on the bed in his uniform in order to be better prepared to meet any midnight intruder.

“It won’t do to sleep too sound,” he thought, “or the house might be robbed without my knowing it.”

He was soon fast asleep. It might have been because he had the matter on his mind that about midnight he woke up. A faint light had been left burning in the chandelier in the library. Was it imagination on Paul’s part that he thought he heard a noise in the adjoining room? Instantly he was on the alert.

“It may be a burglar!” he thought, with a thrill of excitement.

He got up softly, reached for the revolver, and with a stealthy step advanced to the door that opened into the library.

What he saw was certainly startling.

A man, tall and broad shouldered, was on his knees before the safe, preparing to open it.

“What are you doing there?” demanded the telegraph boy, firmly.

**THE INTERRUPTED BURGLAR.—See page 27.**

The man sprang to his feet, and confronted Paul standing with a revolver in his hand pointed in his direction. [27]

“O, it’s a kid!” he said, contemptuously.

“What are you doing there?” repeated Paul.

“None of yer business! Go back to bed!”

“Leave this house or I fire!”

The man thought of springing upon the boy, but there was something in his firm tone that made him think it best to parley. A revolver, even in a boy’s hand, might prove formidable.

“Go to bed, or I’ll kill you!” said the burglar, with an ugly frown.

“I will give you two minutes to leave this room and the house!” said Paul. “If you are here at the end of that time I fire!”

There was an expression of baffled rage on the face of the low browed ruffian as he stood bending forward, as if ready to spring upon the undaunted boy.

# CHAPTER V.

[28]

## AN EXCITING INTERVIEW.

For a full minute Paul and the burglar faced each other without either moving. The telegraph boy of course waited for some aggressive movement on the part of his opponent. In that case he would not hesitate to fire. He felt the reluctance natural to any boy of humane instincts to take human life, and resolved, if possible, only to disable the ruffian. His heart quickened its pulsations, but in manner he was cool, cautious and collected. If the burglar had seen any symptoms of timidity or wavering, he would have sprung upon Paul. As it was, he was afraid to do so, and was enraged at himself because he felt cowed and intimidated by a boy. He resolved to inspire fear in Paul if he could.

“I have a great mind to kill you,” he growled.

“Two can play at that game,” said Paul, undaunted.

“Look here! You are making a fool of yourself. You are risking your life for nothing.”

“I am only doing my duty,” said Paul, firmly.

“The kid’s in earnest,” thought the burglar. “I must try him on another tack.

“Look here,” he said, changing his tone. “You are a poor boy, ain’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Just you lower that weapon, and don’t interfere with me, and I will make it worth your while.”

“What do you mean?” asked Paul, who, however, suspected the burglar’s meaning. [29]

“I mean this,” said the intruder, in an insinuating tone. “Let me open the safe and make off with the contents, and I’ll give you a liberal share of it.”

“What do you take me for?” demanded Paul, indignantly.

“For a boy, of course. What do you care for the people in the house? They are rich and can afford to lose what will make us rich. Let me know where you live, and I’ll deal squarely with you. I mean it. All you’ve got to do is to go back to bed, and they’ll think you slept through and didn’t see me at all. What do you say?”

“I say no a thousand times!” answered Paul, boldly. “I may be poor all my life long, but I won’t be a thief.”

The burglar’s face expressed the rage he felt. It was very hard for him to resist the impulse to spring upon Paul, but the resolute mien of the boy satisfied him that it would be very dangerous.

“You refuse then?” he said, sullenly.

“Yes; you insult me by your proposal.”

“I wish I had brought a pistol; then you wouldn’t have dared speak to me in that way.”

Paul was relieved to hear this. He had concluded that the burglar was unarmed, but didn’t know it positively. Now he could dismiss all fear.

“Well,” he said, “are you going?”

The burglar eyed our hero during a minute of indecision, and decided that his plan was a failure. He certainly could not open the safe within range of a loaded revolver, and should he attack Paul, would not only risk his life, but rouse the house, and fall into the hands of the police, a class of men he made it his business to avoid. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but he must submit.

“Will you promise not to shoot if I agree to leave the house?” [30]

“Yes.”

“Will you promise not to start the burglar alarm, but allow me to escape without interference?”

“Yes, if you will agree never to enter this house again.”

“All right!”

“You promise?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Then I’ll go. If you break your word, boy, you’ll wish you had never been born,” he added, fiercely. “I’d hunt you night and day after I got out of jail, and kill you like a dog.”

“You need not be afraid. I will keep my word.” There was something in Paul’s tone and manner that inspired confidence.

“You ain’t a bad sort!” said the burglar, paying an involuntary tribute to the boy’s staunch honesty. “You’re a cool kind of kid, any way. What an honor you’d make to our profession!”

Paul could not help smiling.

“I suppose that’s a compliment,” he said. “Thank you. Now I must trouble you to go.”

“I’m going! Remember your promise!”

In an instant the burglar was out of the window, through which he had made his entrance, and disappeared from sight. Paul did not approach the window, lest his doing so should excite alarm

in the rogue. When a sufficient time had elapsed he ran to the window, closed it, and once more breathed freely. The danger was passed, and he began now to feel the tension to which his nerves had been subjected.

“Has anything happened, Paul?” asked a voice. Turning, Paul saw Mrs. Cunningham at the door. She had thrown a wrapper over her, and, attracted by the sound of voices, had entered the library.

“Has any burglar been here?” she asked, nervously, observing Paul with the revolver in his hand. [31]

“Yes,” answered the telegraph boy; “I have just bidden the gentleman good night.”

By this time Jennie, too, made her appearance. “What is it, mamma? What is it, Paul?” she asked. “Why are you standing there with the revolver in your hand?”

Paul told the story as briefly as the circumstances would admit.

“It was a mercy you were awake!” said Mrs. Cunningham. “Did you hear the noise of the man’s entrance?”

“I don’t know how I happened to wake up,” said Paul. “I generally sleep sound. But I opened my eyes, and immediately heard a noise in this room.”

“But did you have time to dress?” asked Jennie.

“I did not need to do so, for I threw myself on the bed with my clothes on.”

“And with your cap on?” inquired Jennie with an arch smile.

“No, but when I rose from the bed I put it on without thinking. I don’t know whether I ought to have let the burglar get off free, but I thought it the easiest way to avoid trouble.”

“You did right. I approve your conduct,” said Mrs. Cunningham. “You seem to have acted with remarkable courage and discretion.”

“I am very glad if you are pleased, madam,” said Paul, gratified at this cordial indorsement.

“Weren’t you awfully scared, Paul?” asked Jennie Cunningham.

“Well, I was a little scared, I admit,” answered Paul, with a smile, “but I didn’t think it wise to show it before the burglar.”

“My hand would have trembled so that I couldn’t hold the pistol,” declared the young lady.

“Of course; you are a girl, you know.” [32]

“Don’t you think girls are brave, then?”

“They are not called upon to be brave in the same way.”

“A good answer,” said Mrs. Cunningham. “And now, Jennie, we had better go back to bed. Will you not be afraid to sleep here the rest of the night after this adventure?” she asked, turning to Paul.

“No, Mrs. Cunningham. The burglar won’t feel like coming back.”

“What’s that?” asked Jennie, pointing to some article on the floor.

“It is the burglar’s jimmy,” said Paul, stooping to pick it up. “He left in such a hurry that he forgot to take it with him. I will carry it into my room, and take care of it.”

Paul bade the two visitors good night and threw himself once more on the bed. The remainder of the night passed quietly. The midnight visitor did not reappear.

# CHAPTER VI.

[33]

## PAUL MAKES A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

The next morning Mrs. Cunningham insisted on Paul's taking breakfast with her before he returned to the telegraph office. Though it was a new experience to Paul sitting down at a luxuriously furnished table, in a refined family, he was possessed of a natural good breeding, which enabled him to appear to advantage.

He was flattered by the cordial manner in which Mrs. Cunningham and her daughter treated him, and he was tempted to ask himself whether he was the same boy that had lived for years in a squalid tenement house, under the guardianship of a ragged and miserly old man. Being gifted with a "healthy appetite," Paul did not fail to appreciate the dainty rolls, tender meat, and delicious coffee with which he was served.

"I can't get such a breakfast as this at the 'Jim Fisk' restaurant," thought Paul. "Still, that is a good deal better than I could get at home."

"I am not sure whether I shall need you tonight, Paul," said Mrs. Cunningham, as they rose from the breakfast table. "It is not certain whether Mr. Cunningham will be at home or be detained over another night at Washington."

"I shall be glad to come if you need me," said Paul.

"I think I will have you come up, at any rate, about seven o'clock," said the lady. "I will write a [34] line to the superintendent to that effect."

"Very well, ma'am."

When Paul presented himself at the office he was the bearer of a note to the superintendent.

That official showed some surprise as he read it.

"So you drove away a burglar, Number 91?" he said.

"I believe I frightened him away," answered Paul.

"Humph! Was he a little fellow?"

"No, a large man."

"And he was afraid of you?" continued the superintendent, surprised.

"He was afraid of my revolver," amended Paul.

The superintendent asked more questions, being apparently interested in the matter.

"The lady wishes you to go up again tonight," he said.

"Yes, sir, so she told me, but it is not certain that I shall have to stay all night."

"Of course you are to go."

As the telegraph office would receive a good round sum for Paul's services, the superintendent was very willing to send him up.

At noon Paul went home.

The tenement house seemed still more miserable and squalid, as he clambered up the rickety staircase. He mentally contrasted it with the elegant mansion in which he had spent the night, and it disgusted him still more with the wretched surroundings of the place he called home.

He was about to open the door of old Jerry's room, when he was arrested by the sound of voices. Jerry's, high pitched and quavering, was familiar enough to him, but there seemed something familiar, also, in the voice of the other, and yet he could not identify it with any of Jerry's acquaintances.

There was a round hole in the door, the origin of which was uncertain, and Paul, knowing that he [35] was at liberty to enter, did not think it wrong to reconnoiter through it before doing so.

To his intense surprise, the face of the visitor, visible to him through the opening, was that of the burglar whom he had confronted the night before.

"What can he have to do with Jerry?" Paul asked himself, in bewilderment.

Just then the man spoke.

"The fact is, father, I am hard pressed, and must have some money."

Paul's amazement increased. Was this burglar the son of old Jerry? He remembered now having heard Jerry refer to a son who had left him many years ago, and who had never since been heard of.

"I have no money, James," whined the old man. "I am poor—very poor."

"I've heard that talk before," said the son, contemptuously; "and I know what it means."

"But I am poor," repeated old Jerry, eagerly. "I don't get enough to eat. All I can afford is bread and water."

"How much money have you got in the bank?" asked James.

"Wh—what makes you ask that?" asked the old man, in an agitated voice.

“Ha! I have hit the nail on the head,” said the visitor with an unpleasant laugh.

“You see how poor I am,” said the old man. “Does this poor room look as if I had money?”

“No, it doesn’t, but I know you of old, father. I suppose you are the same old miser you used to be. I shouldn’t wonder if you could raise thousands of dollars if you chose.”

“Hear him talk!” ejaculated the old man, raising his feeble arm in despairing protest. “I—I haven’t got any money except a few cents that Paul brought me yesterday.” [36]

“And who is Paul?” asked the son, quickly.

“He is a boy I took years ago when he was very small. I—I took him out of charity.”

“Very likely. That’s so like you,” sneered the son. “I warrant you have got more out of him than he cost you.”

This was true enough, as Paul could testify. He was only six when he came under the old man’s care, but even at that tender age he was sent out on the street to sell papers and matches, and old Jerry tried to induce him to beg; but that was something the boy had always steadfastly refused to do.

He had an independent, self respecting spirit, which made him ashamed to beg. He was always willing to work, and to work hard, and he generally had an opportunity to do so. This will relieve Paul from the charge of ingratitude, for he had always paid his own way, and really owed Jerry nothing.

“He—he has cost me a great deal,” whined Jerry, “but I knew his father, and I could not turn him out into the streets.”

“And how old is this boy now?” asked the son.

“I—I think he is about sixteen.”

“He ought to be able to earn something. What does he do?”

“He is a telegraph boy.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the burglar with a scowl, for the word provoked disagreeable memories of the previous night. “I hate telegraph boys.”

“Paul is a good boy—a pretty good boy, but he eats a sight.”

The son indulged in a short laugh.

“How does he like your boarding house?” he asked.

“He doesn’t eat here; he goes to a restaurant. He spends piles of money!” groaned the old man. [37]

“Telegraph boys are not generally supposed to revel in riches,” said the son in a sarcastic tone. “It’s so much out of your pocket, eh?”

“Yes,” groaned the old man. “If he would give me all his wages I should be very comfortable.”

“But he wouldn’t. From what I know of your table, father, I think he would starve to death in a month. I haven’t forgotten how you starved me when I was a kid.”

“You look strong and well now,” said old Jerry.

“Yes, but no thanks to you! But to business! How much money have you got?”

“Very little, James. I have eleven cents that Paul gave me yesterday.”

“Bah! You are deceiving me. Where is your bank book?”

“I have none. What makes you ask such questions?” demanded the old man, querulously. “I wish you would go away.”

“That is a pretty way to treat a son you haven’t seen for twelve years. Do you know what I am?”

“No.”

“Then I’ll tell you; for years I have been a burglar.”

Old Jerry looked frightened.

“You’re not in earnest, James?”

“Yes, I am. I ain’t proud of the business, but you drove me to it.”

“No, no,” protested the old man.

“You made me work hard, and half starved me when I was a boy, you gave me no chance of education, and all to swell your paltry hoards. If I have gone to the bad, you are responsible. But let that drop. I’ve been unfortunate, and I want money.”

“I told you I had none, James.”

“And I don’t believe you. Hark you! I will come back tomorrow,” he said, with a threatening gesture. “In the meanwhile, get fifty dollars from the bank, and have it ready for me. Do you hear?” [38]

“You must be mad, James!” said old Jerry, regarding his son with a look of fear.

“I shall be, unless you have the money. I will go now, but I shall be back tomorrow.”

Paul ran downstairs hastily, as he heard the man’s heavy step approaching the door. He didn’t

care to be recognized by his unpleasant acquaintance of the night previous.

# CHAPTER VII.

[39]

## PAUL RESOLVES TO MOVE.

After Jerry's unwelcome visitor was well out of the way, Paul returned to the room. He found old Jerry trembling and very much distressed. The old man looked up with startled eyes when he opened the door.

"Oh, it's you, Paul," he said, in a tone of relief.

"Who did you think it was?" asked Paul, wishing to draw out the old man.

"I—I have had a visit from a bad man, who wanted to rob me."

"Who was it?"

"I'll tell you, Paul, but it's a secret, mind. It was my son."

"I didn't know you had a son."

"Nor I. I thought he might be dead, for I have not seen him for twenty years. I am afraid he is very wicked."

"How did he find you out?"

"I don't know. He—he frightened me very much. He wanted me to give him money—and I so miserably poor."

Paul didn't answer.

"You know how poor I am, Paul," continued the old man appealingly.

"You always say so, Jerry."

The old man did not appear to notice that Paul had ceased to call him grandfather.

"And it's true—of course it's true. But he wants me to pay him fifty dollars. He is coming back tomorrow." [40]

"But he can't get it if you haven't it to give."

"I—I don't know. He was always bad tempered—James was. I am afraid he might beat me."

"What! Beat his father!" exclaimed Paul, indignantly.

"He might," said the old man. "He wasn't a good boy like you. He always gave me trouble."

"Are you really afraid he will come, grand—Jerry?" asked Paul, earnestly.

"Yes, he is sure to come—he said so."

"Then I think we had better move to another place where he can't find us."

"Yes—yes—let us go," said the old man, hurriedly. "But, but," he added, with a sudden thought, "we have paid the rent here to the end of the month. I can't afford to lose that—I am so poor."

"It will only be a dollar and a half; I will pay it," said Paul.

"Then I think I shall go. When shall we leave, Paul?"

"This evening, Jerry, if I can get the time. I may have to stay up town to guard a house where the gentleman is absent, but it isn't certain. If I do, I will be here early in the morning, before I go to work."

This assurance seemed to abate the apprehensions of the old man, who, it was evident, stood in great fear of his son. Paul was obliged to take a hurried leave of him in order to have time for lunch before returning to the office.

"Who would have dreamed," he said to himself, "that the bold burglar whom I encountered last night, was the son of old Jerry? One is as timid as a mouse, the other seems like a daring criminal. I wonder why Jerry never told me that he had a son." [41]

The discovery that Jerry had such a son made Paul still more unwilling to own a relationship to him. It was bad enough to pass for the grandson of a squalid miser, but it was worse to be thought the son or nephew of a burglar.

The day passed quietly. Paul was not sent out much, on the supposition that he might have to pass another night at the house of Mr. Cunningham.

About seven o'clock he rang the bell of the house in Fifty First Street.

The same servant admitted him. This time she received him with a smile, knowing that he stood high with her mistress.

"Come right in," she said. "The mistress will see you in the sitting room."

"Have you had any more visits from burglars?" asked Paul.

"No; may be they're waiting till night."

"Has Mr. Cunningham got back?"

"No, but he's expected at eight."

Paul was glad to hear this, for he preferred not to remain over night, as he knew that old Jerry would need him.

When Paul entered the sitting room Mrs. Cunningham received him cordially.

“I suppose you have not seen the burglar since,” said Mrs. Cunningham, innocently.

She little dreamed what a discovery he had made, and he did not think it wise to enlighten her.

“He has not called upon me,” answered Paul, with justifiable evasion. “I don’t think I want to meet him again.”

“I hope he will never present himself here,” said the lady.

“He made me a promise that he would not,” said Paul.

“I suppose he wouldn’t mind breaking it.” [42]

“No, but he may conclude that you would be on your guard.”

“There is something in that,” said Mrs. Cunningham, looking relieved. “My husband has telegraphed me that he will be here at eight o’clock, but I don’t want him to run the risk of encountering such a man.”

“Then you won’t need me to remain here?”

“No; but I wish you to stay till Mr. Cunningham returns. He will wish to see you.”

“Certainly, if you desire it,” said Paul, politely.

“My daughter will entertain you,” continued the lady. “Here she is.”

“Good evening, Paul!” said Jennie, cordially extending her hand, as she entered the room.

“Good evening!” responded Paul, brightening up.

“Would you like to play a game of dominoes?”

“I would be very glad to do so.”

“Then we’ll play ‘muggins.’ There’s more fun in that than in the regular game.”

So the two sat down and were soon deeply immersed in the game.

“Do you know, Paul,” said Jennie, suddenly, “I feel as if I had known you for a long time, though it is only about twenty four hours since we met.”

“I feel the same,” said Paul.

“I’m awfully glad they sent you here instead of some other telegraph boy.”

“Perhaps you would have liked another one better?”

“I don’t think I should, but I ought not to say so. It may make you vain.”

“Are boys ever vain? I thought it was only girls.”

“That’s a very impolite speech. I shall have to give you a bad mark!”

“Then I’ll take it all back!” [43]

“You’d better,” said Jennie, with playful menace. “I hope you’ll come up some time when you are not sent for on business!”

“I would like to very much, if your mother is willing.”

“Why shouldn’t she be willing?”

“I am only a poor telegraph boy.”

“I don’t mind that. I don’t see why a telegraph boy isn’t as good as a boy in a store. My cousin Mark is in a store.”

It will be seen that these young people were rapidly coming to a very good understanding. Paul was not in love, but he certainly did consider Jennie Cunningham quite the nicest girl he had ever met.

So the time passed till Mr. Cunningham returned. His wife informed him briefly of what had occurred. They both entered the room together. He was a man of middle age, a very pleasant and easy mannered gentleman.

“Are you the boy who drove away the burglar?” he asked, with a smile.

“Yes, sir, I believe so,” answered Paul.

“Then let me add my thanks to those of my wife. You have done us a great service.”

“I am very glad to have had the chance,” said Paul.

“If you will come to my office tomorrow morning,” continued Mr. Cunningham, “I will thank you in a more effective way. Come at ten o’clock. As you may find it difficult to leave the office otherwise, tell the superintendent that I have an errand for you.”

“Very well, sir.”

“Here is my business card.”

Paid took the card and rose to go.

“Mamma,” said Jennie, “can’t you invite Paul to call and see us sometimes?”

“Certainly,” said the lady, smiling. “After what he has done he ought to have the freedom of the [44]

house. We shall be glad to see you as a visitor, Paul," she said, kindly.

Paul left the house in a flutter of pleasant excitement. He was quite determined to avail himself of an invitation so agreeable.

He crossed over to Third Avenue, and returned by the elevated railway to the home of old Jerry.

# CHAPTER VIII.

[45]

## PAUL MOVES TO LUDLOW STREET.

In the evening Paul found old Jerry anxiously awaiting him.

“Have you found a new room, Paul?” he asked, eagerly.

“I haven’t had time,” Paul answered, “but I’ll go at once and see about it.”

“James will be here tomorrow,” said the old man, nervously, “and I—I am afraid of him. He is a bad man. He wants me to give him money. You know I have no money, Paul?” he concluded with a look of appeal.

Now Paul knew that old Jerry had money, and he could not truthfully answer as the old man desired him.

“You say so, and that is enough,” he said.

“But it’s true,” urged Jerry, who understood the doubt in Paul’s mind. “How could I get any money? What you give me is all we have to live on.”

“That isn’t much, at any rate.”

“No, Paul, it isn’t much. Couldn’t you give me half a dollar more? Two dollars and a half are very little for me to live on and pay the rent,” whined the old man.

The appeal would have moved Paul if he had not suspected that the old man had a considerable sum of money laid away. As it was, it only disgusted him and made him feel angry at Jerry’s attempt to deceive him.

“Are you sure you get no money except what I give you?” he asked, pointedly. [46]

“What do you mean, Paul?” demanded the old man, looking alarmed. “What gave you the idea that I had any other money?”

“At any rate,” said the telegraph boy, “you haven’t any money to throw away on this son of yours. I have no doubt he’s a bad man, as you say.”

“He was always bad and troublesome, James was,” said old Jerry. “He was always wanting money from the time he was a boy.”

“When he was a boy there was some reason for his asking it, but now he is a man grown, isn’t he?”

“Yes, yes.”

“How old is he?”

“James must be nigh upon thirty,” answered Jerry, after a little reflection. “You won’t hire too expensive a room, Paul?” he added. “You know we are poor, very poor!”

“Not unless I am willing to pay the extra cost myself.”

“Don’t do that! Give me the extra money, Paul,” said Jerry, with eager cupidity. “I—I find it hard to get along with two dollars and a half a week.”

“You forget, Jerry,” said Paul, coldly, “that I must have my meals. I can’t live without eating.”

“You eat too much, Paul, I’ve long thought so. It’s hurtful to eat too much. It’s—it’s bad for the health.”

“I’ll take the risk,” said Paul, with a short laugh. “I am not afraid of dying of gout, Jerry, with my present bill of fare.”

“If you wouldn’t mind my going out a few hours every day, and asking kind gentlemen to help me, Paul, we—we could get along better.”

“I won’t hear of it, Jerry,” said Paul, sternly. “If I hear of your going out to beg I will leave you and go off and live by myself. Then there will be no two dollars and a half coming to you every week.” [47]

“No, no, don’t leave me, Paul,” said Jerry, thoroughly alarmed by this threat. “I won’t go out if you don’t want me to, though it’s very, very foolish to stay in, when there are so many kind gentlemen and ladies ready to give money to old Jerry.”

“Besides,” added Paul, “if you go out and stand in the street, your son will sooner or later find you out, and make trouble for you.”

“So he will, so he will,” chimed in the miser, with the old look of alarm on his face. “You are right, Paul, you are right. I must put it off. I—I wish he would go away somewhere—to—to California, or some place a great way off.”

Paul saw that he had produced the effect he intended upon the old man’s mind, and went out at once to look for a new room. He finally found one some half mile farther up town, in Ludlow Street—a little below Grand.

The room was better furnished than the one in which he and Jerry had lived for some years. There was a cheap carpet on the floor, a bed in one corner, and a shabby but comfortable lounge, on which Paul himself proposed to sleep. The rent was two dollars a month more than they had been accustomed to pay, but Paul concluded to say nothing of this to the old man, but quietly to

pay it out of his own pocket. It would be but fifty cents a week, and he thought he could make that extra sum in some way. He was beginning to be more fastidious about his accommodations, now that he had seen how people lived uptown.

In fact, Paul was becoming ambitious. It was a very proper ambition, too. He had lived long enough in a squalid, miserable room, and now he meant to be better provided for.

"I am getting older," he said to himself. "I ought to earn more money. I am sure I can somehow. I will keep my eyes open and see what I can find." [48]

Paul resolved to buy a bureau, if he could get one cheap, for at present he had absolutely no place in which to keep his small stock of clothing. He did not know exactly where the money was coming from, but he was hopeful, and had faith in himself. He was not waiting for something to turn up, as many lazy boys do, but he meant himself to turn up something.

Having concluded a bargain for the room, paying a dollar down, and promising to pay a further sum on Saturday night when he received his weekly pay, he returned to old Jerry.

"Well, Jerry," he said cheerfully, "I've found a room."

"Where is it, Paul?"

"In Ludlow Street."

"Then let us go—at once. James might change his mind, and come round tonight. I don't want to see him. He is a bold, bad man."

Paul suggested that they had better not leave word with the neighbors where they were going, as this might furnish a clew to James Barclay, and put him on his father's track.

Old Jerry eagerly assented to this, and the two started for their new home. They had very little to carry—at any rate, this was the case with the miser, and Paul's wardrobe was not too extensive for him to carry it all with him at once.

When Jerry saw the room that Paul had engaged he was alarmed.

"This—this is too fine for us, Paul," he said. "We can't afford to pay for it. How much is the rent?"

"Six dollars a month," answered Paul.

"We shall be ruined!" ejaculated Jerry, turning pale.

"It is two dollars more than we paid in the old place," said Paul, "but it won't come out of you. I will make a new arrangement with you—I will pay the entire rent, and give you a dollar and a half a week." [49]

"Make it two dollars, Paul," said Jerry, in a coaxing tone.

"What are you thinking of? Do you want to starve me?" demanded Paul, sternly.

"I—I am so poor, Paul," whined the miser.

"So am I," answered Paul, "but I must keep enough to pay for my meals."

Jerry saw that it would be useless to contest the point further, and settled himself in his new quarters, rather enjoying the improvement, but groaning inwardly over Paul's extravagance. Paul threw himself on the lounge, after taking off his coat and vest, and, covering himself with a blanket, was soon sound asleep.

**PAUL THREW HIMSELF ON THE LOUNGE, AND SOON WAS FAST ASLEEP.**

# CHAPTER IX.

[50]

## PAUL BECOMES A CAPITALIST.

Paul did not fail to meet the appointment at Mr. Cunningham's office the next morning. He had no difficulty in getting away, for it was understood at the office that he was wanted to run an errand and his time would be paid for.

"You seem to be in with the Cunninghams, Number 91," said the superintendent.

"Yes, sir, they are very kind to me," answered Paul.

"That is well. We like to have boys on good terms with customers. It increases the business of the office."

Mr. Cunningham was talking with another gentleman when Paul entered his office.

"Sit down, Paul," he said in a friendly tone, indicating a chair. "I shall soon be at leisure, and then I will attend to you."

"Thank you, sir," said the telegraph boy.

He had to wait about ten minutes. Then Mr. Cunningham's visitor left him, and he turned to Paul.

"How is business this morning?" he asked, with a smile.

"This is my first call, sir."

"Oh, well, no doubt you will have plenty before the day is over."

"Yes, sir, I am engaged for the afternoon."

"Indeed! And in what way?" [51]

"I am to go shopping with a lady."

"Can't she go by herself there?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose so, but she wants me to carry her bundles."

"Retail merchants generally send them home."

"Yes, sir, but she once had one miscarry, and now she prefers to take a boy with her."

"How do you like that business?" asked Mr. Cunningham.

"It is rather tiresome," answered Paul, "as the lady is hard to suit and spends a good deal of time in each store. However, there is one thing that reconciles me to it."

"What is that?"

"She is liberal, and always gives me something for myself."

"That is very considerate of her. I was speaking of that to my wife this morning."

"Of what, sir?" inquired Paul.

"We both decided that you were entitled to a present for your brave defense of the house."

Now I suppose it would have been the proper thing for Paul to protest against receiving any present, but I am obliged to record the fact that he had no objection to having his services acknowledged in that way.

"I only did my duty, sir," he said, modestly.

"Very true, but that is no reason why I should not show my appreciation of the service rendered. I suppose you have no bank account?"

"I never got along as far as that, sir," said Paul.

"Then I won't give you a check, as it might inconvenience you."

Paul was a little surprised, for a bank check sounded large, and the gratuities he usually received seldom reached as high as fifty cents.

Mr. Cunningham drew out his pocketbook, and, taking out three bills, placed them in Paul's hands. [52]

Paul's eyes expanded when he saw that the first bill was a ten. But he was destined to be still more surprised, for each of the other two was a twenty. There was fifty dollars in all.

"Is all this for me?" he asked, almost incredulous.

"Yes, Paul."

"But here are fifty dollars."

"I am quite aware of it," said the merchant, smiling. "That is the exact sum I intended to give you."

"I don't know how to thank you," said Paul, warmly. "To me it is a fortune."

"Excuse my giving you advice, but I hope you will spend it wisely."

"I will try to do so, sir. I will put all but ten dollars in a savings bank."

"You could not do better. You may in time be able to add to it."

“I shall try to, sir, when I earn more money.”

“How much do you earn now?”

“With presents, it amounts to six or seven dollars a week—sometimes less.”

“You can’t save out of that?”

“No, sir; I live with an old man, and give him two dollars and a half a week for rent and other expenses. Hereafter I am to give him three dollars. I should give more, but I pay for my own meals.”

“Then you have no parents living?”

“No, sir; I am alone in the world.”

“Is the old man any relation to you?”

“No, sir.”

“When you need friends to call on you will always be welcome at my house.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Paul, gratefully, and he decided to avail himself of the invitation soon. He [53] was anxious to meet Jennie Cunningham again. Having no sister, he had enjoyed scarcely any opportunities of meeting girls, except such as sold matches or papers in the streets, and these, for the most part, were bold and unattractive.

Mr. Cunningham turned to his desk, and Paul saw that his interview was over.

He did not like to carry around so much money. He was liable to be robbed; that he could not afford. So he resolved to go around to the Bowery Savings Bank and deposit forty dollars, taking out a book. Then he would feel safe as to that. The ten dollars he had a use for, as he wished to buy a cheap bureau, or trunk; he had not quite made up his mind which.

He took the shortest cut to the Bowery Savings Bank. This is one of the largest and most important savings banks in the city, and its deposits exceed twenty millions. It is a blessing to thousands of salaried men and women, mechanics and others, in providing them a safe place of deposit for their surplus money.

Paul entered the bank, and, going up to the proper clerk, subscribed the books of the bank, giving his age, and other particulars necessary to identification; and then, rather to the surprise of the bank officer, wrote out a deposit check for forty dollars.

“You have just been paid off, I take it,” he said with a smile.

“Yes, sir,” answered Paul.

“Two weeks’ pay, I presume?”

“I earned it in considerably less time than that, sir.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, I earned it all, and ten dollars besides, in one night.”

“Then your business is better than mine. I should be willing to exchange.”

“It isn’t a steady business,” said Paul. [54]

“What is it?”

“Defending a house from burglars.”

“I am not quite sure how I should like that business; there might be some risk attending it.”

Paul’s business was completed, and he prepared to go away. The book he put in his pocket, and took his way back to the office on Broadway. He began to feel like a young capitalist. Forty dollars may not seem a very large sum to some of my fortunate readers, but Paul had never before possessed ten dollars at a time, and to him it seemed a small fortune.

He had no idea that his visit to the bank was observed by any one that knew him, but such was the case.

Old Jerry, as the reader already knows, was a depositor at the Bowery Savings Bank, and this very morning, having a small deposit to make, he was shambling along the Bowery, when he saw Paul descend the steps with a bank book in his hand. He was intensely surprised.

# CHAPTER X.

## PAUL LOSES HIS BANK BOOK.

Old Jerry felt outraged at Paul's withholding money from him for deposit in the savings bank.

"The—the thieving young rascal!" he muttered to himself, indignantly. "He is putting my money into the bank, and letting me starve at home, while he lives on the fat of the land, and lays up money. Me that have taken care of him ever since he was a little boy, and—and cared for him like a father."

Jerry had a curious idea of the way fathers care for their children, judging from his words. When Paul was only six years old, he had been sent into the streets to sell matches and papers, and, being a bright, winning boy, had earned considerably more, even at that tender age, than many older boys.

At times Jerry had induced him to beg, but it was only for a short time. Paul had a natural pride and independence that made him shrink from asking alms, as soon as he was old enough to understand the humiliation of it. So there was never a time when he had not earned his own living, and more besides. But Jerry chose to forget this, and to charge Paul with ingratitude, when he discovered that he had a private fund of his own.

"I must get hold of that money," thought Jerry. "I wonder how much Paul has got."

There was no way of finding out, unless he got hold of the book, or inquired at the bank. He decided to do the latter. Accordingly he went over to the bank, and entering it walked up to the [56] receiving teller.

"Was there a boy named Paul Parton here just now?" he asked.

"Yes; what of it?"

"Did he put some money into the bank?"

"Yes."

"How much was it?"

"We don't give information about our depositors," said the teller. "Is he your grandson?"

"Yes; that is, he lives with me."

"You are a depositor also, are you not? I seem to remember your face."

"Yes."

"What is your name?"

"Jeremiah Barclay."

"I remember now. Why do you want to know about this boy?"

"He ought to have given me the money, instead of putting it into the bank."

"We have nothing to do with that. He did not steal it from you, I presume."

"No," answered Jerry, reluctantly. It occurred to him for an instant to claim that Paul had robbed him, but he was rather afraid that the telegraph boy would in that case become angry and leave him, and the sum he had in bank would not pay him for that.

The miser did not suspect that Paul had over five dollars laid up, having no knowledge of the handsome gift he had received from Mrs. Cunningham. But even if it were only five dollars, it was sufficient to excite Jerry's cupidity, and he decided that he must manage to get possession of it.

"Then you won't tell me how much money Paul has in the bank?"

"It is against our rules."

Jerry felt that he was dismissed, and stumbled out of the bank, forgetting, in his thoughts about [57] Paul, the business of his own which had brought him there.

But there was other business for Jerry to attend to that morning. We are about to let the reader into a secret, which he had hitherto kept from Paul.

Not far away was a small tenement house which Jerry hired and sublet to tenants. Every month he called to collect his rents, and the difference between the rent he paid for the whole building, and the rents he collected from the tenants, gave him a handsome profit.

It was not rent day, but there were two of the tenants in arrears. One was a laborer, temporarily out of work, and the other was a poor widow who went out scrubbing, but was now taken down with rheumatism, and therefore not able to work.

The old man ascended with painful toil to the third floor, and called on the widow first.

She turned pale when she saw him enter, for she knew his errand, and how little chance there was of softening him.

"I hope you have got the rent for me this morning, Mrs. O'Connor," said Jerry, harshly.

"And where would I get it, Mr. Barclay?" she asked. "It's very little work I can do on account of the sharp pains I have."

"That's none of my business," said Jerry, in a harsh tone. "You will have to go, then."

“And would you put me on the street, me and my poor childer?” said the poor woman, with a troubled look. “I’m afraid it’s the hard heart you have, Mr. Barclay.”

“Don’t talk nonsense, Mrs. O’Connor,” said Jerry, sharply. “I can’t let you stay here for nothing. I—I’m very poor myself,” he added, with his customary whine.

“You poor!” repeated the widow, bitterly. “I’ve heard that you’re rolling in riches, Mr. Barclay.” [58]

“Who—who says so?” asked Jerry, alarmed.

“Everybody says so.”

“Then you can tell ’em they’re very much mistaken.”

“What do you do with all the rent you get from this building, then?”

“I pay it away, that is, almost all of it. I don’t own the building. I—I hire it, and some months, on account of losses, I don’t make a cent,” asseverated Jerry. “I—I think I’m a little out take the year together.”

“Then why don’t you give it up if you don’t make any money out of it?”

“That—that is nothing to the purpose. Once more, Mrs. O’Connor, will you pay me my rent?”

“How can I when I have no money?”

“Then you must borrow it. I’ll give you till tomorrow, and not a day longer. Remember that, Mrs. O’Connor, will you not?”

Next Jerry visited the other tenant with rather better success, for he collected one dollar on account.

He waited eagerly for Paul to come home. He had made up his mind to explore Paul’s pockets after he was asleep and get possession of his bank book. With that, as he thought, he would go to the bank and draw the money that stood in Paul’s name. It would be a theft, but Jerry did not look at it in that light. He persuaded himself that he had a perfect right to take the property of the boy who was living under his guardianship, though, to speak properly, it was rather Paul that took care of him.

It was rather late in the evening when Paul got home, for every other evening he was employed. The old man was awake, but pretended to be asleep. Paul took off his coat and vest, and threw himself on the lounge, covering himself up with a quilt. His clothes he put on a chair alongside. [61]

It was not long before he was sound asleep, being much fatigued with the labors of the day.

Old Jerry got up cautiously from the bed. He, too, was dressed, for he seldom took the trouble to undress, and cautiously drew near the lounge. He took up Paul’s coat, and threw his claw-like fingers into an inside pocket. His eyes sparkled with delight as he drew out the telegraph boy’s bank book.

“I’ve got it!” he muttered, gleefully. “Paul isn’t any match for the old man! I—I wonder how much money he has saved up!”

Paul slept on, unaware of the cunning old man’s treachery, and of the danger to which his little treasure was exposed.

# CHAPTER XI.

[62]

## AT THE SAVINGS BANK.

Old Jerry laid down Paul's coat, and opened the bank book, of which he had just obtained possession. He was eager to ascertain how much Paul had saved up.

"Forty dollars!"

He could hardly believe his eyes.

How in the world could Paul have managed to save up forty dollars?

"Forty dollars!" exclaimed old Jerry, gleefully. "I'm in luck for once. Of course it belongs to me. I am Paul's guardian, and have a right to his earnings. He shouldn't have kept it from me. I—I will go to the bank and draw it all tomorrow. Then I will put it in in my own name. That will make it all right." And old Jerry rubbed his hands joyfully.

After this theft, for it can be called by no other name, Jerry did not sleep much. He was too much excited by the unexpected magnitude of his discovery, and by his delight at adding so much to his own hoards. Then, again, he was afraid Paul might wake up, and, discovering his loss, demand from him the restitution of the book.

Generally Paul rose at six o'clock, as this enabled him to get his breakfast and get round to the telegraph company at seven. He generally waked about fifteen minutes before the hour, such was the force of habit.

[63]

This morning he woke at the usual time, but old Jerry had got up softly and left the room twenty minutes before.

Turning over, Paul glanced toward the bed in the corner, and was surprised to see no signs of the old man.

"Jerry gone out already!" he said to himself, in amazement "I wonder what's come over him. I hope he isn't sick."

Paul didn't however borrow any trouble, for he concluded that Jerry had got tired of his bed, and gone out for a morning walk.

He lay till seven, and then, throwing off the quilt, rose from the lounge. He was already partly dressed, and only needed to put on his coat. Then, with a cheerful smile, he felt for his bank book, which he had placed in the inside pocket of his coat.

*It was not there!*

He started, and turned pale.

"Where is my bank book?" he asked himself in alarm.

Then it flashed upon him.

"Old Jerry has taken it!" he said, sternly, "and has slunk off with it before I am up. That's why he got up so early. But I'll put a spoke in his wheel. I'll go to the bank and give notice that my book has been stolen. He shan't draw the money on it, if I can prevent it."

But Paul was unable to carry out his intention of calling at the bank at the hour of opening, in order to give notice of his loss. On reporting for duty at the telegraph office, he was sent over to Jersey City, where he was detained until eleven o'clock. He felt uneasy, and thought of asking to have some other boy assigned to the duty, but it so happened that the superintendent was not in an amiable frame of mind, and he knew that his request would not be granted.

[66]

Meanwhile, about five minutes after the bank was opened, old Jerry shambled in, and, sitting down at a table, wrote out an order for forty dollars in favor of Book No. 251,610 signing it "Paul Parton."

This he took to the desk of the cashier.

"Please give me the money on this," he said.

The cashier eyed him sharply.

"Are you Paul Parton?" he demanded.

"N-no," faltered the old man; "I am Paul's guardian."

"Did you put in this money for him?"

"N-no."

"Did he write this order?"

Old Jerry would have had no scruples about asserting that it was written by Paul, but he knew that the statement would at once be recognized as false, as he had himself written it in the presence of the cashier.

"N-no," he admitted, reluctantly; "but it makes no difference; Paul is busy, and can't come. He's a telegraph boy. H-he wanted me to draw it for him."

It will be seen that old Jerry's conscience was elastic, and that he had no scruple about lying.

"That won't answer," replied the cashier, eying the old man suspiciously. "It is not according to our rules."

“I—I want to use the money—that is, Paul does,” remonstrated old Jerry, disappointed.

“That makes no difference.”

“I—I’ll get Paul to write an order,” said Jerry, as he left the bank.

“That old man stole the boy’s book,” thought the cashier. “Now he is going home to forge an order in the boy’s name.”

That is exactly what old Jerry meant to do. He thought it best however, to wait till afternoon.

Meanwhile, at twelve o’clock, Paul, then for the first time able to get away, hurried into the bank, breathless. [67]

“I want to give notice that my bank book has been taken,” he said, panting.

“Your name, please?”

“Paul Parton.”

“Number of book?”

“No. 251,610.”

“Your book was presented two hours since by an old man, who handed in an order for all the money.”

The perspiration gathered on Paul’s brow.

“Did you give it to him?”

“No; it is not according to our rules to pay, except to the written order of the depositor.”

“I am glad of that,” said Paul. “Don’t pay it if he comes again.”

“We will not,” replied the cashier; and Paul left the building feeling greatly relieved.

Old Jerry ought to have known that there was very little chance of a forged order being honored, for the bank possessed Paul’s autograph signature on its books, making the fact of the forgery evident at once, but it sometimes happens that men sharp in some matters are very obtuse in others. This was the case with old Jerry in the present instance.

About two o’clock he entered the bank once more. Paul had not come home at the noon hour—he seldom did, being in the habit of dining at a restaurant, and the old man thought him still ignorant of the theft. He was anxious to draw the money before the telegraph boy learned that his book had been appropriated.

He had prepared an order, having taken one with him in blank, and made it out for forty dollars, signing it “Paul Parton.”

Armed with this, he walked up to the cashier’s window, and without a word presented it in the book. [68]

The cashier recognized him instantly.

“Well,” he said, “what do you want?”

“The money,” answered the old man, his features working with cupidity.

“You were here this morning?”

“Y—yes.”

“I told you you could not draw out the money on your own order.”

“This is Paul’s order,” returned Jerry, with unblushing falsehood.

“Did he write it?”

“Y—yes.”

“I thought you said he was occupied by business.”

“He—he came home at noon, and wrote the order.”

“That is false!” said the cashier, sternly. “The boy has been here to report that his book has been stolen, and forbade us to pay out any money on it.”

The old man’s face was the picture of dismay.

“The—there’s some mistake,” he managed to mutter. “It must be some other boy. Paul asked me to draw the money. Besides, it isn’t his money at all. It—it rightfully belongs to me.”

“You can draw no money on the order which you have forged,” said the cashier, sternly.

“Then give me back the book,” said Jerry, beginning to get frightened.

“I shall retain the book for the rightful owner,” said the official. “And now let me advise you never to come here again on any such errand, or I shall feel it my duty to hand you over to the police.”

Without another word old Jerry shambled out of the bank, with a scared look on his face. This reference to the police startled him. It had not occurred to him that he was doing anything of which the law could take cognizance. His exultation of the morning had quite passed away. He had flattered himself that his hoard would increase by forty dollars. Now he had found himself foiled in the attempt to convert Paul’s savings to his own use. [69]

About six o’clock Paul returned to the humble home. Old Jerry was resting on the bed in the corner. He looked up nervously as the telegraph boy entered, and saw at once by the expression on Paul’s face that he knew all.

“Jerry,” said Paul, “why did you take my bank book?”

“I—I’m so poor, Paul,” whined Jerry, “I—I needed the money.”

“So you turned thief,” returned the boy, indignantly.

“The money was mine by right—you shouldn’t have kept it from me.”

“I deny it!” said Paul, with emphasis. “Have you got the book with you?”

“N—no; they wouldn’t give it back to me,” complained Jerry.

“And they did right. If you ever play such a trick on me again, robbing me in my sleep, I’ll leave you. Suppose I should get hold of your bank book—”

“I—I haven’t any money in the bank. I’m so poor!” ejaculated the miser, panic stricken.

“I have reason to believe you have the bank book in your pocket at this moment.”

“You—you wouldn’t rob me, Paul?” implored Jerry.

“How can I if you have no bank book? But you can rest easy. I am not in the habit of stealing.”

He went out to supper, leaving Jerry utterly discomposed. Not only had his plan failed, but his secret had been discovered.

# CHAPTER XII. [70]

## JAMES BARCLAY'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

Though he is a very unworthy specimen of humanity, the reader may feel interested to know something more about James Barclay, whose acquaintance we made while he was attempting to commit a burglary.

It was mere accident that made him acquainted with the fact that his father was living in New York. To him it seemed a most fortunate discovery. Knowing old Jerry's miserly habits, he had no doubt that the old man was worth some thousands of dollars, and upon this sum he felt that he had a right to draw. His father was timid, and he depended upon terrifying him into complying with his demands.

The first visit terminated as well as he expected. He didn't suppose that Jerry kept much money in his room. Hence his arrangement to come back the next day.

As he left the poor tenement house he chuckled to himself, "I'll scare the old man into giving me all the money I want. It will be like drawing a tooth, and I've no doubt he'll make a great fuss, but there's no escape for him. He can live on little or nothing and enjoy it. It won't do him any real harm to let me have, say half of his miserly hoard. Egad, James Barclay, you're in luck at last. I thought when that telegraph kid foiled me last night that nothing would go well with me, but things seem turning. If I ever meet that boy again I must give him a lesson. He's a bold young [71] rascal, though, and would be a credit to my line of business."

It is doubted whether Paul would have considered this a compliment if he had heard it. His ambitions did not run in the direction of becoming a successful burglar.

It was a question with James Barclay where to spend the intervening time, as he was not to call on his father till the next day. He was about at the end of his resources, having less than a dollar in silver in his possession. He might have tried to hatch up some dishonest scheme for filling his pockets but for the chance discovery of his father. That afforded a chance quite as promising, and far less perilous, and he decided not to make any illegal ventures till he had made all he could out of old Jerry.

"I'd rather be honest," he said to himself in a glow of virtuous feeling; "but, confound it, a man must live, and as the world owes me a living, I must get it one way or another."

It did not seem to occur to James Barclay that the same chance existed for him as for the majority of his fellow men—a chance of earning a living by honest work. Labor and industry he abhorred. They might do for others, but not for him.

"Tomorrow I'll be in funds," he said to himself complacently. "Now, what shall I do with myself today? A man can't do much without money."

It occurred to him that an old acquaintance—rather a shady acquaintance by the way—used to live in Jersey City. He would go over and see him. It would while away the time in a pleasant manner, and he might get news of his other companions, for he had been out of the city himself for several years. In fact, for we need not keep the secret from the reader, he had been passing three years in seclusion at the village of Sing Sing on the Hudson. That accounted for his father [72] having been spared any visits for that length of time.

James Barclay turned down Cortlandt Street, and made his way to the ferry at the foot of the street. He invested three cents in a ferry ticket, and in a few minutes set foot in Jersey City.

"It's a long time since I have been here," he reflected. "Ten to one Jack isn't hanging out at the old place. However, I can see."

He made his way to the former abode of his old friend, Jack Cratts, who was much such a character as himself, but, being more prudent, less apt to get into trouble.

He only met with disappointment. Another family occupied the room once tenanted by Jack, and he could obtain no information as to the whereabouts of his friend.

James Barclay was disappointed. The time was hanging heavily on his hands. He made his way slowly toward the ferry, when he encountered a poorly dressed woman of about thirty, carrying a heavy basket of clothes. She was evidently a laundress.

His face lighted up with instant recognition.

"Is it you, Ellen?" he said.

The woman turned pale, and nearly dropped the basket she was carrying.

"James!" she ejaculated, faintly.

"Yes, Ellen, it is your poor, unfortunate husband. Egad, I'm glad to see you."

It was now over three years since James Barclay and his wife had met. She had never been very happy with him, after the first few months of married life, and she did not know now whether to be glad or sorry she had met him. She had not lost all love for him—wives seldom do under any provocation—but she knew him too well to believe that he had changed materially. He was likely [73] still to prove a disturbing element in her life. Yet she felt a momentary pleasure, lonely as she was, in meeting the man who, ten years before, had captured her affections.

"Are you glad to see me, Ellen?" asked Barclay, in an unusually pleasant tone.

“Yes,” she answered, slowly.

“How are the children? I don’t suppose I should know them.”

“They are well. Jimmy and Mary are going to school. Jimmy sells papers evenings to help me along.”

“How old is the young rascal?”

“Eight years old.”

“Is he a chip of the old block, eh, Ellen?”

“I hope not,” said the woman, heartily. Then, with a half frightened look, she added, “Don’t be offended with me, James, but I don’t want him to follow in your steps.”

“No offense, Ellen,” said Barclay, laughingly. “I don’t pretend to be an angel, and I hope the kid will be more of one than I. And how are you yourself, old woman?”

“I’ve had to work very hard, James,” sighed the woman. “It’s been all I can do to earn a poor living for the children.”

“I wish I could help you, and perhaps I may. I’m expecting some money tomorrow, and I’m hanged if I don’t give you ten dollars of it.”

“It would be a great help to me, James,” said his wife, with a momentary look of pleasure.

“Are you going home now?”

“Yes, James.”

“I’ll go along, too, and see what sort of a crib you’ve got. Can you let me have some dinner?”

“Yes, James, though it’ll be a poor one.” [74]

“O, I shan’t mind. Here, give me that basket. I’m stronger than you.”

“Has he really reformed and become better?” thought Ellen, puzzled. She had never been used to such marks of attention from her husband. But he was in an amiable frame of mind. He had found a place of refuge till the next day, and then he would draw fifty dollars from his father—the first of many forced loans he promised himself.

He lounged away the rest of the day at his wife’s poor room. When the children came home from school he received them with boisterous good nature. They seemed afraid of him, remembering his severity in earlier days, but this only seemed to amuse him.

“That’s a pretty way to receive your loving father,” he said, laughingly. “Come here and sit on my knee, Mary.”

The little girl obeyed with scared face, because she did not dare to refuse lest she should anger her father. So the day passed. James Barclay lay in bed late next morning, but about eleven o’clock started for New York, to meet the appointment with his father.

A little before noon he ascended the staircase, and opened the door of the room which he had visited the day before.

It was empty!

His face darkened, and an unpleasant misgiving entered his mind.

He knocked at the door of the opposite room, which was opened by a woman.

“What has become of the old man who occupied the room opposite?” he asked.

“He has moved,” answered Mrs. Duane.

“Moved! When did he move?”

“This morning, I believe.” [75]

“Where has he gone to?”

“He didn’t leave word.”

“The old fox!” muttered James Barclay. “He has gone to get rid of me. But I’ll follow him up, and sooner or later I’ll find him.”

# CHAPTER XIII.

[76]

## JAMES BARCLAY AT HOME.

James Barclay's disappointment was intense when he discovered that his father had eluded him. He was almost penniless, and had nothing of sufficient value to pawn. Had he raised the sum which he had expected from old Jerry, it is doubtful whether he would have returned to his family in Jersey City. As it was, he had no other resource.

His wife, who took in washing to do at home, was hard at work ironing when the door opened and her husband entered. A frown was on his face, and he was evidently in ill temper.

A cat, the family pet, being in his way, he kicked her brutally, and the poor animal, moaning piteously, fled in wild dismay.

"Get out of the way, you beast!" he said, angrily.

"Don't kick poor Topsy!" pleaded his wife. "I am afraid you have hurt the poor little thing."

"Keep her out of my way, then," growled Barclay. "I hate cats. You must be a fool to keep one."

"The children love poor Topsy, James," said his wife.

"I suppose you'd keep a snake for them, if they liked it."

"A kitten is very different from a snake."

"I shall kill it some time if it gets in my way. Have you got anything to eat in the house?"

[77]

Mrs. Barclay paused in her work long enough to get some bread and meat from the pantry, which she set before her husband.

"Where are the children?" he asked, after a while.

"They have gone to school."

"They ought to be earning something at their age," growled Barclay.

"They are very young yet, James. You wouldn't have me take them from school?"

"School won't do 'em much good."

"You wouldn't have them grow up ignorant, surely?"

"They have got to earn something. I can't support them in idleness."

As it was some years since he had contributed a cent to their support, his wife didn't quite appreciate his complaint, but she knew too much of her husband's temper to argue with him.

"Jimmy sells papers when he gets home from school," she said.

"How much does he earn that way?"

"Sometimes from fifteen to twenty cents."

"He'll need to earn more, I can tell you that. I'm very poor, Ellen, and cursed unfortunate, too. I haven't money enough to buy a ten cent cigar."

"I will try to support the children if you will take care of yourself, James."

Any man with a spark of true manhood in him would have been shamed by such a proposition, but James Barclay was a thoroughly selfish man. It seemed to him that his wife ought to support him, too.

"Have you got a dollar about you, Ellen?" he asked.

"Ye-es," she answered, hesitatingly, "but I must buy some bread and groceries this evening, or the children won't have their supper."

[78]

"Seems to me you care more about the children than you do about your husband. A pretty wife you are!"

"I don't deserve that, James. Of course you are welcome to your share of the supper."

"Thank you! So you want to treat me as a child."

The man was utterly unreasonable, and his wife can hardly be blamed if there rose in her mind a regret that he had not stayed away longer, and left her and the children in peace.

"I thought you expected to have some money today, James," she said.

"Yes, but I didn't get it. Just my cursed luck!" he answered, bitterly. "My own father turns his back on me, and won't give me a cent, though he has money in plenty."

"Your father?" said his wife in surprise. "Is he—have you seen him?"

"Yes, I saw him yesterday, and told him I would call today for fifty dollars. I went, and found the old scoundrel had disappeared."

"Is it right to call your father by such a name? He may not have had the money."

"You don't know my father. He's a miser, and always has been. He lives in a wretched hole, not so good as this place, while he has thousands of dollars invested, or hidden somewhere. He thinks he's got rid of me, but" (here an oath escaped his lips) "he will find he's mistaken."

All this was new to Mrs. Barclay, who had heard very little of her husband's family.

“Perhaps if you find him you could induce him to come and live with us,” she said. “He might take an interest in the children and do something for them.”

“More likely he would want to live off us. However, if I could once get him here, I’d manage to get my hand into his purse. It’s a good idea.”

“Does he live alone? He must be an old man.” [79]

“He’s all bent and shriveled up; he’s got a telegraph boy living with him, he told me. I hate telegraph boys—I met one the other night—an impudent young rascal! I’d like to meet him again. I’d wring the kid’s neck for him.”

“Where did you meet him, James?”

James Barclay eyed his wife suspiciously. He did not care to tell her under what circumstances he met Paul Parton.

“Never you mind, old woman!” he said. “It’s no concern of yours.”

“If you don’t want to tell me, I don’t care to know, James,” she answered, meekly.

“Well, I don’t want to tell you. But about the old man’s coming here, it’s a good idea of yours. I will send off the telegraph boy, for he might be dangerous. Ten to one he’s trying to get the old man to leave him his property. I wish I knew where he is.”

“Haven’t you got any clew?”

“No, he’s hid somewhere. He won’t come out of his hole for fear of meeting me.”

“If you could meet this telegraph boy, you might learn through him where your father is.”

“Unfortunately, Mrs. B., I don’t know the telegraph boy—never met him—shouldn’t know him from Adam.”

“I suppose he has a number.”

“That’s so, old woman!” exclaimed Barclay, slapping his knee with emphasis. “I think I know where I can find out his number, and then it’ll be easy to find him. He can’t hide from me, for he has to be on duty every day. But I shall want money—just give me that dollar!”

“I can’t, James; the poor children would have to go without their supper.”

“Look here, Mrs. B., I want you to understand that you’ve got to obey your husband. I’ll give you back the money as soon as I can, but I need it to track my father. Let me once get hold of him, and it’ll be all right. I will soon have plenty of money.” [80]

“But I can’t spare the money, James. The children must have their supper.”

“I’m tired of your talk,” he rejoined, roughly. “If you refuse me the money, I’ll raise it in some other way.”

He glared round the room, and his eyes rested on a dress that his wife had just ironed.

“I can raise something on that,” he said, seizing the dress, and preparing to carry it away.

“Stop, James, for pity’s sake!” cried his wife, terrified. “That dress belongs to one of my customers. It would be stealing to take it!”

“She’s probably got plenty of others; she can spare it,” he said.

His wife hastened to him and tried to wrench the dress from his grasp, but holding it in one hand beyond her reach, he gripped her arm with the other so hard that she uttered a cry of pain.

At this moment the door was pushed open, and a new character appeared upon the scene in the person of a stalwart policeman.

“What’s all this?” he demanded, in a tone of authority. “Release that woman, or I’ll take you in.”

# CHAPTER XIV.

## ON THE TRACK OF NUMBER 91.

[81]

The policeman's sudden appearance can be easily explained. He and his family occupied rooms in the same house with Mrs. Barclay, and he happened to be passing the door of her apartment when he heard the cry.

"What's all this?" he demanded once more.

"None of your business!" returned Barclay, indignantly. "What call have you to intrude where you're not wanted?"

"I often do that," said the policeman, grimly. "Mrs. Barclay, who is this man?"

"My husband, sir."

"There, do you hear that?" demanded Barclay. "I have a right to be here."

"What were you about to do to your wife? What made her cry out?" asked the policeman, sharply. "I ask you that question, Mrs. Barclay."

"My husband was carrying off that dress to pawn it," replied the wife. "It does not belong to me, and it would have got me into trouble."

"What have you to say to that?" asked the officer, turning to Barclay.

"My wife would give me no money," answered Barclay, sullenly, "and I threatened to pawn her dress."

"She says it was not her dress."

"I thought it was," said Barclay.

"O, James," began his wife, but a threatening look from her husband stopped her words. [82]

"And then you treated her roughly, it seems!"

"No, I didn't. I just took her by the arm, to stop her getting the dress."

"Have you any complaint to make, Mrs. Barclay?" asked the officer.

"Not if he will give me the dress back. It doesn't belong to me, and I don't want to lose it."

"Take the dress," said Barclay, throwing it down.

"Mind you make no more trouble," said the policeman in a warning voice, as he left the room.

"Where did the cop come from?" asked Barclay.

"He lives in the house."

"Then I wish he'd move out of it. Cops are no company for decent people."

It is small wonder that James Barclay did not enjoy the company of a class of men who, first and last, had given him considerable trouble.

His wife did not reply, but picked up the rumpled dress and began to smooth it.

"Now, Ellen," said Barclay, changing his tone out of policy, "I'll make a bargain with you. I want to go over to New York, and hunt up that telegraph boy. Through him I can track my father and get some money. See, this is all I have in the world," and he drew out four pennies from his pocket.

"But the children, James."

"The children can get along on half of it. Give me fifty cents, and I will give you ten dollars as soon as I make a raise. That's pretty good interest, hey, old woman?"

Mrs. Barclay drew from her pocket two silver quarters and handed them to her husband.

"There, take them, James," she said, "and don't forget your promise. I made that money by hard work."

"It will be all right, Ellen," said Barclay, thrusting the money carelessly into his vest pocket. "You [83] can't raise a crop without seed, you know."

He put on his hat and left the house whistling.

Arrived in New York, James Barclay lost no time in returning to his father's old lodgings. Mrs. O'Connor, one of the tenants, chanced to be just coming out of the house with a bundle of clean clothes, which she was about to carry to a customer.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Barclay, politely, for he could be polite when he saw fit, "I believe you knew an old man who moved away from here recently?"

"Old Jerry? Yes, I knew him well. He lived here ever since I did, and what took him away so sudden I can't tell."

"I am sorry not to find him, for I know of something to his advantage."

"He didn't leave word where he was going, more's the pity. I wish he had, for I'd like to have called to see him and the bye some time."

"There was a boy, then, who lived with him? I believe I have heard him mentioned before."

“Yes, sir, and a nice bye he was, and a smart one. He was rale kind to the old man, Paul was, and I don’t think old Jerry could have got along without him.”

“He was employed in a store, wasn’t he?” asked Barclay, assuming less knowledge than he possessed.

“No, indade. Paul is a telegraph bye, and has been for ’most two years. He’s a favorite with the company, I’m thinkin’, as he ought to be, for he always attinds to his duties, and is up early and late.”

“So he’s a telegraph boy!” said Barclay, musingly. “I should like to see him, especially as you speak so well of him. He has a number, hasn’t he? I notice the boys have a number on their caps.”

“Yes, sir. Paul is Number 91.” [84]

“Number 91?” returned Barclay, briskly. “I think I can remember that. I’m much obliged to you, my good lady.”

“Shure, and you’re a very polite gintleman,” said Mrs. O’Connor, who was flattered at being called a lady.

“Why shouldn’t I be polite to a lady like you?” said Barclay. “Perhaps you can give me a little more information.”

“Shure, and I will if I can, sir.”

“At what office can I find this Paul—Number 91, as you call him? I should like to speak to him about my aged relative.”

“I can’t just recollect the number, sir, but the office where Paul goes is on Broadway, same side as the St. Nicholas Hotel, and not far away from it.”

“Thank you very much. You are really the most obliging lady I have met for a long time.”

“Shure, sir, you flatter me. You must have kissed the blarney stone, I’m a thinkin’!”

“No, ma’am, I haven’t; but I hope I know enough to be polite to a lady. You don’t seem like a stranger to me, for you are the image of a lady I used to know on the other side of the water, the Countess of Galway.”

Mrs. O’Connor smiled and simpered, for she had never before been compared to a countess.

“And can I do any more for you, sir?” she said.

“No, thank you. You have given me all the information I require. Good day!”

As Barclay walked away, Mrs. O’Connor followed him with her eyes.

“He isn’t dressed very nice,” she said to herself, “but in his manners he’s a perfect gintleman. I’d like to see that Countess of Galway, that I look so much like.”

# CHAPTER XV.

## BARCLAY GETS INTO BUSINESS.

[85]

"You're getting on finely, old fellow," said James Barclay to himself, as he left the tenement house, and steered toward Broadway. "I managed that old woman skillfully, and got all the information I want. I think, Jerry Barclay, you won't long elude me. I shall have no trouble now in finding the telegraph boy, and then I shall soon be face to face with the old man."

Arrived at Printing House Square, he struck across the City Hall Park, the other side of which is skirted by Broadway.

Sitting on one of the benches was a man rather showily dressed, with a red blotched face, and an indefinable expression that stamped him as one who lived by his wits, rather than by honest toil. As Barclay's glance rested upon him, he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Bill Slocum, is that you?" he said.

"Jim Barclay, as I'm a sinner," said the other, rising and extending a rough hand, on one of whose fingers sparkled a ring, set with what might have been a diamond, but was probably paste. "And how is the world using you, old pal?"

"Rough," answered Barclay. "The old man's gone back on me, and my own wife made a great fuss because I wanted to borrow a dollar. Sometimes I think I was better off in our old boarding place up the river."

Bill Slocum was one of his fellow boarders up at Sing Sing.

[86]

"The world owes you a living, Barclay," said his friend.

"So it does, but how's a chap going to collect his claim? That's what I'd like to know."

"O, well, there's ways if you only know how," said Slocum, rather enigmatically.

"How are you makin' it yourself?" asked Barclay, curiously.

"I get enough to eat and drink and wear. I ain't in no anxiety about livin'."

"How do you do it?"

"Just look at that!"

Bill Slocum drew from his pocket a roll of bills, and held it up for his companion to see. It was a thick roll, and amounted to a fair sum, even if the denominations were small.

"How'd you get all that?" asked Barclay.

"There's more where they come from," answered Slocum.

"Are there any for me?" asked Barclay, eagerly.

"Yes, if I introduce you."

"You'll do it, Slocum, won't you?"

"Yes, if you want me to. But, first, a word in your ear."

He rose from his seat, and withdrew to a place where he would not be heard.

"They're flimsies," he said, briefly.

"Oh!" ejaculated Barclay, looking a trifle disappointed.

He understood that they were not genuine bills, but counterfeit.

"Well, and what if they are?" said Slocum, reading his expression.

"There's a risk about it."

"Nothin' venture, nothin' have, as my old grandmother used to say. Just be foxy, and you won't get caught. I'm making a good living off of it, myself."

[87]

"What commission do you get for passing them?"

"Fifty cents on a dollar. That's liberal, isn't it?"

"Yes, that is liberal," Barclay admitted. "Have you made anything today?"

"Have I? Well, I reckon I have."

"How much?"

"I've passed a ten and a five."

"And that gives you seven and a half for your share?"

"Right you are, Barclay. Your knowledge of arithmetic does credit to your education. It's plain your respected parent took great pains with your trainin'."

"My respected parent," repeated Barclay, frowning, "is about the meanest old skinflint you'll find within a hundred miles. I found him out yesterday, and let him know that I was going to call again today, to raise a loan, but when I called the old fox was gone bag and baggage."

"A shabby way to treat his offspring. I pity you, Jim. So you are left to the tender mercies of the world."

“I don’t find ’em very tender,” growled Barclay. “Do you see that?” and he drew from his pocket about forty cents in change.

“Yes, but it doesn’t dazzle me.”

“It’s all the money I have in the world.”

“Then you’d better join me.”

Barclay hesitated.

“I don’t quite like it. I don’t care about going up the river again too soon.”

“You needn’t, if you are careful. I’ll give you a few points. If one of your bills is found out, you are at once searched to see if you have any more.”

“There’s the danger.”

“So there is, but you can guard against it. When I am preparing to offer a bill, I put a number of good bills in my vest pocket, where they will be certain to be found at once. The other counterfeits I put in a secret inside pocket where they are not likely to be discovered. Then when it is found that all the other bills are good, I say that some rascal must have passed the bad bill on me, taking advantage of my innocence and ignorance of the world.” [88]

This seemed to Barclay an excellent joke, and he laughed long and loud.

“Excuse me, Bill, but you don’t look it.”

“I can when it’s necessary.”

After a little more conversation Barclay, who was already half convinced, yielded to the temptation, and agreed to accompany his friend to the secret office of the counterfeiters, and enroll himself as one of their agents. Slocum offered to conduct him within at once.

The interview proved a satisfactory one, and Barclay was readily accepted, being vouched for by his friend and companion. It may be said also that his appearance was in his favor, though it would hardly have recommended him for any honest business.

When Barclay came out of the office, and again found himself on Broadway, his spirits were perceptibly raised. He was no longer impecunious, but carried with him fifty dollars in counterfeit bills.

“Well, good by, Jim,” said Slocum. “It is best for us to part, and not work near each other. Then again, it is best not to recognize each other when we meet, so that if one gets into a scrape the other need not be molested.”

“All right, Slocum. Success to you!”

James Barclay walked up Broadway, when all at once he uttered a half exclamation indicative of astonishment.

He was nearly face to face with a telegraph boy, in whom he recognized the resolute lad who had foiled him in his attempt at burglary. But this was not all. On the boy’s cap he recognized, with amazement, the distinctive inscription: [89]

A. D. T.
91.

# CHAPTER XVI.

[90]

## AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

“Number 91!” ejaculated James Barclay in surprise.

The surprise was reflected on Paul’s face when on looking up he recognized James Barclay.

“I think we have met before,” said the burglar, grimly.

“Yes,” answered Paul, smiling.

“You are the boy that lives with my father?”

“Yes, if you are the son of Jerry Barclay,” Paul admitted, seeing that denial was useless.

“It’s queer how things come about,” said Barclay, reflectively.

“I think you will have to excuse me,” said Paul, “for I am sent on an errand, and it won’t do for me to stop.”

“Where are you bound?”

“To the Astor House.”

“Are you going to walk?”

“Yes.”

“Then I will go with you, if you don’t mind.”

Paul was by no means desirous of Barclay’s company, but there seemed no way to shake him off. The street was free to all.

“You can come with me if you like,” he said.

“Then I’ll go. I’ve got something to say to you. But first I’ll say that I don’t bear any ill will against you for what you did the other night. You only did your duty.”

“That’s true. I’m glad you look upon it in that light.” [91]

“I admire your pluck, blest if I don’t. All the same I was disappointed.”

“Don’t you think it would be better to go into some other line of business, Mr. Barclay?”

“Yes, I do, but that was all that was open to me at that time. Now, I’ve got into something different.”

Paul looked curious, but didn’t ask what that business was. He concluded that Barclay would tell him if he felt disposed.

“I’m a confidential agent,” continued Barclay, “and it’s likely to pay me well. Where has my father moved to?”

Paul hesitated.

“I see you don’t want to tell me. My father moved to get out of my way, I expect.”

“Yes, he did.”

“I don’t know as I blame him much, being the kind of man he is. I’m his son, but money is his god. I asked for money, and he didn’t want to give it to me.”

“That’s what he said.”

“Well, I was in need of money then. Now I’m not. Do you see that?”

He drew from his vest pocket the roll of counterfeit notes which had been intrusted to him, and showed it to Paul.

“That doesn’t look as if I was in want of money, does it?”

“No, it doesn’t,” Paul admitted. In truth he was surprised at this unexpected wealth on the part of his companion, and it occurred to him to wonder whether he had engaged in another burglary in which he had been more successful.

“No, I didn’t get it in the way you think,” he said, answering Paul’s suspicious thought. “I got it in the way of business. Now will you tell me where my father lives?” [92]

“I can’t without his permission.”

“Then tell him that I don’t want any money from him. I am able to pay my own way now.”

“He says he is poor.”

“Do you believe him, 91?” asked Barclay.

“I think he must have some money,” answered Paul, cautiously.

“So do I, decidedly. But he can keep it. Tell him that. I only want to see him about some family matters. It ain’t strange if a son wants to have a chat with his father after twelve years, is it?”

“No, I should say not.”

“Tell the old man that I am willing to give him five dollars as a sign of good faith. If he will give me five, I’ll hand him ten.”

“I’ll tell him that,” said Paul, rather surprised, and asking himself whether James Barclay was in earnest.

“You couldn’t give me small bills for a ten, could you?” asked Barclay, meaning to push his business by Paul’s help.

“No, I couldn’t. I don’t carry any money about with me except a little silver.”

“Never mind; I’ll get it somewhere else. Will you let me know tomorrow what my father says?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll call at your office about ten o’clock.”

“I may be away, but if I am not you can see me.”

“How long have you been with my father?”

“Ever since I was five or six years old.”

“What made him take you? He isn’t so very charitable.”

“There was some money that went with me, I have heard.”

“I’ve no doubt of it. The old man is keen to look out for Number One. He prefers that to looking out for Number Ninety One.” [93]

Paul laughed at the joke, though he didn’t think it very brilliant.

“Do you expect he will leave you his money?” questioned Barclay, with a sharp glance at Paul.

“No, I have no claims upon him.”

“That’s true, but you might take advantage of his being weak and old.”

“What do you take me for?” asked Paul indignantly.

Barclay laughed.

“I don’t take you for an angel, and a few thousands might be a temptation to you as well as the next man.”

“Do you think your father has as much money as that?”

“Why shouldn’t he? He has been always scrimping and saving and never spending.”

“Well, it’s nothing to me,” said Paul. “If you ask my opinion, I think he’ll never make a will, and whatever he has will go to his natural heir. I suppose that’s you.”

“Yes, it’s me. If I’m dead, I’ve got a wife and two children.”

They had reached Barclay Street, and the Astor House was close at hand.

“I must leave you now,” said Paul. “I go into the hotel.”

“Very well. Don’t forget to tell my father what I told you.”

“I will do so.”

That evening Paul, in redemption of his promise, said to the miser:

“I saw your son, today, Jerry.”

The old man’s face wore a startled expression.

“You saw—James?” he faltered. [94]

“Yes.”

“Did he know you lived with me?”

“Yes, but I don’t know how he found out. Perhaps he asked at our former lodgings.”

“What—what did he say?”

“He asked where you had moved.”

“You didn’t tell him?” said Jerry, in alarm.

“No, I said I could not without your permission.”

“Good boy, Paul. Don’t tell him—ever. He—he would come here and ask for money. It would be very foolish, for I am wretchedly poor. Why didn’t you tell him that Paul?”

“I don’t think he would believe me if I did. But you are mistaken, he says, about his wanting money. He showed me a roll of bills, and said he had a good position.”

“He asked me for fifty dollars when he came to see me. He is a bold, bad man!”

“Now he says he is willing to give you money. He says if you will give him five dollars back he will give you a ten dollar bill.”

“Did he say that?” asked old Jerry, eagerly.

“He told me to tell you that.”

Old Jerry’s face wore a look of perplexity. He hated to give up a chance of five dollars, but at the same time he felt afraid of his son. He could not believe him to be in earnest, for such liberality was by no means characteristic of him.

“Did he—seem to be in earnest?” he asked Paul.

“Yes, he seemed to be, but you know him better than I do. He said he wanted to have a chat with you, as he had not seen you for so many years. What shall I say to him?”

Old Jerry didn’t immediately reply. Avarice and greed struggled in his mind with an instinctive fear of his son.

“I—I’ll think of it,” he answered. “I can’t tell just yet.” [95]

“Shall I say that to him?”

“Yes—and—Paul—”

“Well.”

“Don’t let him follow you home and find me out. He’ll try to do it. He is a—a bad man, as he was a bad boy.”

“I will do as you say, Jerry.”

Paul was not sorry to carry back this message, for he, too, mistrusted James Barclay, and felt that his desire to see his father covered some sinister design.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## A QUEER COMPACT.

[96]

James Barclay was very much in earnest in wishing to find his father's new habitation, for he was convinced that the old man possessed a moderate fortune, and he felt that, sooner or later, it would come to him. If in any way he could persuade old Jerry to put it in his hands now, he would be handsomely provided for.

He was not to see Paul until the next morning. He secured lodgings at a low hotel on the Bowery, where twenty five cents per night was charged. The accommodation corresponded with the price, but Barclay, fresh from Sing Sing, was not inclined to be fastidious, and congratulated himself that again he was a free man.

He was not unmindful of his business, but was on the lookout for a chance to exchange his counterfeit bills for good ones.

He strolled into a drinking saloon, and called for a drink. By his side a man, from the country, apparently, was just paying for a glass of whisky, and in so doing displayed a wallet filled with bills. Barclay felt interested in him at once.

"My friend," he said, "won't you drink with me? I hate to drink alone."

"You're very polite, stranger, but I—hic—I guess I'm about full."

"O, you can stand another glass, I am sure."

"Well, I don't mind," hiccoughed the countryman. "You're a—gen—gentleman."

"So are you," said Barclay, with a wink at the barkeeper. "What'll you have?"

[97]

The countryman expressed a wish for whisky straight, and was served with a glass.

Then the two sat down, and engaged in conversation. It was evident from the thick utterance of the gentleman of the rural districts, that he was no longer master of himself.

"By the way," said Barclay, carelessly, "will you do me a favor?"

"I can't lend you any money," answered the other, with a remnant of prudence. "I promised my wife I wouldn't."

"O, I don't want a loan," said Barclay. "Bless you, I've got money enough. But I see you've got a number of bills. Couldn't you change a ten for me?"

The countryman saw no harm in this, and counted out ten dollars in small bills, for which he accepted a nice crisp ten dollar bill, which looked handsome, but, as we know, was not worth the paper it was printed upon.

"Won't you take another drink in acknowledgment of the favor?" asked Barclay. "It has saved my going to the bank."

The countryman was already so dizzy, that he had the good sense to refuse, after trying to balance himself on his feet without success.

"Then I'll bid you good day," said Barclay, who, for obvious reasons, desired now to terminate the acquaintance.

"Goo' day," said the other, in a husky voice.

"That was very well done!" soliloquized Barclay, as he counted the good money and put it by itself in an upper vest pocket. "The fellow's so drunk that he'll never know where he got the bad tenner. That'll do for one day's work."

[98]

The next morning, a little before the time agreed upon with Paul, he was crossing the City Hall Park, when he unexpectedly met the telegraph boy.

"Good morning, Number 91," he said. "I was just coming up to the office to look for you."

"Then you are saved the trouble."

"Yes; and now what word from my father? Where can I find him?"

"He does not seem willing to see you," answered Paul.

James Barclay frowned angrily.

"I believe you're doing this, you young rascal, keeping me and the old man apart, so you can get hold of his money yourself."

"You are welcome to think what you like, Mr. Barclay," said Paul, with spirit. "Good morning!"

"Curse the kid!" muttered Barclay, following the telegraph boy with a vindictive glance.

"That's what I say, too, boss!"

Barclay turned quickly, and found the speaker to be a bootblack, a boy about Paul's size. It was Tom Rafferty, a boy introduced in the first chapter, with whose attempted imposition upon a smaller boy in the same line of business Paul had forcibly interfered.

"So you know the kid?" he said, inquiringly.

"I'd ought to," answered Tom. "Shine yer boots, boss?"

“Yes, I’ll have a shine,” answered Barclay, thinking he might make this boy of service.

“So you don’t like Number 91?”

“No, I don’t,” was the emphatic reply.

“What’s the matter with him?”

“He thinks himself above me, jest because he is a telegraph boy, and I am a bootblack.”

“Have you known him long?”

“Ever since he was so high,” said Tom, indicating the height of a boy of six.

“Do you know the old man he lives with?” [99]

“Know old Jerry? Of course I do. Used to live in the same house, when dad was livin’.”

“So the boy has always lived with him?”

“Ever since I knowed him.”

“Humph! Where do they live now?”

“Round in Pearl Street.”

“No, they don’t. They’ve moved.”

“I didn’t know it. Must ’ave moved lately.”

“Yes, it was. Now, boy—what’s your name?”

“Tom Rafferty.”

“Then, Tom, would you like a job?”

“Wouldn’t I!”

“I want to find out where the boy and the old man live. I’ve got some business with the old man, but he don’t want to see me.”

“Wouldn’t Paul tell you?”

“No.”

“What’s it worth, boss?” asked Tom, with an eye to business.

“It depends on how soon you can find out. How can you find out?”

“I’ll foller Paul when he goes home from the office.”

“That’ll do. Do you think you can find out for me tonight, so as to let me know tomorrow morning?”

“I reckon I can, boss.”

“Meet me here tomorrow morning, and tell me where they live, and I’ll give you a dollar.”

Tom had not been expecting more than a quarter, and was very well pleased with Barclay’s liberality.

“I’ll do it, boss!” he said, striking the box, to indicate that the shine was completed. Apart from the money that was promised him, he was glad to thwart Paul, who didn’t want his customer to ascertain the address.

“I’ll meet you here about nine o’clock, and have another shine,” said Barclay, as he slipped ten cents—double pay—into Tom’s hand. [100]

“You’ll find me on hand, and right side up with care,” said Tom. “You’re a gentleman I like to fall in with.”

James Barclay walked away, well pleased with the arrangement he had made.

“There’s more’n one way of finding out what you want to know,” he soliloquized. “The old man ain’t sharp, or else he thinks I ain’t. I’ll give him a call when that troublesome telegraph boy is about his business. Me and the old man will have considerable business to discuss. He’s going to give me a share of his money, or I’ll shake the life out of him. It ain’t pleasant to discipline your dad, but when he don’t treat you like he ought, it’s the only way.”

Tom Rafferty, towards the close of the afternoon, loitered in the neighborhood of the telegraph office where Paul was employed. When Number 91 left the office and betook himself homeward, he did not notice that he was followed at the distance of a few rods by Tom Rafferty.

But such was the case.

# CHAPTER XVIII. [101]

## JAMES BARCLAY OBTAINS A CLEW.

No commission could have been more congenial to Tom Rafferty than to track Paul and the miser. He had never liked Paul, whom he charged with putting on airs, because he was better dressed than himself, but his aversion had deepened to hatred since the telegraph boy's forcible interference in favor of little Jack. He saw a way now to annoy Paul, for he was satisfied that James Barclay was no friend of Jerry or Number 91.

He hovered round the telegraph office till Paul was dismissed, and then, unobserved by him, sauntered along behind him. At Grand Street, Paul crossed Broadway and proceeded eastward to where Ludlow Street opens out of it, and proceeded in a southerly direction for about five minutes. Had he turned back, he might have suspected Tom's motive in following him, but he was absorbed in his own thoughts, and never looked behind him. At length he entered an open doorway and went upstairs. Tom carefully noted the number, and then, with a look of triumph, went back to his usual lounging place at the City Hall Park.

The next morning, at the hour fixed, James Barclay entered the park and looked about for Tom. Tom, who was also on the lookout for him, put himself in his way.

"Shine yer boots, boss?" he asked, with a grin.

"Oh, you're the boy I saw yesterday," said Barclay, recognizing him. "Well, what luck have you had?" [102]

"I follered him, and found out where he lives, boss."

"Good!" said Barclay, brightening up. "Where is it?"

"Where's the dollar you was to give me?" asked Tom, cautiously.

"Here it is!" said Barclay, producing a silver dollar.

"Give it here, boss."

"First tell me where my—where the telegraph boy lives."

"If I should, you might put it back in your pocket," said Tom, cunningly.

Barclay did not resent this imputation upon his good faith, for his sense of honor was not very keen, and he would only have regarded such a trick as smart. In this case, however, he was so anxious to learn where his father lived that he had no idea of cheating his confidential messenger.

"No, boy, I'm on the square," he answered. "Here, take the money and tell me the number."

Tom took the dollar, chucked it in the air, catching it dexterously as it came down, and then pocketed it with an air of satisfaction. He was neither provident nor industrious, and it was rare that he found himself in possession of so large a sum.

"No. 105 Ludlow Street," he said. "That's the number."

"Are you sure of that? Did you see the old man?" demanded Barclay, eagerly.

"No, I didn't see him, but I knowed he was there, for he and Paul live together," answered Tom.

"That's near Grand Street, isn't it?"

"You've hit it boss. Shine yer boots?"

"Go ahead!"

While this operation was being performed, Tom, whose curiosity was excited, began to question in his turn. [103]

"You ain't no relation to Paul, be you?" he asked.

"What business is it of yours?" demanded Barclay, frowning.

"Didn't know yer wanted to keep it secret," said Tom, abashed.

"Have you known the old man long?"

"I've knowed old Jerry ever since I was a small kid."

"How does he make his living?"

"He begs in the streets, when he can get away from Paul. Number 91 is so proud he won't let him when he knows it."

"I should think he would rather have the old man beg, so he wouldn't have to give him so much money."

"So should I. I wouldn't mind. Old Jerry could make enough begging to support himself, easy."

"Evidently you are a different chap from this telegraph boy," observed Barclay, not without sarcasm.

"I hope so," said Tom Rafferty. "I don't put on no airs."

"And he does?"

"You'd better believe it. And after all he's only a telegraph boy. I could go on the telegraph

myself, if I wanted to."

"Why don't you?"

"I'd rather have my liberty, and be my own boss. I guess I make as much money, any way."

"You could dress better, and be cleaner," suggested Barclay, surveying the ragged costume and soiled face and hands of the bootblack.

"What's the use of being clean?" asked Tom, with calm philosophy. "You don't feel no better. Besides, you're sure to get dirty again. It's all foolishness."

"Right you are, my boy," said Barclay, with a smile. "There isn't much of that foolishness about you." [104]

Here the boy struck the box smartly with his brush, as a sign that the job was completed.

Barclay put down his foot and prepared to go.

"You haven't paid, boss," said the bootblack.

"I gave you a dollar."

"That was for something else. You haven't paid for the shine."

"You ought to throw that in," said Barclay.

"Don't do business that way, boss."

"Here's your money, then," said Barclay, throwing a nickel on the ground at his feet. He had intended all the time to give it, but amused himself by teasing the boy. "Supposing I should want you again, shall I find you here?"

"Yes, boss; this is my office," answered Tom, humorously. "If it's more convenient, you kin call at my house on Fifth Avenue."

James Barclay left the park in a state of high satisfaction. It was important to his schemes to find his father, and now there seemed to be no further difficulty in the way. Then, too, he rather plumed himself on his success as a detective. Old Jerry, prompted probably by Paul, had removed his residence with the object of avoiding him and putting him off the track. But it had all proved useless. Thanks, as he assured himself, to his remarkable sharpness, he had foiled the old man and found out what he had attempted to conceal.

"How glum he will look when he sees me coming into his room!" he chuckled to himself. "It'll be worth five dollars to see his scared face. Serves him right, too, for tryin' to deceive his own flesh and blood."

It was no little additional satisfaction that Paul, too, against whom he had a grudge for his interference with his attempt at burglary, would be disappointed and discomfited. [105]

Should he go at once to call on his father? By the City Hall clock it lacked a quarter of ten. There was no hurry, for he had his address, and could find him any time. He wanted to make another call first, and decided to do so. What this call was, is not essential to my story. It is sufficient to say that it occupied him two hours, and that it was a little past twelve when he reached the new residence of his father in Ludlow Street.

There was a woman standing at the door.

"Is there an old man and a telegraph boy living here?" asked Barclay.

"Yes," answered the woman. "Head of the stairs on the third floor."

"Thank you, ma'am. I'm much obliged."

James Barclay ascended the stairs, smiling to himself all the way.

# CHAPTER XIX.

## OLD JERRY RECEIVES A VISIT.

Though old Jerry was more sensible than some misers in resisting the temptation of keeping all his money at home, where he might feast his eyes in the contemplation of it, he had a little hoard of gold pieces which he secreted in his room, and which from time to time he took out and counted with gloating eyes.

This very day he had taken them from their place of concealment, and, spreading them on the bed, was counting them over with trembling fingers when his son quietly opened the door, and entered the room.

The old man looked around, pale and alarmed, and clutched at the gold in the hope of hiding it before the intruder, whoever it might be, could catch a glimpse of it. But he was nervous, and had only thrust a part of the gold hurriedly into his pocket when James entered.

Over the old man's face there crept an expression of dire dismay. There was no one in the world whom he less wished to see than his son.

The latter's keen glance detected his father's employment, and did not fail to observe the half dozen gold pieces still remaining on the bed spread, though old Jerry, as quickly as possible, gathered them up, and thrust them into his pocket.

"Good morning, dad!" said James, in a jocular tone. "I am afraid you are not glad to see me."

Old Jerry stared at him in mute consternation. [107]

"Considering that I am your only son, you might give me a better welcome," said James, carefully closing the door, and sinking into a chair.

"Go away, go away!" said the old man, hoarsely. "You—you are a bold, bad man, and I don't want to see you."

"Come, dad, that is unkind!" said James Barclay, in a bantering tone. "You mustn't forget that I am your son."

"I wish I could forget it," muttered the old man.

"I am not so bad as you think I am, father. Seeing that we are all that is left of the family, it's only right that we should live friendly. I'm glad to see you are not so poor as you pretend."

"You—you are mistaken, James," whined old Jerry. "I am very poor."

"That don't go down, dad. What were you doing when I came in?"

Old Jerry looked confused.

"How many gold pieces have you got there? Let me count them."

"Three—or four," stammered Jerry, unable to deny the statement entirely.

"Three or four!" repeated James, mockingly. "Thirty or forty, more likely."

"You—you are quite wrong, James," said Jerry, in nervous alarm. "It's—it's all I have in the world."

"Perhaps it is, and perhaps it isn't. When I was here before, you pretended you didn't have any money at all. What are you going to do with it?"

"I am keeping it to—to bury me," answered Jerry.

"Then you'd better give it to me. You can't bury yourself, you know. I'll see you buried all right when the time comes."

"I couldn't do it, James. I must keep it as long as I live. When I die—"

"It comes to me, I suppose." [108]

"Ye—es."

"Then I might as well have it now, don't you think so, dad?"

"Go away! I don't feel well. I want to be left alone," stammered Jerry, with a terrified look at the stout, broad shouldered visitor, whom he could hardly believe to be his son, so great was the difference between the burly strength of the one, and the shrinking weakness of the other.

"Look here, dad, you ain't treating me well. You don't seem to consider that I am your only son. Are you saving up your money for that young telegraph brat that lives with you?"

"Paul is a good boy," mumbled Jerry. "He doesn't scare and trouble me like you, James."

"That isn't answering my question. Are you going to leave him all your money?"

"I—I have very little—to leave, James," returned the old man, lapsing into his usual whine. "There won't be anything left when my funeral expenses are paid."

"What there is will go to me, will it?"

"I—I suppose so," faltered Jerry.

"Then I think you'd better make your will and say so. Otherwise that boy will claim all."

"Paul is a good boy. I—I should starve but for what he brings me every week."

“You look half starved as it is. Come, are you willing to make your will in my favor?”

“I—I’ll think of it, James.”

“And give it to me to keep.”

“It—it won’t do you any good, I—I am so poor.”

“I’ll take the chance of that. You’ve got more money in your pocket than would bury you five times over.”

“No—no,” protested the old man in alarm. “You—you frighten me, James. I don’t feel well. Won’t you go away?” [109]

“There is no need to be scared, dad. I don’t want your money.”

“Is that true, James?” said the old man, in a tone of relief. “I have so little it wouldn’t do you any good.”

“Didn’t that boy tell you I wanted to make you a present?”

“Yes, he said so.”

“Yet you hid away from me and wouldn’t let me know where you lived.”

“Did Paul tell you? How did you find me out, James?”

“No, he didn’t tell me, but I found out all the same. Never mind how! Only I warn you it won’t do you any good to hide from me in future. I have ways of finding you out. But let me convince you that I don’t need your money. Do you see that?”

As he spoke he drew out a roll of counterfeit bills and exhibited them to the astonished eyes of old Jerry.

The old man regarded him with new respect as the possessor of such unexpected wealth.

“Are—are they square?” he asked.

“Of course they are,” answered James. “I intended to give you a present if you hadn’t treated me so coolly—”

“I meant no offense, James,” said the old man, eying the money with a look of greed.

“Well, if you apologize, it’s all right!” said James, with noble magnanimity. “You’ll find you haven’t judged me right. I can do more for you than that telegraph kid. But I want you to trust me, and treat me kind, do hear?”

“Yes,” answered Jerry, meekly.

“To show you that I’m in earnest, I’ll make you a fair offer. Give me two of those five dollar gold pieces, and I’ll give you these two ten dollar bills. If that isn’t a handsome offer, I don’t know what is.” [110]

Jerry was dazzled by this offer. The fact that it was made by such a scapegrace as he knew his son to be should have put him on his guard, but cupidity blinded him.

“Do you mean it, James?” he asked, surveying the bills with avidity.

“Certainly I do. I make the present just to show you that I don’t bear no grudge, and want to live friendly.”

“Let me see the bills, James.”

“There, take them in your hand if you like.”

Old Jerry took the bills, and eyed them at first longingly, but as he marked their new appearance a suspicion entered his mind. If they were counterfeit his son’s unexpected liberal offer would be accounted for. James’s character, too, made it very probable that he would engage in circulating counterfeit bills.

“I—I would rather keep the gold, James,” he said, handing back the bills.

“Then you’re a fool!” said James Barclay roughly. “I see you don’t want to be friendly. I wanted to be on good terms with you, seein’ you’re my father, but now I don’t care. Give me that gold!”

“Go away!” said the old man, in renewed alarm.

James Barclay’s reply was to rise from his seat, and stride over to where his father was sitting on the bed. He seized the old man roughly by the shoulder, and made a motion to search the pocket containing the gold pieces.

“Give it up peaceably or I’ll hurt you!” he said.

Jerry uttered a shrill cry, and tried to make a feeble opposition, but he was like a child in the hands of the burly ruffian.

“Stop your whimpering!” said James, fiercely. “That gold I mean to have, and you’d best give it up.” [111]

Jerry again uttered a cry, which was heard by Mrs. Hogan, an opposite neighbor, who, opening the door, saw, unnoticed by either, the uneven struggle between Jerry and his assailant.

Mrs. Hogan was a brave woman. She dashed back into her own room, and returned in an instant with a dipper of hot water. Armed with this she was prepared for hostilities.

“Let the old man alone, you thafe of the worruld!” she exclaimed, indignantly.

James Barclay turned, and, seeing that it was a woman, replied scornfully, “Get out of here, woman, or it’ll be the worse for you!”

# CHAPTER XX.

[112]

## JAMES BARCLAY COMES TO GRIEF.

“Get out yourself!” retorted Mrs. Hogan, as with undaunted mien she faced the ruffian. “What are you doin’ to old Jerry?”

“Mind your business, woman, and leave the room, if you don’t want to get hurt!”

James Barclay still retained his grip upon the old man as he spoke.

He was as bold as his father was timid, and did not mean to be frightened away by a woman.

“I’m no more a woman than yourself,” said Mrs. Hogan, angrily, who preferred to be addressed as a lady.

“Well, you’re dressed like one, any way,” rejoined Barclay, with a smile of amusement. “My father and I have a little business together, and you’re not wanted.”

“Is he your son, Jerry?” asked Mrs. Hogan, not certain whether the statement was true.

“Yes,” answered Jerry, feebly, “but he wants to rob me. Take him away, Mrs. Hogan.”

“Ain’t you ashamed of yourself to trate your old father so manely?” demanded Mrs. Hogan, indignantly.

“Give me the money, father, and I’ll go,” said Barclay, thinking it politic to get away as soon as possible.

“Take him away!” said old Jerry, feebly.

“I’ll do it!” responded Mrs. Hogan. “I’ll tache him, the murtherin’ thafe!” [113]

She suited the action to the word, and dashed the scalding hot water into the face of James Barclay.

He uttered a hoarse cry of mingled rage and pain, and, leaving his father, dashed after his bold assailant.

He was partially blinded, however, by the pain, and she easily escaped.

Scarcely knowing where he went, he ran against an athletic, broad shouldered man, who was bringing up a basket of coal.

“O, that’s your game, is it?” said the newcomer, fancying the assault intentional. “I don’t know who you are, but I’ll give ye all ye want. No man can hit Dennis O’Brien widout gettin’ as good as he gives.”

In a trice the two men were grappling, and, losing their balance, tumbled down the stairs, receiving some hard knocks on the way. The result was that both were arrested by a passing policeman, and locked up.

James Barclay, whose burns were severe, was sent to the hospital on the Island, and it was thirty days before he was free to pursue his plans again.

Old Jerry, picking himself up after his narrow escape, carefully counted his gold pieces, and to his great relief found that none were missing.

He breathed a sigh of relief when he learned that his son had been arrested, and determined to deposit his gold in the savings bank, so as to guard against future robbery.

It was about this time that Paul, called up town by some errand, was crossing Madison Square, when he heard his name called.

Looking up he recognized, with no little pleasure the smiling face of Jennie Cunningham.

She was accompanied by a boy of about Paul’s size, fashionably dressed, and wearing an expression of high self appreciation on his rather narrow face. [114]

“How are you, Paul? It’s an age since I saw you,” said the young heiress, cordially, offering her hand.

“I am glad to see you, Miss Jennie,” responded Paul.

“Why haven’t you been up to see us? I have been expecting you for a long time.”

“I wasn’t sure I wouldn’t be intruding.”

“Then I’ll tell you once for all, you needn’t be a bit afraid. I want to beat you at dominoes. You beat me last time, didn’t you?”

“I believe so,” said Paul.

“Then I want my revenge. When will you come?”

“Whenever I am invited,” said Paul, smiling.

“That reminds me—how stupid I was to forget it—that I am to have a fancy dress party of young people next Wednesday evening. You’ll come, won’t you?”

“I am afraid I have no clothes fit to wear at a party.”

“O, you are to come in costume. Come as a telegraph boy. That will be the very thing. You’ll act the character naturally, you know, and no one will know that you are a real telegraph boy.”

“I should like very much to come, if I can come in my uniform.”

“That’s just what I want. Mind, then, Wednesday evening, at eight o’clock. What is the number of your office?”

“No. —— Broadway.”

“I will send you a regular card of invitation. Then you will be treated just like the rest.”

She was about to turn away when a thought struck her.

“O, I forgot to introduce you to my cousin, Mark Sterling. Mark, this is Paul Parton, the boy who drove off the burglar when papa was gone to Washington. You’ve heard me speak of him?” [115]

“O, yes, I’ve heard of him,” said Mark, coldly. “He behaved in a very creditable way—for a telegraph boy,” he continued, in a patronizing tone.

“Or for any other boy!” rejoined Jennie, quickly. “Really, I look upon Paul quite as a hero.”

“I am afraid I am not entitled to such high praise,” said Paul, modestly.

“You must make allowances for my Cousin Jennie,” said Mark. “She is a girl, and girls are all apt to gush.”

“This particular girl isn’t, Mark,” said his cousin, indignantly. “Have you ever seen the burglar since, Paul?”

“Yes.”

“O, tell me where.”

“On Broadway.”

“Why didn’t you have him arrested?”

“There was no policeman at hand. Besides, I told him that night that if he would go peaceably I would not molest him.”

“Such a promise doesn’t count,” said Mark, in a tone of authority. “You should have called a policeman.”

“My promise always counts!” said Paul, firmly.

“Even if given to a burglar?” said Mark, with a sneer.

“Yes, even if given to a burglar.”

Mark took off his hat mockingly.

“Really, I wasn’t prepared to find such a lofty sense of honor—in a telegraph boy!” he said, with a satirical smile.

“I am afraid you are not very well acquainted with telegraph boys,” said Paul, good naturedly.

He quite understood that Mark meant to sneer at him, but being confident of Jennie Cunningham’s favor, he felt quite indifferent to the opinion of her cousin. [116]

“No,” said Mark, significantly; “I have never had the honor of associating much with that class of —persons.”

“Come, Mark, don’t make yourself so disagreeable,” said Jennie, unceremoniously. “Remember that Paul is a particular friend of mine.”

“Thank you, Miss Jennie,” said Paul, gratefully.

“I was not aware of that,” said Mark, stiffly.

“I am afraid I must be going; my time is not my own,” said Paul. “Good morning, Miss Jennie; good morning, Mr. Sterling.”

Jennie Cunningham responded cordially, but Mark affected not to hear the telegraph boy’s farewell. He was not in the best of humor, having a partiality for his pretty cousin, and being disposed to regard with jealousy any kindness bestowed by her upon other boys. He was foolish enough to venture upon a remonstrance, without reflecting that this was the poorest possible way of recommending himself to the favor of his companion.

“Jennie,” he commenced, “I am very much surprised at the notice you take of that low telegraph boy.”

“Do you mean Paul Parton?”

“Yes, if that is the fellow’s name.”

“Then I wish you to understand that he is not a low boy.”

“What do you know of him? What do you know of his family?”

“Nothing, except that he has neither father nor mother living.”

“Probably they were low persons.”

“Why probably?”

“You know well enough that nice boys don’t become telegraph messengers.” [117]

“Paul is a nice boy,” asserted Jennie, with spirit.

“You seem to be infatuated with him,” said Mark, shrugging his shoulders.

“Because I treat him with common politeness?”

“Didn’t you invite him to your party next Wednesday?”

“Suppose I did?”

“Do you think it suitable to have a boy like that among your guests?”

“Yes, I do.”

“I don’t believe your mother will approve of it.”

“My mother invited Paul to spend the evening whenever he had time.”

This rather took Mark by surprise. He could not very well say anything in condemnation of his aunt, though he chose to lecture his cousin.

“I hope you won’t expect me to take any notice of him,” he said, with dignity.

“O, I don’t think he will insist upon it. I will take care that he feels himself at home.”

Mark did not venture to say more, but walked beside his cousin in a disgusted frame of mind. I am afraid he was really jealous of Paul, whom, against his will, he was forced to admit to be a very good looking boy.

# CHAPTER XXI. [118]

## THE FANCY DRESS PARTY.

Paul might have hesitated about accepting the invitation to attend a fashionable party if he had not been on such cordial and friendly terms with his young hostess and her family. He was sure to be kindly treated by them and by the majority of the guests who very properly follow the lead of their entertainers. He foresaw that Mark would snub him if he had an opportunity, but for this he cared little. It was clear that Mark was foolishly puffed up with an idea of his own consequence, and had been accustomed to look with scorn upon all who were not on the same social plane as himself.

Paul had for some time been thinking of ordering another and newer uniform, and thought it good policy to do so at once, that he might have the new suit to wear for the first time at Jennie Cunningham's party. It is the custom for boys to obtain them from the company, paying by installments, or regular weekly deductions from their pay.

The next morning some surprise was excited at the office by the receipt of a square envelope, of perfumed French paper, directed to

PAUL PARTON, A. D. T., No. 91.

"A love letter, I suppose," said the chief, with a smile, as he handed the note to Paul.

Paul opened it, and, having no reason for secrecy, passed it to the superintendent.

"An invitation to a fancy dress party!" said that official, in surprise. "You seem to be pretty thick with the Cunninghams, Number 91." [119]

"They are very polite and kind," said Paul.

"I suppose you are trying to ingratiate yourself with the young lady."

"I am too young to think of that," answered the telegraph boy, very sensibly.

"Shall you accept the invitation?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must go in fancy dress."

"I have already decided to go as a telegraph boy."

"Then you knew of this before?"

"I met Miss Jennie yesterday in Madison Square, and was told she meant to invite me."

"You are a lucky boy."

"So I think, sir."

From that time Paul was treated with greater consideration in the office, the chief regarding him as a *protege* of the Cunninghams. This was an advantage, for he was now employed on the most agreeable and desirable commissions that came to the office.

On Wednesday morning Paul said to old Jerry: "I shall be home late tonight, Jerry."

"Why, Paul? Will you be kept at the office?"

"No; I am to attend a party."

Jerry opened his eyes.

"A party! Where, Paul?"

"In Fifty First Street. It is a fancy dress party."

"But how came they to invite you?"

"They employed me on one occasion, and have treated me in a friendly way since."

"I don't understand it, Paul. Is it a—a rich family?"

"Yes, Jerry."

The old man's eyes lighted up hopefully.

"And they are good friends of yours, Paul?" he asked. [120]

"Yes, grand—yes, Jerry."

"Then, Paul, you can do me a great favor. You will, won't you?" pleaded the old man, coaxingly.

"What is it?" inquired Paul, suspiciously.

"Tell them how poor I am, Paul, and ask them if they won't help me. It would be nothing to rich folks to send an old man ten dollars, or twenty, and would do me a sight of good."

"You must be crazy to ask me such a thing," answered Paul, sternly. "Have you no shame, or do you think I have none, to beg money of strangers?"

"But I am so poor, Paul," whined the miser.

"I am tired of hearing of that, Jerry," said the boy, with an expression of disgust on his face. "It was bad enough when I believed you to be really poor, but now that I know you to have plenty of money, and are very likely rich, it makes me sick to hear you tell such falsehoods."

“Is this the way you talk to a poor old man who has brought you up?” whined old Jerry.

Paul was in no wise moved by this appeal. He knew too well the extent of his obligations to the old miser.

“I have always paid my way, Jerry,” he said, coldly. “Even when I was only six years old, I earned all I cost you. If you think I am any expense to you, I am willing to leave you any time.”

“No, no, Paul,” said old Jerry in alarm. “I can’t spare you. I am getting old, and I don’t want to be left alone.”

“Then don’t ask me to do what I am ashamed of, Jerry.”

Paul arrived at the party about twenty minutes after eight. He did not care to be among the first in attendance. He was shown upstairs to the gentlemen’s reception room, and, having adjusted [121] his toilet, went downstairs. Jennie and her mother stood at one end of the drawing room.

Paul made his way towards her, and, following the example of other guests, shook hands, and offered congratulations, for it was Jennie’s birthday.

“I am glad to see you, Paul,” said Jennie, with a smile, and her mother echoed the welcome.

Turning away, Paul met the eyes of Mark Sterling, bent upon him with a satirical look.

“Good evening,” said Paul, politely.

“So you’re on hand!” said Mark, not over courteously.

“As you see,” answered Paul, coolly. “That is a fine costume of yours.”

Mark sustained the character of a young Highland chieftain, his dress being quite costly.

“Yes,” he answered, his vanity gratified, even by a compliment from a telegraph boy. “You’ve got a new suit, haven’t you?”

“Yes.”

“It is a pity you went to such an expense. No one is likely to take much notice of a telegraph boy.”

“O, I shall use it on duty,” answered Paul. “You are very considerate for me.”

“Paul, let me introduce you to Miss Grace De Vere,” said Mrs. Cunningham.

Paul bowed politely to a pretty brunette of fourteen, dressed as a flower girl.

“Shall we promenade?” asked Paul, observing that many of the guests were walking in couples.

“Yes, if you like. I suppose it is very appropriate for a telegraph boy and a flower girl to walk together,” said Grace, laughing. “What a very natural telegraph boy you make! Where did you get the uniform? Did you borrow it of a real telegraph boy?”

“No,” answered Paul, “I had it made expressly for me.” [122]

“I suppose that is better. I hired my suit of a costumer.”

As Paul and Grace were promenading, they met Mark escorting a pale, sallow girl with a long nose, but very expensively dressed as a maid of honor. Mark turned up his nose, but looked rather envious, nevertheless, for Grace De Vere was not only pretty, but of high family. He said something to his companion, and both stared impertinently at Paul.

“Do you know Mark Sterling?” asked Grace.

“Only a little.”

“I don’t like him at all. He is awfully disagreeable. He looks as if he didn’t like you.”

“I don’t think he does. Can you tell me the name of the young lady with him?”

“It is Irene Braddon. Do you admire her?”

“I prefer my present partner,” said Paul.

“Thank you; you are very gallant. Still, it isn’t much of a compliment. Irene belongs to a rich family, but she is disagreeable, and few like her.”

“Is Mark an admirer of hers?”

“He likes to be seen with her because she is of a rich and prominent family. But he likes his cousin, Jennie Cunningham, best. He is jealous of every boy who pays her any attention. But I want to ask you a question. Why have I never met you before at any parties? I am sure I should have remembered you.”

“This is the first party I ever attended.”

“Indeed! How can that be?”

“Because I am really what I represent, a telegraph boy.”

Paul watched the face of his young companion closely, fearing that this revelation would cut him off from her favor.

“You don’t mean to say that you are the telegraph boy that frightened away the burglar?” [123] inquired Grace, eagerly.

“I believe I am.”

“Why, you are quite a hero!” exclaimed Grace, enthusiastically.

“O, no,” answered Paul, modestly. “It didn’t take much courage.”

Grace asked Paul a great many questions, and did not seem at all shocked to learn that she was escorted by a common telegraph boy.

“Come, Grace,” said Jennie, after a while, “we can’t have you two monopolize each other. My cousin, Mark, solicits the honor of escorting you. Paul, if you are a very good boy, you may walk with me.”

“Did you know, Miss Grace,” said Mark, “that you were walking with a real telegraph boy?”

“Yes, he told me so.”

“I am surprised that my Cousin Jennie should have invited him here.”

“I am not at all. I think him the handsomest boy at the party.”

“There is no accounting for taste,” rejoined Mark, very much disgusted at this laudation of a boy he despised.

“He is so agreeable, too,” added Grace, with malicious pleasure at her companion’s discomfiture.

“He has plenty of cheek!” said Mark. “He tries to make himself very conspicuous. It would be better taste to stand quietly in a corner.”

Later in the evening, Paul became more conspicuous, and Mark became still more disgusted with him.

# CHAPTER XXII.

[124]

## THE YOUNG MINSTRELS.

About half past nine Jennie beckoned Paul to come into the back parlor, which was comparatively deserted.

“I am going to ask a favor of you,” she said.

“I shall be glad to do anything you wish,” said Paul, earnestly.

“I am preparing a surprise for the company—something not down in the programme. I ask you to help me because you can sing.”

Paul blushed.

“I don’t call it singing,” he said, modestly.

“I am sure you have a very nice voice, Paul. Now I will tell you what I want. You and I are to dress as Italian street singers—I have a harp on which I can play a little. We will come in as soon as we are ready and surprise the company.”

“Will it be necessary to sing in Italian?” asked Paul, with a smile. “I have forgotten all mine.”

“You know as much as I do. We will sing some of the popular ballads. Here is a list which I have written down. Do you know them?”

Paul looked over the list and selected three which he felt able to sing.

“Very well,” said Jennie, with satisfaction. “You will find your suit ready in your dressing room. I have spoken to one of the boys—Arthur Constable—to go up and assist you. Now, will you be ready in fifteen minutes?”

“Yes,” answered Paul, confidently.

[125]

“I wonder what Jennie and the telegraph boy are talking about so earnestly!” thought Mark, with a scowl, for he had just noticed their conversation. “I never suspected that Jennie had such low tastes.”

An unpleasant frown gathered on Mark’s face, which he made no attempt to conceal. He was getting to dislike Paul more and more.

Next the two whose intimacy had provoked his discontent left the room, and his anger increased.

Presently, however, Mr. Cunningham entered the room and said, with a smile:

“Young people, I have engaged the services of two Italian minstrels, who will try to entertain you for a short time.”

Instantly there was a hush of expectation, for the announcement was understood literally.

The door was thrown open, and Paul and Jennie entered. Paul wore a suit of black velvet, and a hat also of velvet, in which it must be admitted he looked very handsome. Jennie was attired also in a characteristic national costume, and carried in her hand a harp.

As they entered together most of the company agreed that they made a very attractive picture.

They advanced, hand in hand, till they reached a position at the head of the room. Then Jennie struck her harp, and the two began to sing a favorite melody, their voices according remarkably well.

There was a sound of applause at the end of the first song. Paul bowed, and, taking his hat from his head, gravely made the round of the guests. Pennies were dropped by such as had them.

When Paul reached Mark he was tempted to pass him by, for he saw the scornful smile upon his face, but he did not care to make a scene, and held out his cap to him as well as the rest.

Mark dropped in a penny.

[126]

“That’s for the monkey,” he said, in a significant tone. “Keep it yourself.”

“Thank you,” said Paul, with unruffled good humor, for he felt that he could afford to be good natured. “Your liberality is unexpected.”

Mark bit his lips, foolishly taking offense at this good natured retort.

Another song was vociferously called for and given. Then a third was demanded, and the two minstrels retired amid a volley of plaudits.

“That was perfectly charming,” said Grace De Vere, enthusiastically. “What a nice looking boy that Paul Parton is! He looked perfectly lovely in his velvet suit.”

The boy to whom this was addressed was Mark Sterling, and it may well be believed that it was far from pleasing him.

“Are you falling in love with him?” he asked, with a sneer.

“I do believe I am!” answered Grace. “Don’t tell him, though!”

“I am not likely to. The fellow is conceited enough already.”

“Now, Mark, you are too bad. To me he seems remarkably modest.”

“He ought to have more sense than to push himself forward so, being only a telegraph boy.”

“I don’t care what he is; he is very nice and very good looking.”

“I suppose you admire his singing, too?”

“Yes, he has a sweet voice.”

“That’s a matter of opinion.”

“I do believe you’re jealous of him, Mark. You don’t like it because Jennie didn’t ask you to take the part.”

This was really true, for Mark fancied himself a singer, though his voice was thin and shrill. Had he taken Paul’s part the effect would have been ludicrous, but, of course, he had no idea of this. [127]

It so happened that he knew the three songs which had been sung, and he was very much annoyed to have been passed over in what was the pronounced success of the evening, and to see a mere telegraph boy selected instead of him.

“Jealous of a telegraph boy!” repeated Mark, with a scornful inflection. “I am not sunk quite so low as that.”

About eleven o’clock the party broke up. Being a juvenile party, it was not kept up as late as if it had been attended by older persons. Paul took his leave with the rest, feeling that he had enjoyed himself uncommonly well.

“I must thank you for a pleasant evening, Miss Jennie,” he said, as he said adieu to his youthful hostess.

“You did your part towards making it so, Paul.”

“Thank you for the opportunity.”

“Don’t forget to come soon to see us,” said Jennie, giving her hand to Paul.

Paul bowed his thanks, and left the house with three or four others in his company. Among them was Mark Sterling.

“Where do you live?” asked Mark, abruptly.

“Down town,” answered Paul, shortly. He felt reluctant to say that he lived in Ludlow Street, although he conjectured rightly that Mark would have no idea where it was situated.

“I thought, perhaps, you might live on Fifth Avenue.”

“Not at present; that may come later.”

Mark laughed disdainfully.

“When you give a party, I hope you will do us all the honor to send an invitation.”

“Would you accept?” [128]

“Yes, I think I would.”

“I will bear it in mind. Now, let me bid you all good night.”

Mark was disappointed to find that not one of his companions would join in his sarcasms against the telegraph boy. All thought him very agreeable and very handsome, and Mark was at last obliged to give up his attack, and lapse into sullenness.

Paul walked to Sixth Avenue, though that was not the most direct route homewards, and in place of taking a car, walked slowly down the avenue. It was a pleasant night, and he felt broad awake, and by no means fatigued. It seemed to him pleasanter to walk part of the way at least. As he walked he fell into serious thought. He had left an elegant house, crowded with a gay and fashionable company, and he was going—where? To a miserable tenement house, in which he shared a poor and ill furnished room with a squalid and miserly old man, in appearance not above a tramp. Certainly the contrast was a startling one. As he dwelt upon it, Paul felt more and more disgusted with his home and surroundings.

“Why can’t I live in a refined house, among refined people?” he asked himself. “I feel much more at home with them than with old Jerry. Must I always live a beggar?”

Paul’s mental answer was an emphatic “No!” He was young and hopeful. The world was before him. He was poor, but other poor boys had raised themselves from poverty as great, and he felt that there was an equal chance for him.

His reflections were interrupted by the sight of a tall young man, not far in advance, whose unsteady gait showed that he was under the influence of liquor.

# CHAPTER XXIII.

[129]

## THE PICKPOCKET.

Such a sight as this is by no means uncommon in a large city, and of course Paul had witnessed it many times. But for one circumstance, he would have given the young man a passing glance, and gone on. But he observed that the young man was followed. The person following was also a young man, rather flashily attired, and, as Paul thought, of suspicious appearance. It seemed to him clear that he had designs upon the first young man, whose condition was likely to make him an easy prey to an unscrupulous acquaintance.

“Where have I seen that man before?” thought Paul.

He was puzzled for a moment, and then he remembered that he had strayed one day into a court room, and seen him as a prisoner at the bar, charged with picking a pocket.

“That’s what he’s after now,” thought Paul. “I will prevent him if I can.”

The telegraph boy moderated his pace, so as not to attract the attention of the man in the rear, but kept a close watch over him.

Finally the pickpocket came to a sudden resolution, and quickening his pace came up with the man he was following.

“Excuse me, my friend,” he said, smoothly, “but I see you are in need of assistance. Won’t you take my arm? I’ll take you home, if you wish.”

“You’re very good,” said the stranger. “I’ve been drinking more than is good for me, I’m afraid.” [130]

“We all do that sometimes,” said his new acquaintance. “I’ve been there myself. Where are you staying?”

“At the Albemarle Hotel. Am I going the right way? I’ve got turned round, I think.”

“Yes, you are on the right track. I live close by your hotel myself, so I can go along with you just as well as not.”

“Thanks; you are really very kind.”

“O, don’t mention it.”

The other made no objection to the pickpocket passing his arm through his, and the two walked on together.

“He means to rob him,” thought Paul. “What can I do to prevent it?”

He didn’t quite like to make an accusation, though he remembered the thief’s face perfectly, till he had some ground for warning the intended victim. It might be that the pickpocket was merely taking the part of the good Samaritan, though it was by no means probable.

The two men became sociable, and Paul was near enough to hear fragments of the conversation. He gathered that the stranger was from St. Louis—that he was visiting New York on a business errand, representing a firm, of which his father was the head.

The pickpocket, who had been waiting only till he could gain the stranger’s confidence, now felt that it was time to be carrying out his plans. With dexterous fingers he managed to explore the pocket of his companion, and Paul caught sight, quick as he was, of his appropriation of his victim’s wallet.

“I shall have to leave you here,” said he, abruptly, having no further motive for continuing the companionship. “Good night!”

“Good night!” said the stranger. “Sorry to lose your company!” [131]

Paul was excited, as he might well be, for he saw that on him alone depended the frustration of the thief’s plans.

“Stop thief!” he exclaimed, in a loud voice.

The thief looked startled, and turning into Thirty Seventh Street ran towards Fifth Avenue.

Paul followed in close pursuit.

“Drop that wallet, or it will be worse for you!” exclaimed the undaunted boy.

Had the night been dark, the thief would have taken the chances, and retained his booty. But he was sure to attract attention, and might any minute run into the arms of a policeman. The risk was too great.

“There, curse you!” he muttered, throwing down the wallet. “Now stop following me!”

Paul picked up the pocketbook, and ceased the pursuit. He had accomplished all he intended, and was willing to let the thief go free, now that he had restored his plunder.

He retraced his steps to Sixth Avenue, where he found the stranger waiting for him.

“Here is your pocketbook,” he said. “You have had a narrow escape.”

“By Jove! I should think I had,” answered the young man. “How much money do you think there is in that wallet?”

“Is it a large sum?” asked Paul, his curiosity aroused.

“Fifteen hundred dollars—perhaps a little more. You’re a brave boy. But for you I should have lost it.”

“I am very glad to have been of such service,” said Paul. “If the thief only knew what a purse he had lost he would feel like murdering me.”

“What made you suspect him? You must have sharp eyes.” [132]

“I believe I have,” answered Paul, “but I was watching him closely as I walked behind. I knew him to be a pickpocket.”

“How was that?” asked the young man.

“I once saw him in the court room at the Tombs, being tried for theft. I have not seen him since, but I recognized him at once. I saw him join you, and I suspected his motive at once.”

“You saw my condition?”

“Yes, I saw that you were not yourself.”

“I had been making a fool of myself by drinking too much. I hope you don’t drink?”

“No, sir, never.”

“You are wise. Will you walk with me to my hotel?”

“Yes, sir, where are you staying?”

“At the Albemarle. Do you know where it is?”

“O, yes,” answered Paul, smiling. He felt that he would hardly have been fit for a telegraph boy if he had not known the location of a hotel so well known.

“I have been spending the evening with a few friends who live in an apartment house near the park. The punch was remarkably good, and I drank more than was good for me. I suppose you wonder why I didn’t ride home, instead of walking?”

“It would have been safer, at any rate.”

“I had a headache and thought I might walk it off. At any rate, I should feel better for being in the open air. But I found some difficulty in steering straight, as I dare say you noticed.”

“Yes, sir, I observed it.”

“Then this fellow came along. He offered to accompany me home, and I never suspected that he was a thief. I am afraid you will think me rather green.”

“O, no; the man’s appearance might easily deceive you.” [133]

“It did not deceive you.”

“No, for I had seen him before. But will you pardon me for saying that you were imprudent in carrying around so large a sum of money at this late hour?”

“You are quite right. I was a fool, and I am willing to admit it.”

It was not long before Paul and his new friend reached the hotel, which is in the block above the Fifth Avenue.

“Come upstairs with me,” said the young man.

“If you wish it,” answered Paul.

“I do; I have some business with you, but I won’t keep you long.”

Paul followed his new acquaintance into a handsomely furnished chamber on the third floor. He involuntarily thought of the poor tenement house room in which he and old Jerry made their home, and he wondered whether it would ever be his fortune to be as well lodged as the traveler from Missouri.

“Why not?” asked Paul, hopefully.

“Sit down,” said the stranger, pointing to a chair. “I won’t keep you long.”

# CHAPTER XXIV.

[134]

## A ROOM AT THE ALBEMARLE HOTEL.

The stranger was tall and well formed. He had certainly showed moral weakness in yielding to the fascinations of drink, but he looked like a smart man of business.

“Wait a minute,” he said, “and I will talk to you.”

He went to a stationary washtub, and bathed his head freely.

“There,” he said, after he had rubbed his face vigorously with a towel. “I feel fifty per cent better. There is nothing like cold water after all.”

“Inside as well as outside,” added Paul, with a smile.

“That’s where you are right, my boy. Evidently your head is level. You say you are a telegraph boy?”

“Yes sir.”

“How do you like it?”

“Fairly well—for the present.”

“You wouldn’t like to follow it permanently, eh?”

“No, sir; by the time I got to be fifty or sixty, I might like to change to something else.”

“You might be able to retire on a fortune.”

“It would be a very small one, judging from my weekly pay.”

“I think myself, unless you are wedded to the business, you might pass your time more profitably. What do you think you would like?”

[135]

“To enter some business house where I could rise step by step as I deserved it,” answered Paul, with animation.

“You have the right idea. Now let me tell you why I inquire. In the fall my father will establish a branch house here, with myself at the head of it. I don’t mind telling you that if I had lost the money I have with me, it is doubtful whether he would have trusted me so far. Now, thanks to your prompt assistance, I have been spared the natural result of my folly, and my father will never know the risk I have run. So you see that you have rendered me an important service.”

“I am sincerely glad of it, sir.”

“I mean that you shall be, and on your account. If I establish myself here, I shall want a young assistant on whose intelligence and fidelity I can rely. Do you know any such person?”

“I hope you mean me,” said Paul eagerly. “It is just the opening I have been looking for, for a long time.”

“I do mean you. Have you a father or mother?”

“No, sir; unhappily not.”

“Have you no one belonging to you, then?” asked the young man with a look of sympathy.

“No, sir, I can’t say that I have. I live with an old man who is not related to me. It is better than being alone.”

“Doesn’t he rely upon you to contribute to his support?”

“He does, but he need not. He is a miser and has money deposited in the Bowery Savings Bank, and elsewhere, I expect. I think he has enough to carry him through to the end of his life.”

“If he is a miser you probably don’t live very luxuriously.”

“We live in a poor room in an east side tenement house, sir,” answered Paul.

[136]

“You are not contented with that, I take it.”

“No, sir; when I compare it with the place where I spent this evening, it makes me mortified and ashamed.”

“You were at a party, you said?”

“Yes, sir, in a fine brown stone mansion up town.”

“Isn’t it a little unusual for a telegraph boy living in a tenement house to be invited to a fashionable party?”

“Yes, sir, but these are very kind friends of mine, who overlook my poor social position, and notice me as much as if I lived in a house as good as their own.”

“I think they must be uncommon people, but I approve them for all that. ‘A man’s a man for a’ that,’ as Robert Burns says in his poem. That is, it makes no difference whether he is rich or poor, whether he lives in a palace or a hovel, if there is good stuff in him, he deserves honor.”

“I would like to see the whole poem,” said Paul. “I think Burns is right.”

“So do I, but I must not forget that it is late, and I am keeping you from your bed. I have not told you my name yet.”

“No, sir.”

“It is Eliot Wade. The firm name is William O. Wade & Co., of St Louis. We have a wholesale clothing house, and propose to establish a similar one in New York. Now, when this arrangement is effected, how can I communicate with you?”

“If you will write to Paul Parton, A. D. T., No. —— Broadway, I shall receive the letter. If I leave the telegraph service before, I will tell them where to send any letter which is received.”

“And in case both fail, you will be sure to learn our place from the advertising columns of the newspapers. In that case, call and inquire for me.”

“Thank you, sir. I will be sure to do so.”

“You will be likely to find it to your advantage.” [137]

Paul, concluding that there was nothing more to be said, rose to go.

“Good night, Mr. Wade,” he said. “I consider myself lucky in having met you.”

“I can return the compliment. But I have not yet got through with you.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Paul, resuming his seat.

“You don’t suppose I would send you away without an immediate acknowledgment of the service you have done me tonight?”

“The future employment which you promised me I consider a very valuable acknowledgment.”

“That will, I hope, prove so, but there is nothing like a bird in the hand.”

As Eliot Wade spoke, he produced the wallet which had been saved to him by the intrepidity and presence of mind of Paul, and drew therefrom a bank note, which he tendered to Number 91.

“Accept that with my thanks added,” he said.

Paul looked at the bill and his face expressed the amazement he felt.

*It was a hundred dollar bill!*

“You don’t mean to give me so much as this, Mr. Wade,” he ejaculated.

“Why not?” asked the young man, with a smile.

“It is a good deal too much.”

“On the other hand, it is about fifty dollars too little. Ten per cent on the sum saved would be one hundred and fifty dollars, and it is worth that. However, I will reserve that for a future occasion. Consider me fifty dollars in your debt.”

“You are very liberal,” said Paul earnestly, “and I heartily thank you. You can imagine that a hundred dollars is a large sum to a poor telegraph boy.”

“Now,” said the young man, smiling, “let me give you a piece of advice, suggested by my own experience. Don’t drop into any drinking saloon on your way home, or you may fall into the hands [138] of a sharper, as I did.”

“I will remember your caution, sir,” said Paul, smiling.

“It may be safer for you to ride home, as the hour is late.”

“I will do so, sir. Good night and thank you.”

“It seems to me that you are born under a lucky star, No. 91,” said Paul to himself. “In a single evening I have received a sum of money equal to half a year’s wages. If old Jerry only knew it, I should not dare to fall asleep in the same room with him.”

He took the green car whose terminus was the Grand Street Ferry, and in less than half an hour he reached the door of his humble lodging.

He went upstairs and entered the bed chamber—which contrasted so strongly with the handsomely furnished hotel room which he had just left. He expected to find old Jerry fast asleep, but he was mistaken. The old man was lying on his poor bed in a cramped position, his eyes open, moaning piteously.

“What is the matter, Jerry?” he asked, approaching the bed.

“I am sick, Paul,” said the old man. “I—I am feeling very miserable! Do you think I am going to die?”

# CHAPTER XXV.

[139]

## OLD JERRY'S WEALTH.

Old Jerry certainly did look weak and miserable. His face seemed thinner and paler than usual; his thin gray hair looked quite disordered, and there were dark rings around his eyes.

"You look sick," answered Paul, pityingly.

"Do you think I am going to die?" asked the old man, tremulously.

"Oh, no, not yet awhile," answered Paul, in a cheering voice. "But you must have a doctor."

"No, no; I can't afford it," said Jerry, in alarm. "Doctors charge so much. They—they seem to think a man is made of money."

"Would you rather die," Paul exclaimed, impatiently, "than pay for a doctor's attendance? What good will your money do you if you die?"

"You—you might ask the druggist for some medicine to help me. That would be much cheaper."

"That won't do you; you need a doctor. If you don't have one, you may die before morning."

Jerry was thoroughly frightened now. He made no further resistance, and Paul summoned a doctor having an office on Grand Street.

When he saw Jerry, and felt his pulse, he looked grave.

"I think he is going to have a low fever," he said.

"Is it catching?" asked Mrs. Hogan, nervously, for Paul had waked her up, and asked her to come in.

The doctor smiled. [140]

"O, no," he said. "Don't be alarmed. Pardon me for asking," he said, turning to Paul, "but does your grandfather—I suppose he is your grandfather—eat regularly and sufficiently?"

"I am afraid not, sir."

"He has lowered his system, I should judge, by lack of nourishing food, and at present his vitality is very low."

"I can easily believe it, doctor," said Paul. "I will speak to you on the subject later. Do you think he is going to have a fever?"

"Yes, a low fever, as I said—the revenge of outraged nature for a violation of her rules."

"Am I going to die?" asked Jerry, his parchment skin assuming a greenish hue. "I—I want to live; I am not ready to die."

"That depends on whether you follow my rules."

"I will if—if you don't make me spend too much money; I am poor—miserably poor."

"I will see that your rules are followed, doctor," said Paul, finding it hard to hide the disgust he felt at this characteristic manifestation of the old man's miserly disposition.

"I see you are a sensible boy," said the doctor, approvingly. "Perhaps I had better speak to you privately."

"Very well, doctor. As we have no other room, will you step into the entry?"

The doctor followed Paul out.

"Before you give your instructions," said the telegraph boy, "I want to say that Jerry—he is not my grandfather—is a miser, and has deliberately deprived himself of the necessaries of life."

"Has he money?"

"He has enough, I am sure, to pay what is needful, but it will be hard to get him to spend it."

"He must have nourishing food, and stimulating medicines, or he cannot recover. His life is at stake." [141]

"Will he need a nurse?"

"I suppose you can't attend to him?"

"No; I prefer to attend to my regular business, and hire some one."

"Then do so, for the old man will require some weeks, at least, to recover from the low point to which he has brought himself."

"I think I can get Mrs. Hogan to take care of him. You may give her your directions."

First, however, Paul made the proposal to the good woman. "I'll see that you are paid," he said. "If I can't get the money out of Jerry, I will pay it myself."

"But, Paul, dear, I wouldn't want to take the little you have. You've no more than enough for yourself."

"I will show you something, Mrs. Hogan, if you won't let Jerry know."

"Shure I won't."

Paul produced the hundred dollar bill, and filled the soul of Mrs. Hogan with amazement.

“Where did you get it?” she asked, in wonder.

“It was given me by a gentleman whom I saved from being robbed of a good deal more,” he answered. “You see, Mrs. Hogan, I am not so poor as you suppose. I will pay you seven dollars a week, if that will satisfy you, for your care of Jerry, but I will try to get him to repay me the money, for his life depends on what we are able to do for him.”

The doctor, upon Mrs. Hogan’s acceptance of the office of nurse, gave her instructions. To begin with, though late, he directed that some tea and oatmeal should be prepared and administered to his patient to reinforce his failing strength.

It was nearly one o’clock when Paul threw himself down on the lounge with his clothes on, and [142] fell into a sound sleep.

Old Jerry did not immediately improve. His strength was so far reduced that it required time to rebuild his enfeebled constitution. Mrs. Hogan proved a good nurse. Indeed, in her younger days she had acted in that capacity, and was not ignorant of the duties.

When Paul came home the next evening, he found the nurse waiting to speak to him.

“The doctor says Jerry must be undressed, and not lay with his clothes on,” she said, “but old Jerry is so obstinate that he won’t agree to it.”

“Jerry, you will feel a great deal better to take off your clothes,” said Paul, in a tone of expostulation.

“No, no!” objected Jerry, in a terrified tone.

“And why not?” asked Mrs. Hogan. “Shure, the doctor knows what’s best for you.”

But Jerry obstinately refused.

“It’s a quare frake the old man has, not to be undressed like a good Christian,” observed Mrs. Hogan.

“I think I know his objection,” said Paul. “We won’t trouble him just now.”

The next day at noon Paul called at the house, having a few minutes to spare. Mrs. Hogan met him with a smile of triumph.

“We’ve took off his clothes,” she said, “and I’ve put a night gown on him, and he’s lying as peaceful as can be.”

“Didn’t he refuse?” asked Paul, in surprise.

“No, and a good reason why. He was out of his head, and so I asked Mr. McQuade, downstairs, to come up and help me. And niver a word the old man spoke, but seemed dazed like.”

“Where are his clothes?” inquired Paul, eagerly.

“Shure there they are!” said the nurse, pointing to a pile of wretched garments on a chair near [143] the bedside.

“I’ll stay here ten minutes, Mrs. Hogan,” said Paul, “and give you a chance to go to your room.”

“Thank you, Paul. I’ll go and make a bit of tay for the old man.”

Paul locked the door after her, and eagerly took up the shabby old suit which had been worn for years by old Jerry. He instituted a careful search, and found himself richly rewarded. In one pocket he found a bank book on the Bowery Savings Bank. His eyes opened with amazement when he found nearly three thousand dollars set down to the old man’s credit. There was another book, marked the Union Dime Savings Bank, a bank in the upper part of the city. On this book deposits were entered to the amount of eight hundred and ninety dollars. Feeling something stiff behind the lining of the coat, Paul hastily ripped it open, and found a certificate of one hundred shares of Erie, then selling at forty eight dollars per share. This appeared to be all, except a few dollars in money.

“It is my duty to take care of them,” reflected Paul. “Mrs. Hogan is no doubt honest, but others might enter the chamber who would not scruple to rob the old man. I will take care of them, and deposit them in a safe place.”

He made a hasty calculation, and found that the two savings bank books contained deposits amounting to three thousand eight hundred dollars. The value of the Erie stock he afterwards ascertained to be four thousand eight hundred, making in all eight thousand six hundred dollars.

“How strange that a man with so much money should be willing to live so miserably!” he thought. “Probably he has shortened his life by this means.”

At this point Mrs. Hogan reentered the room.

Paul had replaced the clothes on the chair, and she did not observe that they had been touched. [144]

“Is there anything you want, Mrs. Hogan?” asked Paul. “If so, I can leave some money with you.”

“I might, maybe, need to send Mike out to the druggist.”

“Here’s a dollar, then.”

“Shure, Paul, you’re very kind to the old craythur, though he’s no kin to you.”

“Oh, I expect to be paid back some time.”

“I’m sure you will. We’ll try to keep life in the craythur, though it’s little he enjoys it.”

“Perhaps he enjoys it as much in his way as you or I.”

“Shure it’s little I’d enjoy if I lived like him.”

“I agree with you, Mrs. Hogan. But I must be going.”

About three o’clock there was a knock at Mrs. Hogan’s door. A woman of thirty presented herself.

“Shure, and it’s I that am glad to see you, Mrs. Barclay,” said the hospitable widow. “I haven’t set eyes on you since you went over to live in Jersey City.”

“No, I don’t often get over here. Today I had to bring clothes to a customer, and thought I’d come and see you.”

The visitor was Ellen Barclay, whom a strange chance—or was it Providence?—had brought unwittingly to the poor home of her husband’s father.

# CHAPTER XXVI.

[145]

## ELLEN BARCLAY'S DISCOVERY.

Mrs. Barclay had only experienced a feeling of relief when her husband failed to return to her. She had grown accustomed to taking care of herself and the children without him, and his presence seemed likely only to impose upon her an additional burden. Though she earned her living in a humble way, she was fairly educated, and could sew neatly, but a brief trial with the needle satisfied her that it would be quite impossible to obtain the comforts of life for three persons in that way. So she had mastered her pride, and entered the lists as a laundress.

"And how are the children, Mrs. Barclay?" asked Mrs. Hogan.

"They are both well, thank God."

"And do you never hear anything of their father?"

Mrs. Barclay's face clouded.

"Yes," she answered, "he came home a few days since, but only stayed one day."

"Didn't he bring you any money then?"

"No; he borrowed some from me."

"It's a shame, so it is, in a great, strapping man like him to leave you to work for the poor children."

Mrs. Hogan had never seen Mr. Barclay, or she would have recognized him in the man whom she helped drive away from his father's room, and was utterly ignorant of the relationship between him and the old man whom she was nursing.

"I don't know but it's wrong," said Ellen, "but I believe I should be happy if I thought he would [146] never come again. He has only brought me trouble, and I dread his influence upon the children; we are better off without him. But how are you getting along yourself, Mrs. Hogan?"

"I've no cause to complain," answered the Irish widow. "I'm well, and Mike and I pick up a living. Just now I'm taking care of a sick man in the room across the entry. It's an ould man—a kind of miser he is, I surmise—and his name is the same as your own, Mrs. Barclay."

The name of Barclay is not an uncommon one, but this statement seemed to produce a strong impression on Mrs. Hogan's visitor.

"An old man named Barclay?" she repeated.

"Yes."

"How old, should you think?"

"I don't know, but he's all dried up, and wrinkled. He may be siventy."

"May I see him?" asked the visitor, eagerly.

"Shure you may go in with me when I give him his medicine."

Ellen Barclay followed Mrs. Hogan into the opposite room, and looked with strange interest at the wan, emaciated old man stretched out on the bed.

"I've brought your medicine for you, Jerry," said Mrs. Hogan, soothingly.

"Jerry!" exclaimed the younger woman. "Is his name Jerry?"

"Shure it is; and what thin?"

"My husband's father was named Jeremiah. This may be he."

"Have you niver seen him?" asked Mrs. Hogan, in surprise.

"Never; I did not know he was living till my husband's recent visit. Then he spoke of his father's [147] being a miser, and his expecting to get some money from him."

"Well, well; if I ever heard the like! As like as not old Jerry is your father in law. I'll soon see."

"Jerry, do you want to see your own son?" she asked, bending over, and addressing her patient.

An expression of alarm overspread the old man's face.

"Don't let him come in! Keep him away!" he exclaimed.

"Are you afraid of your own son, thin?" asked the nurse.

"He is a bad man; he tried to rob me," said the old man, looking about him fearfully.

"I do believe it's that man I threw the bilin' water on!" exclaimed Mrs. Hogan, in surprise. "What's your husband's appearance, Mrs. Barclay?"

"He is tall and thick set, and his hair is inclined to be red."

"Has he a scar on his right cheek?"

"Yes."

"That's the same man I drove away last week, wid the bilin' water. He was trying to hurt old Jerry, wasn't he, Jerry?"

"Yes, yes," muttered the old man. "He's a bad man, and he wanted to take away all my money,

and I’m so poor.”

“Is he so poor?” asked Mrs. Barclay.

“No, it’s only his fancy. He’s what you call a miser; that’s what Paul says.”

“Where is Paul? Paul is a good boy!” murmured Jerry, half unconscious, but his attention arrested by the familiar name.

“Yes, he is a good boy,” repeated Mrs. Hogan. “It’s he that engaged me to take care of Jerry, when he was took sick, and he tould me he’d see that I was paid.”

“How long has this boy been with him? I remember now Mr. Barclay mentioned a telegraph boy. He didn’t seem to like him. I should like to see the boy; perhaps he could tell me something of the old man, and help me to decide whether he is really my husband’s father. On what day did James call here?” [148]

Mrs. Hogan told her.

“It was the day after he left me. You say he got no money?”

“No; but he would if I hadn’t come in.”

“It is strange he has not been here since.”

“No, it isn’t, Mrs. Barclay; he was took in by a policeman, and I expect he’s on the Island.”

Ellen Barclay breathed a sigh of relief. Had her husband been the man he should have been, such news would have brought sorrow and distress. Now she regarded it as an augury of peace. While he was in confinement he would not be able to molest her.

“When can I see this boy, Paul?” she asked.

“Paul is generally at home some part of the evening, though he’s liable to come in at odd times.”

“I will try to come over tomorrow evening, if you think he will be at home.”

“It would be a good thing for you if the ould man has money, as Paul thinks,” said Mrs. Hogan, in a low voice.

“Not if my husband were free,” said Ellen Barclay.

“Thrue for you! He came near murderin’ the ould man. But there’s a dale of virtue in hot water,” added Mrs. Hogan, with a laugh. “He made a mistake when he tackled Bridget Hogan, I can tell him that, now.”

“I shall have to go now, Mrs. Hogan. I left the children alone.”

“Not without a cup of tay. I’m just goin’ to make some for the ould man, and you’re welcome to a cup.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Hogan. I know of old that your tea is good.” [149]

“It is that same, if I say so myself.”

“One thing I can’t understand,” said Ellen Barclay, thoughtfully. “You say the telegraph boy pays you for taking care of this old man?”

“Yes, he does.”

“But where does he get the money? Telegraph boys are not usually paid a big salary.”

“That’s thrue; but Paul is such a favorite he gets many presents. He’s an honest boy, and it’s my hope my boy Mike will grow up just loike him.”

“I will see him for myself tomorrow evening. If Jerry, as you call him, is really my father in law, I ought to know it. He seems a very different man from my husband. I can’t see any resemblance between them.”

“That’s not strange, neither. Pat Hogan’s father was a little, dried up shrimp of a man like ould Jerry here, and Pat was five tin, or tin feet five, in his stockings I disremember which.”

“I think it must be five feet ten,” said Ellen Barclay, with a smile.

“No doubt you’re right, ma’am. But just come round tomorrow evenin’ and see Paul, and then, maybe, you’ll find out all you want to know.”

# CHAPTER XXVII. [150]

## JERRY DISCOVERS HIS LOSS.

It was not until late in the afternoon that Jerry regained sufficient command of his faculties to observe that his clothes had been removed.

He uttered a cry of alarm which brought Mrs. Hogan into the room.

She found the old man struggling to rise in bed, but without success, so great was his weakness.

“Don’t try to get up, Jerry!” she said, soothingly. “Lie still, there’s a good man!”

“Bring me my clothes!” gasped Jerry.

“And what for do you want your clothes?” asked Mrs. Hogan, supposing that he wished to dress. “Shure the doctor said you must have them taken off. It would be better for you.”

“Bring them to me—quick!” gasped the old man once more.

“Shure, and what will you do with them?”

“Never mind, woman! Bring them to me, or I’ll have you arrested for robbing me.”

“O, that’s it, is it?” retorted the nurse, bridling. “If I couldn’t find anything to stale better’n them, I’d remain honest to the end of my life.”

“If you won’t bring them here, I’ll get up myself.”

“Take the clothes, thin,” said Mrs. Hogan, lifting them gingerly, as though afraid of contamination. “Shure, I wouldn’t give two cents for the lot of ’em.”

She little knew why Jerry valued them, and what a quantity of wealth had been concealed in the [151] soiled garments.

With trembling fingers, and features working with agitation, Jerry took the clothes, and began to feel for his treasures. Alas for the old man! His worst fears were realized. The bank books and certificate of stock had been removed. Not a trace of them was to be found. The poor man, for he was to be pitied, uttered a sharp cry of anguish. The clothes dropped from his nerveless hands, and he fell back on the bed as if stricken with a mortal wound.

“Help! Help! Police!” he ejaculated. “I’ve been robbed.”

“Robbed is it?” inquired Mrs. Hogan, puzzled. “And of what have you been robbed, ould man?”

“There were two savings bank books in the pockets. You’ve taken them!”

“Well, well, if I ever heard the loike!” exclaimed Mrs. Hogan, indignantly. “So you call me a thafe, do you?”

“Give them back to me!” said the old man, imploringly. “I—I am so poor. It will kill me if I lose my money.”

“Two savings bank books, indade!” said Mrs. Hogan. “It’s my belafe you’re an ould humbug, you that have always called yourself so poor. And how much money was there in them?” she asked.

“I—I—no matter. Give me the books, or I’ll send for the police.”

“Go and welcome, this minute, if you please. You ought to know better than to call an honest woman a thafe.”

“Somebody has taken the books,” wailed Jerry.

“Very likely Paul’s taken care of them for you. He was here alone with the clothes.”

“Where is Paul?” demanded Jerry, with peevish eagerness.

“He’s at his work, but I’m expecting him back every minute. If he has taken the books, they are [152] all right. Paul’s an honest boy, and a fine boy.”

“Do you think he would rob me, Mrs. Hogan?” asked Jerry, piteously.

“It’s a shame to be askin’ such a question,” said Mrs. Hogan. “Shure you know Paul wouldn’t demane himself by such an act. But here he is to answer for himself.”

She heard Paul’s step on the stairs, as he came up whistling. Directly afterwards he entered the room.

“What’s the matter?” he asked, looking from one to the other.

“The ould man’s in a great taking about bein’ robbed, Paul,” answered Mrs. Hogan. “He says some savings bank books have been taken from his clothes.”

“Where are they, Paul?” wailed the old man.

“They are safe, Jerry. I took them from your pockets, and the railroad shares, too, and have left them with a Safe Deposit Company, for safe keeping.”

“Are you sure they are safe, Paul?”

“Yes, much safer than they would be here. Of course Mrs. Hogan is honest, but other persons might come into the room.”

“Bring them back to me, Paul. I want to see them.”

“I can if you insist upon it, Jerry. But you are too sick to look after them. Besides, suppose your son should come in some day. He could rob you easily, and you would never see your property again. Shall I show you the receipt for them?”

“Yes.”

Paul drew from his pocket the receipt given him by the Safe Deposit Company, and displayed it to the old man.

“Let me keep this?” said Jerry.

“Yes, if you like.” [153]

This seemed to satisfy him, and he clutched the paper with a deep sigh of relief.

“Shure, and you’ve calmed him down, Paul,” said Mrs. Hogan. “Was it really true about the books?”

“It was really true, Mrs. Hogan. He has a good deal of money, though he doesn’t look it.”

“Thin it’s a fool he is to live as he does, whin he might live like a gintleman.”

“He will never live differently. When he dies it will go to his son, who will get through with it in short order.”

Then Mrs. Hogan told Paul about the visit of Ellen Barclay, and her discovering a relation in old Jerry.

“I wish she might have some of the money. Shure, she nades it with her young children.”

“I would much rather she would have it than his son, who is a ruffian and a burglar.”

“And you’ll help her to it, if you can, Paul?”

“Yes, I will. I don’t want Jerry’s money myself. I am young, and my prospects are good. All I want is that it should go into the right hands.”

# CHAPTER XXVIII.

[154]

## JERRY FINDS A NEW RELATION.

Ellen Barclay came over the next evening according to appointment, and had an interview with Paul. She had at first been disposed to look upon him with suspicion, as likely to divert Jerry's money from his legal heirs, but the interview dispelled all such ideas. The telegraph boy was so frank and free spoken, and showed such an interest in helping her, that she was strongly impressed in his favor. He even told her the particulars of his first encounter with her husband, and in what manner he had defeated his plan of gaining possession of Mr. Cunningham's money.

"Yes," said Ellen, bitterly, "he is a husband to be proud of."

"Has he always been as bad?" asked Paul.

"Yes; I had not been married to him a month before I found out that I was wedded to a criminal. He treated me brutally, and I only breathed freely when he was away from home. Within a year from the wedding day, he was condemned to a year's imprisonment, and at least half the time since he has been in confinement."

"Leaving you to support yourself, I suppose?"

"Yes, I have had to support myself and the children. Even when he was a free man, he did little or nothing for the family."

"How did you support yourself?" asked Paul.

[155]

"At first I undertook to maintain myself by the needle, but the miserable pittance I received showed me that I must try some other means of support. On inquiry I found that nothing paid as well as fine laundry work for ladies. It was a trial to my pride, for I was well brought up and educated, to take in washing for a living, but I would rather do that than see my children suffer. So I stifled my pride and became a laundress. I was fortunate in securing customers, and I have wanted for nothing, neither have my children—nothing at least that was necessary to comfort. But when my husband came home lately, and proposed to put upon me the additional burden of his support, I became discouraged."

"I hope better days are in store for you," said Paul.

"Not while my husband lives, and can find me out," said Ellen Barclay, sadly.

"Do you wish me to introduce you to your husband's father?"

"Do you think it will be best?"

"We had better try the experiment at any rate. He may die, and if he does his money ought to go to you."

"It would be a great relief to me if my children would be provided for."

"Follow me, then."

Following Paul, Ellen Barclay went into the chamber occupied by old Jerry.

The old man looked up, noticing Paul only.

"Do you think I will get well, Paul?" he asked.

"Yes, Jerry, if you receive proper care, and have nourishing food."

"But—I am so poor, Paul."

"That is a mistake, Jerry, as you and I know."

"Don't let any one know of the few dollars I have, Paul."

[156]

"I won't let your son know; he is the only one of whom you need be afraid. Did you know he was married, and had two children?"

"I—I think he said something of it."

"Would you like to see his wife?"

"I—I don't know," answered the old man, in an uncertain voice.

"This lady is your son's wife," said Paul, beckoning Ellen to come forward.

The old man regarded her with an uneasy look. "I hope you are not like James," he said; "he is a bold, bad man!"

"No one knows that better than I, Mr. Barclay. It was a sad day when I married him."

"You have found him out, too?"

"Yes, to my sorrow."

"You won't try to get my money?" asked Jerry, anxiously.

"No, but I should like to bring my children here to see their grandfather."

"Are they—like him?"

"No, thank Heaven!"

"Then you may bring them."

“I will. Can I do anything for you?”

“No, except to keep James away.”

“You have made a good impression on him,” said Paul, when they had left the room together.

“Thanks to you,” said Ellen, earnestly. “You are a good boy, and an unselfish one. Hereafter I shall trust you fully.”

# CHAPTER XXIX.

## A NEW COMMISSION.

[157]

“If Number 91 is unemployed, send him to No. 75, Windsor Hotel, at eleven o’clock.”

This message came to the telegraph office at which Paul was enrolled.

The superintendent called him to the desk.

“Here is a call for you, Number 91,” he said. “It comes from a lady, Mrs. Louisa Holbrook. Do you know her?”

“No, sir.”

“Are you familiar with the name?”

“No, sir; I never heard it before.”

“She has evidently heard of you. It is now ten o’clock. At half past ten you may start for the Windsor Hotel. If you arrive there before eleven, you may wait till the hour, and then report at the room indicated.”

“Yes, sir.”

Paul arrived at the Windsor Hotel at ten minutes before the hour. This magnificent hostelry is situated on Fifth Avenue, and occupies the entire block between Forty Sixth and Forty Seventh Streets. It is built of brick, and has an air of quiet elegance which makes it a favorite with ladies and others who like to be spared the noise and bustle which attend other prominent hotels in the city. On the corner just above stands the luxurious home of Jay Gould, the railroad king. A few blocks above is the great Catholic Cathedral, destined one day to rank among the famous [158] churches of the world. Still further up, on the opposite side, are the stately houses occupied by the Vanderbilt family. These things, however, did not occur to Paul, for he was too familiar with the leading buildings on the avenue to give them a special thought, further than to reflect, “The men who occupy these fine houses were once poor boys—many of them. I wonder whether it will ever be my fortune to live as handsomely!”

It was only a thought, not seriously entertained. Paul wanted to rise, but an active, healthy boy seldom thinks of luxury, or craves it. That comes later, after he has attained manhood.

Paul entered the hotel, and, going up to the office, expressed a wish to see Mrs. Louisa Holbrook.

“Were you sent for?” asked the clerk.

“Yes, sir.”

“Then you may go up at once. Here”—to a bell boy—“show this boy up to No. 75, Mrs. Holbrook’s room.”

Though the room was only on the second floor, Paul followed the bell boy into the elevator. At the second landing he got out, and followed the hotel attendant to the door of a room fronting on the avenue. The bell boy knocked, and a voice said, “Come in!”

“It is a telegraph boy, ma’am,” said the servant.

“He may come in, and you can go.”

Paul entered the room—a large and handsome one—and found himself in presence of a lady not much over thirty years of age, with a pleasant face and manner.

“You are Number 91?” she asked.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“I suppose you are surprised that I should have sent specially for you,” the lady said, with a smile.

“I wondered how you came to hear of me,” said Paul. [159]

“That is easily explained. I am a cousin of Mr. Cunningham.”

Paul’s face brightened. It was pleasant to serve any one connected with a family from which he had received so much kindness.

“That explains it,” he said; “all the family have treated me very kindly.”

“I assure you that you stand very high in their estimation,” said Mrs. Holbrook, smiling once more. “My young cousin Jennie was here yesterday, and on learning the nature of my business urged me to send for you.”

“I am very much obliged to Miss Jennie,” said Paul with genuine pleasure, for though too young to be in love, he liked Jennie Cunningham better than any girl he had ever seen.

“It is time I explained the errand on which I propose to employ you,” said Mrs. Holbrook. “You must know, then, that I have an old aunt living at the village of Rockville, in Connecticut. She is advanced in years, and possessed of large wealth. She has a comfortable home, and prefers to keep house rather than live with any of her relatives. She does not live alone, however. She employs a housekeeper, a Mrs. Mercer, whose son, a young man of twenty five, also finds employment on the place. This woman, I have reason to think, is an artful person, who, knowing my aunt to be wealthy, has ingratiated herself with her, and is evidently scheming for her

property, or at any rate a handsome share of it. If it were any person who had a rightful claim, I think I may say for myself and my cousins that we would not interfere in the matter, as we are all moderately rich. But we decidedly object to our aunt's falling into the hands of an artful adventurer like this housekeeper. You are wondering, no doubt, how all this concerns you. I will [160] come to that. Mrs. Cunningham tells me you are a sharp, shrewd boy, and I propose to send you down as a confidential messenger, to look about you, judge of the progress the housekeeper has made in her designs, and, if you see anything wrong, apprise us, or, if there is any chance, open my aunt's eyes to the real character of the persons she has trusted."

Paul listened to Mrs. Holbrook's statement with attention. Some difficulties, however, presented themselves to his mind.

"Unless I am in the house," he said, "I shall find it difficult to carry out your instructions."

"You will be in the house. I shall give you a letter to my aunt, saying that you are a boy in whom I am interested, and that I am anxious to have you pass a few weeks in the country. Can you drive a horse?"

"There is nothing I like better," answered Paul, promptly.

"Can you take care of a horse?"

"Yes, indeed."

"How did you acquire this knowledge in the city?"

"Not far from where I live is a stable, kept by a man whom I know well; I have been in there a good deal, and helped him when he needed it. Sometimes I would drive out for him."

Mrs. Holbrook nodded approvingly. "I am glad to hear it," she said. "My aunt is fond of riding, and has a horse and carriage. She can make you useful in that way, and also as her secretary if she needs any one to write for her, or read to her. I suppose you are equal to such duties?"

"Yes, ma'am. I am not to go as a telegraph boy, I presume?"

"No; have you another suit?" [161]

"Yes, but I am afraid it is not good enough."

"Then I will fit you out. I may as well write a letter first to my aunt, and then I will see about proper clothes for you. I think I will go to Brokaw Brothers. Can you go with me at once?"

Paul answered in the affirmative.

"What is your name?"

"Paul Parton."

"A very good name. That will do quite nicely."

Mrs. Holbrook sat down at the desk, and wrote the following letter:

> "My Dear Aunt:
>
> "I am taking a liberty in sending you a boy in whom I am interested, with the request that you will give him a home for a few weeks, if he should be contented. I know you have a large house and plenty of room. I think a young companion will help enliven the house. Paul Parton (that is his name) will be happy to be of service to you in any way. He understands horses, and will drive you out any time, harness and unharness, read to you or write for you, should you require it. I ask you to receive him as a guest, for my sake, but to make him useful.
>
> "I hope, my dear aunt, you are in comfortable health, and in a condition to enjoy life, notwithstanding your advanced years.
>
> "Your affectionate niece,
> "Louisa Holbrook."

"There," said Mrs. Holbrook, after reading the letter to Paul, "I think this will secure you an entrance into my aunt's house, and should it be read by the housekeeper, as is likely to be the case, it will tell her nothing. Now we will go out and see about getting you a supply of clothes."

# CHAPTER XXX.

[162]

## PAUL'S RECEPTION AT ROCKVILLE.

Paul found himself unable to start for Rockville in the afternoon. He was obliged to make arrangements at home for an indefinite absence, and procure from the savings bank a supply of money for current expenses, which he left in the hands of Mrs. Hogan. His outfit was provided by Mrs. Holbrook, who made it as ample as if Paul were the son of a well to do family, instead of a telegraph boy, dependent upon his own exertions for a scanty living in a shabby tenement house.

When his new patroness parted from him, she put a pocketbook into his hands.

"This is not intended for remuneration," she said, "for I shall pay the telegraph company their usual charges. But I wish you to have money to use, as you may require it."

"Thank you," said Paul. "You are very kind."

"No, I am only considerate and just."

"Have you any special directions to give, Mrs. Holbrook?"

"None beyond what I have already given. I must trust greatly to your own good judgment and discretion. I am sure I can do so with confidence, after the good report Mr. Cunningham has made of you."

"Thank you; I will try to deserve your confidence."

"You may write to me from time to time, when you have anything to communicate."

Paul promised to do so, and at nine o'clock took a train at the Grand Central Depot for Rockville. [163]

Fairly seated in the cars, he opened the pocketbook given him by Mrs. Holbrook.

It contained three five dollar bills, and five dollars more in small notes.

"Mrs. Holbrook is very liberal," he reflected, complacently. "It will be a pleasure to be in her service. I am fortunate in finding such good friends."

Paul was fortunate, but his good fortune was deserved. He always tried to do his duty, was always courteous and obliging, and not afraid to work. Such boys generally find friends. If any of my readers think they are badly treated by their employers, and are poorly provided with friends, let them consider whether they have taken pains to deserve them.

Paul had never traveled, and two hours' ride on the cars from New York to Rockville, on a pleasant, sunny morning, interested him very much.

He knew very little of the country, having spent most of his time in the lower part of the city. He began to think the world was more beautiful than he imagined.

Finally, the cars came to a stop; the conductor called out "Rockville!" and Paul, with curious anticipation, stepped from the cars upon the platform.

There was the usual crowd around the depot. On the platform stood a man with a whip in his hand, evidently a driver.

"Carriage for the hotel, or any part of the village!" he called out.

Paul stepped up to him and inquired: "Can you tell me how far from here Mrs. Granville lives?"

"The widder Granville?" queried the driver.

"I suppose so. She is an old lady."

"Just so. Well, she lives about a mile away, on the Plainfield Road." [164]

"Can you take me there?"

"Well, as you ain't over and above hefty, I guess the horses can manage it," added the driver, humorously. "Just hop on. We'll be starting directly."

Paul got on the front seat with the driver, feeling disposed to a social chat with that personage. There was but one other passenger, a lady, who was bound for the hotel.

"Are you going to visit the widder?" asked the knight of the whip.

"I am expecting to stay at her house a little while."

"I suppose you know her?"

"No, I have never seen her. I bring a letter from her niece in New York, Mrs. Louisa Holbrook."

"I've heard tell of her. She was down here a week last summer. I guess she and the housekeeper couldn't hitch hosses."

"Mrs. Mercer is the housekeeper, I believe," said Paul.

"Folks call her the housekeeper. I call her the boss," said the driver. "She's got the old lady under her thumb, if all accounts are true."

"Is she agreeable?"

Amos, the driver, emitted a short laugh. "Wait till you see her," he said, significantly.

"Do you think Mrs. Granville stands in dread of her?" asked Paul, rather anxiously.

He was beginning to think his task might be a hard one.

"No; the old lady is easy goin', that is all. If she ever got roused she'd turn out to have a will of her own, or I'm greatly mistaken. Bless your soul, Mrs. Mercer wouldn't dare to go too far, for she wants the old lady to leave her a good slice of her property. But she gets round her in an [165] underhand way. For instance, if her son wants to go off anywhere, and it isn't convenient for him to drive the old lady out, Mrs. Mercer persuades her that she isn't looking well, or that the wind is cold and raw, and she'd better stay at home. I shouldn't be surprised if she'd get the old lady to make a will in her favor."

"I wonder what sort of a reception the housekeeper will give me," said Paul, thoughtfully.

"Very likely she will not be over glad to see you, especially when she knows you're a friend of Mrs. Holbrook. That lady saw through the housekeeper's little schemes, and did what she could to put a spoke in her wheel—that's why she hates her."

"Well, all I can do is to hope for the best."

"Be yer expectin' to stay long?" asked Amos, curiously.

"That depends on whether the housekeeper will let me, from what you tell me."

"You'll find it dreadful dull."

"Perhaps so, but I'm going to offer to drive out Mrs. Granville, and I'm willing to take care of the horse or horses, if she wants me to."

"Frost will like that, for he's lazy, and will be glad to get rid of the work."

"I suppose Frost is the housekeeper's son."

"Yes, that's the one I mean."

"What sort of a fellow is he?"

"Good enough for those who like him," answered Amos, dryly. "I don't."

"Does he resemble his mother?"

"He's a chip of the old block, but not half so smart. His mother thinks him an angel, and what she wants the old lady's property for is not so much for herself as for her son."

"You think I won't find him a pleasant companion, then?"

"I know you won't." [166]

"Then I hope I shall like Mrs. Granville."

"She's a good old lady and awful rich. The only weak thing about her is her trusting the housekeeper."

"I should think she would prefer to have some relative with her."

"She won't get any to stay with her till she discharges Mrs. Mercer. The housekeeper makes herself as disagreeable as possible to any relation, because she's afraid they will get an influence over the old lady's mind and interfere with her."

"Perhaps she may think the same of me."

"Like as not. You can tell better in a few days. But there's the house, the big white one on a little hill to the left."

"It is a very nice one."

"Oh, yes, it's a good house. Why shouldn't it be? The old lady's got plenty of money."

"Have you any idea how much?"

"It's risin' a hundred thousand dollars, I heard Squire Taylor say once. Squire Taylor is her lawyer, and he's likely to know."

"No wonder the housekeeper has designs upon it."

"Just so—I shouldn't mind if the old lady would leave me a slice. You might put in a good word for me—Amos Drake—when you get acquainted."

"I'll think of it," answered Paul with a smile. "I owe you something for all the information you've given me."

"That's all right. You seem a good sort of chap, and you're welcome."

Amos drew up in front of the house, and reined in the horses; while Paul descended from the carriage.

"How much is the fare?" asked Number 91.

"Twenty cents."

"That's near enough," said Paul, handing him a quarter.

"You're a gentleman," said Amos. "Now I'll have a cigar when I get back to the hotel." Paul [167] walked up the path to the front door of the mansion and rang the bell.

In about a minute the door opened, and he found himself confronting a tall, grim looking woman with thin face and figure, and iron gray hair.

“Who are you, and what is your business?” she demanded in a chilly tone. Paul had no doubt in his own mind that it was the housekeeper.

“My name is Paul Parton, from New York, and I have a letter for Mrs. Granville.”

“You can give me the letter.”

“Thank you, but I would prefer to give it to Mrs. Granville——”

“Humph! Are you one of her relations?”

“No, but I come from Mrs. Holbrook, her niece.”

“Oh,” said the housekeeper, grimly. “Well, I don’t think you can see Mrs. Granville; she’s got a headache, and can’t be disturbed.”

# CHAPTER XXXI.

[168]

## A DEFEAT FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER.

The housekeeper held the door half way open, and evidently meant to prevent Paul from entering. If he had been less determined, or more easily abashed, he would have given up his purpose. But Number 91 had a will of his own.

“I don’t accept a dismissal from you, madam,” he said, eying Mrs. Mercer with a steady glance. “I demand to see Mrs. Granville.”

“Hoity toity! Who are you, I’d like to know?” demanded the housekeeper, amazed and exasperated.

“A visitor to Mrs. Granville,” answered Paul; “you, I suppose, are a servant.”

“Do you dare to call me a servant, you impudent boy?” answered Mrs. Mercer, raising her voice.

“What are you, then?” asked Paul, calmly.

“I am Mrs. Mercer, the housekeeper, I’d have you to know.”

“So I suppose, and Mrs. Granville is your employer. By what right do you dare to send away her visitors?”

Mrs. Mercer was quite unused to being defied so boldly, and she could hardly express her indignation.

“Well, I never heard of such impudence!” she ejaculated.

In her anger she would have closed the door, but just at that moment a voice was heard from the floor above—the voice of Mrs. Granville, who had been attracted by the housekeeper’s loud tones. [169]

“What is all this, Mrs. Mercer?” she asked, in a tone of authority.

“It’s a boy who wants to force his way in, ma’am,” said Mrs. Mercer, in a sulky tone.

“What boy is it?” asked her mistress.

Paul answered this question himself.

“I come from New York with a letter from your niece, Mrs. Holbrook,” he said.

“Then come in at once,” said the old lady, in an imperative tone. “Why did you not admit him at once?”

“I didn’t know,” answered the housekeeper, confused.

“I beg your pardon,” said Paul, “I told you this, and you said Mrs. Granville had a headache, and would not see me.”

“What do you mean by this misrepresentation, Mrs. Mercer?” demanded the old lady, sternly.

“I offered to take the letter up to you,” said Mrs. Mercer, a little alarmed at the evident anger of her mistress.

“When Mrs. Granville reads the letter she will understand why I preferred to hand it to her myself.”

“Why did you say I had a headache? Why do you presume to send away my visitors, Mrs. Mercer?” demanded the old lady, thoroughly aroused.

“I meant it for the best,” said the woman, sulkily.

“Never presume so far again. Now, young man, come up and let me see you.”

Paul passed the discomfited housekeeper, and, going upstairs, followed the old lady into a pleasant sitting room.

“I am sorry to have been the means of disturbing you,” said Paul, politely. “Mrs. Holbrook sends you this letter, and wishes me to give you her love.”

“You are a nice looking boy,” said the old lady, letting her glance rest approvingly on Number 91. “I hope Louisa is well.” [170]

“Very well, thank you.”

She put on her glasses, and read the letter.

“So you are Paul Parton,” she said, as she folded up the letter.

“Yes, madam.”

“A New York boy?”

“Yes, madam.”

“I am afraid you will find it dull here.”

“O no, Mrs. Granville, I am sure I shall like the country, for a while at least.”

“Do you know how to drive?”

“Oh, yes; I am used to horses.”

“On the whole, I am glad Louisa sent you down here. Frost Mercer, who usually drives me, has been getting lazy of late, and makes excuses when I want to go out.”

“I won’t do that, Mrs. Granville. I shall be only too glad to go.”

“You are sure you won’t upset me?”

“I don’t believe I shall,” answered Paul, smiling. “I don’t care about being upset myself.”

“I think, on the whole, I shall like to have a boy about,” said the old lady, thoughtfully.

“I am afraid Mrs. Mercer might object to me.”

“I am the mistress of the house. Mrs. Mercer is only the housekeeper,” said the old lady, with an unwonted assumption of dignity. “Please ring the bell, Paul.”

Paul did so.

Presently the housekeeper entered in answer to the summons. She looked askance at Paul.

“Mrs. Mercer,” said her mistress, “you will prepare a room for this young gentleman. He will remain here, for the present.”

Mrs. Mercer looked disagreeably surprised. [171]

“Perhaps you had better read this letter from my niece, Mrs. Holbrook, as it will save explanations.”

The housekeeper read the letter, and her thin lips tightened with displeasure.

“There is no need of your getting a boy to drive you around, ma’am,” she said. “My son is perfectly able to do it.”

“Your son is very apt to be engaged when I want to drive out,” returned the old lady, dryly.

“I will see that it don’t happen again,” said the housekeeper, anxious to keep Paul out of the house.

“There is no occasion for that. Mind, I don’t blame your son. Paul here will have nothing else to do, and can drive me as well as not. Besides, he will read to me, and spare my eyes.”

“Frost would be willing to read to you.”

Mrs. Granville smiled.

“I don’t think reading aloud is one of your son’s accomplishments,” she said. “His voice is not exactly musical.”

This was certainly true, for Frost Mercer had a voice deep and croaking, like a frog’s.

“I am sorry you are so prejudiced against my poor boy,” said Mrs. Mercer, mortified and displeased.

“You are a foolish woman, Mrs. Mercer. I am only going to make it easier for Frost, and give this young gentleman something to do. Paul, you may go with Mrs. Mercer, and take possession of your room. Go where you please, till half past twelve, our dinner hour. After dinner, I may take a drive.”

“You’d better get your life insured, then, ma’am,” muttered Mrs. Mercer. “Boys ain’t to be trusted with horses.”

“Is your horse very lively or skittish?” asked Paul.

“No,” answered Mrs. Granville. “He is very gentle and tractable.”

“Then I don’t think there is any need of insuring your life, Mrs. Granville.” [172]

“*I* wouldn’t ride out with you,” said the housekeeper, spitefully.

“Perhaps you will think better of me after a while, Mrs. Mercer,” said Paul, good naturedly.

The housekeeper closed her lips firmly and shook her head.

“I’ve made one enemy, that’s clear,” said Paul to himself—“probably two, for the housekeeper’s son isn’t likely to be my friend.”

Mrs. Mercer led the way to a small room on the next floor.

“You can go in there,” she said, ungraciously.

“Thank you,” said Paul.

It occurred to him to wonder why so small a room should be assigned him, while there seemed to be plenty of larger ones. In the arrangement of the room, however, there was nothing to be desired. Everything was neat and comfortable. To Paul, accustomed to a shabby tenement house, it seemed luxurious, and he was disposed to enjoy it for the time, be it long or short.

# CHAPTER XXXII.

[173]

## FROST MERCER IS CONTRARY.

Mrs. Mercer, the housekeeper, was seriously annoyed by the appearance of Paul upon the scene. For years she and her son had had charge of Mrs. Granville's affairs, and they had taken care to turn the charge to profitable account. The wages which each received formed only a part of this advantage. They bought everything for the house, and levied tribute from every tradesman as a compensation for turning the trade in his direction. The result was that Mrs. Granville, without being aware of it, paid a larger price than any one else for what articles she purchased, the storekeepers and others compensating themselves in this way for the percentage they had to pay the housekeeper and her son.

It is for this reason that Mrs. Mercer never cared to have any visitor in the house. She feared her dishonesty might be found out. She was especially afraid of any one sent by Mrs. Holbrook, who during her stay had been bold enough to interfere with the housekeeper.

When she had ushered Paul into his chamber, she went out to the barn, where she found her son, not at work, but sitting on an old rocking chair which he had carried out for his convenience, smoking.

"Well, mother, what's up?" he asked, on Mrs. Mercer's entrance.

"We have got a visitor," answered his mother, abruptly.

[174]

"We?"

"Well, Mrs. Granville."

"Who is it—the Holbrook woman?" queried Frost, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"No, but it's some one she sent."

"Man, woman, or child?"

"It's a boy—about sixteen, he looks."

"What on earth should she send a boy for?" asked Frost, in surprise.

"To make mischief, I reckon."

"What can a boy do?"

"I read the woman's letter. She sends him to take your place."

"What?" exclaimed Frost, in some alarm.

"Why, she hints that he can drive out the old lady, read to her, and make himself generally useful."

"That will make it lighter for me," said Frost, who was lazy, "if he does the driving."

"Yes, but don't you see what a chance he will have to work himself into the confidence of the old woman?"

"What sort of a boy does he seem to be?"

"I've only seen him five minutes, but I've found out that he is impudent. When I didn't want to let him in, he actually defied me—asked by what right I sent away Mrs. Granville's visitors."

"So he is inclined to make trouble, is he?"

"Yes."

"Suppose I give him a thrashing?"

"It won't do, Frost."

"You think I am not a match for a boy of sixteen?"

"No, not that; but we must not be imprudent. Better get rid of him by underhand means."

"Such as what?"

"I don't know yet; I will consider. Meantime I thought I would come out and put you on your guard."

[175]

"All right, mother. I guess we can checkmate the young meddler. Is he in the house?"

"Yes; I've put him in the small room."

"Next to mine?"

"Yes."

"All right; I'll look him over at dinner time."

In this, however, Frost counted without his host. Mrs. Granville was accustomed to have her meals brought up to her own room. Today she expressed the wish that Paul should dine with her. This displeased the housekeeper.

"I suppose Frost and I are not good enough company for the young man," she said, sulkily.

"My good Mercer, you are much mistaken," said Mrs. Granville, soothingly. "I thought he would be company for me; besides, it will give me a chance to ask him some questions about Louisa."

“Very well, ma’am,” said the housekeeper, but she didn’t look satisfied.

“What do you think, Frost?” she said, as she went downstairs. “Master Paul—that’s his name—is to dine with the old woman upstairs. I suppose he is too good to eat with us.”

“I don’t know as I care much, mother; I don’t want his company.”

“Nor I, for the matter of that, but it’s putting this young popinjay over our heads. They’ll be getting thick together, and the boy will be pulling our noses out of joint.”

“If he does, I’ll pull his out of joint,” muttered Frost.

“Bide your time, Frost. We’ll put our heads together and see if we can’t send him packing.”

After dinner Mrs. Granville expressed a desire, as it was a fine day, to go out for a drive.

“I shall be very happy to drive you,” said Paul, cheerfully. [176]

“You are sure you can drive?” asked the old lady, anxiously.

“I should smile,” Paul was about to reply, when it occurred to him that this form of expression did not sound exactly proper. “I am used to driving, ma’am,” he said, instead.

“Then about two o’clock you may go out to the barn and ask Frost to harness up.”

“O, I’ll do that, Mrs. Granville.”

When he went out to the barn, he found Frost Mercer sitting at his ease, engaged at his favorite business of smoking a pipe.

“I suppose you are Frost,” he said, with a smile.

“I am Mr. Mercer,” answered Frost, in a forbidding tone.

“I beg your pardon. I will call you Mr. Mercer, if you prefer it. I am Paul Parton.”

“I don’t know as that concerns me,” said Frost, staring at Paul in an unfriendly manner.

“It is just as well you should know my name, as I am living in the house,” said Paul, independently. “Mrs. Granville wishes me to drive her out If you will show me what carriage she uses and so forth, I will harness up.”

This was, on the whole, satisfactory to Frost, as he would not have the trouble of harnessing.

“There’s the carriage,” he said, “and there’s the harness. You can find the horses if you use your eyes.”

“Thank you; you are very obliging,” said Paul, with a little touch of sarcasm.

“The old lady doesn’t seem to value her neck,” observed Frost.

“What makes you think so?”

“In letting you drive her.”

“O, that’s it. I think I shall bring her back safe.” [177]

“I don’t know about that. You’re a city boy, ain’t you?”

“Yes.”

“What chance have you had to learn about horses?”

“I know a little about them.”

“Well, I wash my hands of it. If the team is upset, Mrs. Granville will have herself to blame for it.”

“I don’t think you need to worry,” said Paul. “I’ll promise to bring her back safe.”

He set to work to harness the horses. Frost surveyed him with critical eyes, but he could see no evidence of ignorance on Paul’s part. He did his work quickly and skillfully, and then, opening wide the barn doors, led the horses out. Then he jumped into the carriage and was about to drive to the house.

“Come back and shut the barn doors!” called out Frost from his rocking chair.

Paul turned and looked back.

“I don’t think it will do you any harm to do that yourself,” he said, “if you can spare the time from smoking.”

“Hey, what’s that?” demanded Frost, angrily.

“I don’t think it will be necessary to repeat it,” said Paul, coolly; “you heard me.”

“None of yer sass, boy!” said Frost, wrathfully.

Paul did not deign to answer him. He saw that Frost did not intend to be pleased with anything he did, and that there was no use in trying to conciliate.

“I hate that boy!” reflected Frost, following Paul with a venomous expression. “My mother is perfectly right. He’s a dangerous visitor. We must get rid of him one way or another.”

Paul drove around to the front of the house and found Mrs. Granville ready at the door—with the housekeeper at her side.

“I do hope you won’t meet with an accident,” said Mrs. Mercer with an air of deep solicitude. [178]
“Frost is ready to drive you. It will be safer.”

“Thank you, my good Mercer, but Paul tells me he understands driving.”

“I shouldn’t mind if she broke her neck,” muttered the housekeeper, following the carriage with her eyes, “if I only knew it was all right now in her will.”

# CHAPTER XXXIII.

[179]

## A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Paul proved a satisfactory driver, and the old lady's fears were soon dissipated.

"You drive better than Frost Mercer," she said in a tone of satisfaction.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Mrs. Granville," said Paul, well pleased.

"Frost nearly upset me one day. I don't think he is generally intemperate, but I suspect he had been drinking something that day."

"He doesn't seem to like me," Paul ventured to say.

"What makes you think so?"

Hereupon Paul related his reception when he went to the barn to harness the horses.

Mrs. Granville listened thoughtfully.

"He should not have acted so," she said; "I presume he didn't like the idea of being superseded."

"Has he been with you a long time?"

"He and his mother have been in my service for a long time. I think Mrs. Mercer is of a jealous disposition. She never wishes me to have any one here, but she is very faithful and loyal."

"I wonder if that is the case," thought Paul. The housekeeper did not seem to him like one who would be unselfishly devoted to the service of any one.

[180]

Several days passed. Every day Mrs. Granville rode out, sometimes in the forenoon, sometimes in the afternoon, and the effect was perceptible in her improved health and spirits.

"It is fortunate for me that you came here," she said one day. "Before you came I rode out only once or twice a week. It seems to do me great good to drive every day."

"Why did you not go out every day, Mrs. Granville?" asked Paul.

"Frost did not seem to like the trouble of going out with me," she answered. "He often sent word that he was at work, and could not go conveniently."

Paul wondered whether he was engaged smoking in the barn. In his guess he came near the truth.

"Besides," added the old lady, "I did not like to ride out with him as well as with you."

Paul thanked her for the compliment.

"I like to talk with you, but Frost was not very social, and we had very little conversation."

One afternoon Mrs. Granville asked Paul to drive round to the grocery store. She wished to get a supply of a particular kind of cheese which she had neglected to order through the housekeeper.

It so happened that there were several customers ahead of her, and she had to wait her turn. These were being supplied with various articles, and the old lady could not help overhearing what passed between them and the storekeeper. One thing in especial attracted her attention—the prices that were charged. They were in every instance below those charged on the bills handed in to her by Mrs. Mercer. Mrs. Granville made careful note of these prices, and on the way home broached the matter to Paul.

"What does it mean, Paul, do you think?" she asked.

Paul's wits had been sharpened by his city experience, and he rapidly penetrated the secret.

"You always buy through Mrs. Mercer, do you not?" he asked.

[181]

"Yes; but what of that?"

"If I answer it may prejudice you against the housekeeper, and perhaps unjustly."

"Still it is only right that you should tell me."

"Can Mrs. Mercer buy wherever she pleases?"

"Yes; I leave the choice of the place to her."

"Is there another grocer in the village?"

"Yes; there are two."

"Then I think she charges this grocer a commission for carrying your trade to him, and he makes up for it by charging you a higher price."

"Is that often done?" asked Mrs. Granville, surprised.

"Yes, I feel sure of it. I remember one evening in the city listening to a conversation between two coachmen employed in private families. They were boasting of the amount of their commissions obtained from blacksmiths, dealers in hay and oats, and so on."

"But that is dishonest," said the old lady, indignantly.

"They don't look upon it in that way," answered Paul.

"And do you agree with them?" asked the old lady, half suspiciously.

“No, I don’t,” answered Paul, promptly. “I think they ought to be satisfied with their wages.”

“You are right. As for Mrs. Mercer and Frost, they are paid more than most employers would pay, for I am rich, and, thank Heaven, not mean.”

“Don’t condemn them without feeling certain,” said Paul; “I may be wrong in their case.”

“I won’t feel satisfied until I have ferreted the matter out,” said Mrs. Granville. She was very good and liberal, but any attempt at imposition made her very angry.

“How will you find out?” [182]

“You will see.”

The old lady relapsed into silence, and was evidently busy with her thoughts. When she reached home, she called Paul’s services into requisition.

“Paul,” she said, “open the drawer of my bureau—the upper drawer—and take out a file of bills you will find in the left hand corner.”

Paul did so.

“They are Mr. Talbot’s bills.”

Mr. Talbot was the grocer whose store she had left.

“Now we will compare the bills with the prices I heard being charged to the customers who were being waited on in the store.”

This she did with Paul’s help.

The result was that she found herself charged two cents a pound extra on sugar, five cents on butter, three cents on cheese, five cents each on tea and coffee, and so on. Besides she found that excessive quantities of each had been bought, more than three persons could possibly have consumed. What became of the surplus, unless it was thrown away, she could not possibly divine. Of course the housekeeper’s commission increased with increased sales. The real explanation, however, was that Mrs. Mercer had a widowed sister living in the next town. She often called on Mrs. Mercer, and never went away without a liberal supply of groceries, taken from the private stores of Mrs. Granville.

This the old lady did not learn till afterwards.

If Mrs. Mercer had known in what way her mistress and Paul were engaged, she would have quaked with apprehension, but of this she had no suspicions.

The next afternoon Mrs. Granville drove over once more to Mr. Talbot’s store, and asked for a private interview with him.

“Certainly, ma’am,” said the unsuspecting grocer, obsequiously. [183]

“Why is it, Mr. Talbot,” asked the old lady, coming straight to the point, “that you charge me higher prices than you do to your other customers?”

“What makes you think I do?” stammered the grocer.

“I’ll tell you. Yesterday I was present when some of your customers were buying butter, sugar, and other articles. I noted the prices, and then went home and examined my bills. I find you charge me from two to five cents a pound more than to others. Tell me frankly why this is, and I may overlook it.”

“I don’t make any more profit out of you than out of them,” said the grocer.

“But how is this—you charge me more?”

“The extra charge does not go into my pocket.”

“I suspected as much. Into whose then?”

“If I must tell you, it is Mrs. Mercer’s. It is the only condition on which she gives me your trade.”

“Thank you; it is right that I should know.”

“Shall you speak to Mrs. Mercer about this when you get home?” asked Paul, as they were driving homeward.

“Not immediately. I want to observe her a little more. It is a shock to find that one to whom I have been kind for so many years has deceived me so basely.”

Meanwhile Mrs. Mercer, who was becoming more and more jealous of Paul, was arranging a scheme to injure him with Mrs. Granville.

# CHAPTER XXXIV.

[184]

## A PLOT AGAINST PAUL.

The housekeeper and her son had seen, with increasing alarm, the growing attachment of Mrs. Granville for Paul.

“Something’s got to be done, Frost,” she said, decidedly. “That boy is setting the old woman against us.”

“That’s so, mother; she never wants me to go with her now. I might as well be out of the house, so far as any notice of me goes.”

“She’s mighty cool to me, too, Frost. I suspected how it would be when that boy came into the house. He’s the artfulest young one I ever knew.”

“The two of us ought to be a match for him,” grumbled Frost. “I’ll give him a lickin’ if you say so.”

“It would do no good. She’d only take his part, and as likely as not send you packing. No, we must adopt a different course.”

“What shall it be? You’re smarter than I am, mother. I’ll do whatever you think best.”

“I’ve thought of a plan, Frost,” said Mrs. Mercer, and she proceeded to communicate it to him.

“That’ll do,” said the son, in a tone of satisfaction. “We’ve got to give her a bad opinion of her favorite, and then we’ll get rid of him.”

[185]

This conversation took place in Frost’s room one evening. This room adjoined Paul’s, and it so happened that in the upper part of the room there was a round hole in the partition, made probably for the entrance of a funnel, which rendered it easy for conversation to be heard in the adjoining room. Paul had been spending the evening in Mrs. Mercer’s room, but was dismissed earlier than usual, and had retired to his own bed room. So it chanced that he heard the details of the plot against him.

It did not surprise him much, for he was quite aware of the housekeeper’s hostility towards him. He had been on the point of lighting his lamp, but decided not to do so, and noiselessly prepared for bed. He felt that forewarned was forearmed, and he determined to tell Mrs. Granville what he had heard.

This he did the next morning. The old lady listened attentively.

“I did not believe Mrs. Mercer capable of such wickedness,” she said. “After all the kindness I have heaped upon her, too!”

“I suppose she is jealous of me,” suggested Paul. “For my part, I wish her no harm. I would not have told you, except to defend myself in advance of any charges she may make against me.”

“You have done right, Paul,” said the old lady, kindly. “Mrs. Mercer selfishly wishes to monopolize all my favors. Whatever I may do for you would not have interfered with her, if she had behaved properly. Now she must take the consequences of her folly.”

Early in the afternoon, Mrs. Granville directed Paul to bring the carriage round to the door. When they had driven a quarter of a mile, she said: “You may drive me to Coleraine, Paul.”

This was an adjoining town, about four miles away.

[186]

Reaching the town, the old lady directed Paul to drive her to the office of her lawyer. Finding him in, she said: “You may take the horse to the stable, and come back in an hour. I have some business to attend to.”

“Certainly, ma’am,” said Paul, obediently.

He returned in an hour, but had to wait half an hour longer. Then the old lady came out, and seemed unusually cheerful.

“Paul,” she said, “I have been making my will.”

“I thought it might have been made already,” said our hero.

“So it was, but I have made a new one.”

Paul did not feel called upon to reply.

“I have not forgotten you,” continued Mrs. Granville, kindly.

“Thank you very much,” said Paul, gratefully. “I won’t pretend to be sorry, but I hope it will be a long time before I reap any benefit from it.”

“I am sure of that, Paul,” said the old lady. “You are not selfish and self seeking like Mrs. Mercer and Frost. They were handsomely remembered in my former will, but I had not found them out then.”

When they reached the house, Mrs. Mercer herself opened the door. There was a look of blended mystery and triumph on her face as she admitted them.

“Can I speak with you a minute in private, Mrs. Granville?” she said with a significant glance in Paul’s direction.

“Certainly, Mrs. Mercer. Paul, you may go out and put up the horse.”

“It’s coming,” thought Paul.

“Well, what is it, Mercer?” asked the old lady, as she led the way into her own chamber.

“It’s about that boy, ma’am.”

“About Paul?”

“Yes, ma’am. I know you think him an angel.”

“Well, not quite that, Mercer,” smiled Mrs. Granville. [187]

“At any rate, you think a great deal of him.”

“Yes, I do.”

“I never liked him for my part,” continued the housekeeper, spitefully. “I always distrusted him. I thought him a snake in the grass.”

“Come, Mercer, that’s rather a heavy indictment of the poor boy.”

“I can prove all I say, ma’am,” said the housekeeper. “I thought you were wrong in trusting him.”

“What has he done? Come to the point.”

“You see this, ma’am,” said Mrs. Mercer, producing a breast pin set with pearls.

“Yes, it is mine.”

“Where do you think I found it?”

“Suppose you tell me.”

“In the boy’s bureau drawer, while you were out.”

“How did you happen to be examining his drawer?” asked the old lady, sharply.

“Because from things I have noticed I suspected he meant to rob you. I didn’t expect to find that, I confess, but I did think I should find something. This favorite of yours is nothing but a thief.”

“You may call him, Mrs. Mercer. It is only fair to hear what he has to say for himself.”

Mrs. Mercer needed no second bidding. She hurried to the stables and found Paul occupied in unharnessing the horses.

“Frost,” she said, “just finish unharnessing the horses. Mrs. Granville wants to see this young gentleman.”

Frost obeyed with unwonted alacrity, and Paul quietly followed the housekeeper into the house. He was not particularly alarmed, for he had already put a spoke in the housekeeper’s wheel, though she was quite unaware of it.

“Has Mrs. Granville an errand for me to do?” he asked, suppressing a smile. [188]

“You’ll find out what she wants of you,” returned the housekeeper, tossing her head. “Young man, your course is about run!”

“Is it?” asked Paul, innocently.

He followed Mrs. Mercer into Mrs. Granville’s chamber. The old lady was sitting in her arm chair by the window.

“I’ve brought him, ma’am,” said Mrs. Mercer. “Now you can find out for yourself what a viper he is.”

“Paul,” said the old lady, mildly, “Mrs. Mercer tells me she found this breast pin in your bureau drawer. Do you know anything about it?”

“No, ma’am,” answered Paul, not betraying the slightest confusion.

“Of course he would say so,” remarked the housekeeper.

“Yet, Mrs. Mercer says she found it in your drawer.”

“What was she doing there?” asked Paul.

“Tracking a thief!” answered Mrs. Mercer, spitefully.

“She charges you with stealing the breast pin from my room, Paul.”

“Yes, I do; how did it get into your drawer unless you stole it? Answer me that, Mr. Paul Parton.”

“I suppose you put it there,” returned Paul, calmly.

Mrs. Mercer held up both hands in indignant protest. “Did you ever hear the likes, ma’am?” she ejaculated. “He’s a thief, and unfit to stay in your house.”

“Excuse me, Mrs. Mercer,” said Paul, quite coolly, “but didn’t you arrange this little plot against me last evening in conversation with your son?”

“What do you mean?” ejaculated the housekeeper.

“I happened to be in my room, and overheard you.” [189]

“Do you believe this impudent lie, Mrs. Granville?” the housekeeper asked, desperately.

“I have reason to believe Paul,” answered the old lady, “for this breast pin, which you say you found in Paul’s room during my absence, I distinctly remember leaving in my own bureau drawer when I left the house this afternoon.”

Mrs. Mercer was panic stricken. She turned to leave the room, quite overwhelmed, but Mrs.

Granville called her back.

“Stay, Mrs. Mercer,” she said, “I have something to say to you.”

# CHAPTER XXXV. [190]

## PAUL RETURNS TO NEW YORK.

The housekeeper turned at the bidding of her mistress, and gazed at her in apprehension, waiting for her to speak.

“I wish to speak to you about another matter, Mrs. Mercer. I have made a discovery which reflects seriously upon you.”

“What is it?” asked the housekeeper, nervously.

“Why, it is that for a long time—I don’t know how long—I have been paying Mr. Talbot higher prices for groceries and other articles than he charges any one else.”

“I didn’t know it,” answered Mrs. Mercer.

“Do you mean to say that he imposed upon you?”

“That’s just what I do say,” answered the housekeeper, gaining boldness. “I’ll give him a piece of my mind.”

Mrs. Granville eyed her gravely.

“It is too late to impose upon me, Mrs. Mercer,” she said. “I know why he charged me extra prices.”

“He wanted to make money out of you, I suppose.”

“He or some one else. It is useless to misrepresent. I know that this extra sum went into your pocket. Wait,” seeing the housekeeper about to speak. “I learned his usual prices, and with Paul’s help I went over the bills for the last three months, and have discovered how much I have been swindled.”

“It’s *his* doings, I’ve no doubt,” said Mrs. Mercer, bitterly, referring to Paul. [191]

“You are mistaken; though if it were true it would not help you any. I myself discovered the overcharge, and simply employed Paul to look over the bills with me.”

“Talbot lied!” said the housekeeper, desperately. She could not have expected this denial would benefit her, but she was reluctant to confess her guilt.

“I believe he tells the truth,” returned her mistress. “What have you to say?”

“I can’t say anything; it wouldn’t do any good,” said Mrs. Mercer, sullenly. “You’re so infatuated with that boy that you won’t do me justice.”

“Let me remind you,” said the old lady with dignity, “that Paul has nothing whatever to do with the matter. I think well of him, it is true, and am even attached to him, but your wrong doing commenced before he came, and your senseless jealousy has betrayed you into a disgraceful plot against him. Of course you and your son cannot remain in my employment.”

The housekeeper had not anticipated this. It was a terrible thought that she and Frost must go forth from the home that had known them so long.

“Forgive me, Mrs. Granville,” she pleaded in great agitation. “I will give up all the money I have made out of my purchases on your account—I will, indeed—and more, too, if you insist upon it. Only let me stay! Think of the years I have been in your service!”

“You should have thought of that, Mrs. Mercer. You should have thought of my kindness to you and your son, and rejected the temptation to rob me as you have done.”

“I will give it all back—I told you I would,” said the housekeeper, with feverish lips.

“It’s too late! I have lost confidence in you. You are not the woman I supposed; for a small gain [192] you have thrown away a great prospect. You and your son were down in my will for a handsome sum. This day I have made a new will.”

“And given your property to that boy, I suppose?” said the housekeeper in passionate anger.

“I decline to tell you in what way I have disposed of my money!” returned the old lady with dignity. “And now for the future. You and your son will leave me at the end of this week.”

“I will leave this very day!” exclaimed Mrs. Mercer, angrily.

“You can do as you please, but I should not advise you to do so. You did not wait for my conclusion. You will leave at the end of the week, but if you remain till then, you will not go empty handed. I will not only let you keep what you have wrongfully taken, but in acknowledgment of past services, I will pay you and Frost three months’ wages in advance to keep you until you find new employment.”

“I will stay,” said the housekeeper, sullenly.

“It will be best.”

“Shall you keep this boy with you?” she could not help asking, jealously.

“Probably not long. He will wish to go back to the city.”

This assurance relieved Mrs. Mercer, and almost reconciled her to her own departure.

At the end of the week, however, Mrs. Granville closed her house for a time, employing a

neighboring farmer to take care of the land, and went to New York, under Paul's escort, to make her niece a visit. When she parted with Paul, she placed in his hands a check for one hundred dollars.

"That is for yourself," she said. "Come and see me every week. You will not lose your time."

When Paul returned to his old home, he found a great change in old Jerry. He was better in [193] health, though still feeble, but his mind seemed more at rest. Mrs. Hogan was sick, and his daughter in law, Ellen Barclay, was in attendance upon him. To Paul's increased surprise the two children, Jimmy and Mary, were in the room, and seemed on very good terms with their grandfather.

"You didn't expect to see me here, Paul," said Mrs. Barclay.

"No, but I am glad to find you here," said the telegraph boy, cordially.

"Mrs. Hogan has been sick with a fever, and it was necessary that some one should take her place. So I came."

"But it must be inconvenient for you to come over from Jersey City every day."

"I have left Jersey City, and occupy an apartment upstairs."

"How does old Jerry—Mr. Barclay—look upon you?"

"We are very good friends. I am more used to nursing than Mrs. Hogan, and I make him comfortable."

"I thought he might be prejudiced against you on account of your husband."

"He was at first, but we have talked freely about him, and he finds that I, too, am in fear of him. So we have made common cause and he trusts me."

"I am very glad of it," said, Paul, earnestly. "It is as it should be; I don't think Jerry can live long, and you and your children ought to get the benefit of his money."

"You are a good boy, Number 91. I misjudged you at first. I thought you were plotting for the old man's money, and so, I am sure, did my husband."

"You don't think so now?"

"No, I know you better." [194]

"It is strange," said Paul, smiling, "but out in the country, where I have spent the last few weeks, I was suspected of plotting for the property of an old lady by whom I was employed. The housekeeper was very much exercised in mind, and tried to fasten a charge of theft upon me."

"I hope she was not believed."

"No; Mrs. Granville knew me better."

"I wish the lady you mention would leave you something, Paul."

"I don't trouble myself with such thoughts. I have good friends, and I am sure that I shall prosper if I keep my health."

"No one deserves success better."

"Thank you, Mrs. Barclay. I value your good opinion."

This conversation took place in the entry. Just then the feeble voice of Jerry was heard, calling "Ellen."

His daughter in law hastened to the bedside of the old man, and attended to his wants. Paul followed her into the room.

Five minutes later a heavy step was heard on the stairs, and the door was opened; all turned to see who was the visitor. The old man uttered a cry of alarm. His eyes were on the door, and he was the first to recognize the intruder.

"James!" he cried.

"You're right, father," said James Barclay, gruffly; "I'm glad you welcome me so warmly."

# CHAPTER XXXVI.

[195]

## JAMES BARCLAY REAPPEARS.

“Go away! Go away!” ejaculated the old man in terrified accents.

“Couldn’t think of it, father,” said James, throwing himself on the sofa and lighting his pipe. “What, leave you and my wife—how on earth did you find the old man out, Ellen? Now all the family’s together, we’ll live together in peace and happiness. We’ll never desert the old man, will we, Ellen?”

“I wish you would not smoke here, James. It is bad for your father, who has a difficulty in breathing.”

“Oho! You take the old man’s part against me, do you?” said James Barclay, his brow darkening. “You haven’t seen me for weeks, and you begin to jaw already.”

“Ask him to go away, Ellen,” said Jerry, feebly.

“Oh, you’re anxious to get rid of me, are you?” sneered James Barclay. “You would drive me away from my family, would you? Are you still living in Jersey City, Ellen?”

“No, I have taken a room here.”

“That’s right. I’ve no objection. What does the doctor say about the old man? Is he going to die?”

“Hush, James,” said his wife. “How can you be so inconsiderate?”

“Who says I am going to die?” asked Jerry, terrified.

“I hope you will live a good while yet,” said Ellen Barclay, soothingly. “I will take every care of you.” [196]

“I’m not such an old man,” interrupted Jerry. “I ought to live a—a long time.”

“Come, dad, you’re unreasonable,” said James, coarsely. “You’re seventy, if you’re a day. You don’t want to live forever, do you?”

“My own son wants me to die,” moaned Jerry.

“Well, you’ve had your share of life. Ain’t you goin’ to give me a chance?”

“Why will you talk in this way, James?” expostulated his wife, as the old man gave a cry and buried his face in the bed clothes.

“How have I been talking? It’s the truth, ain’t it?”

“You are only making your father worse.”

“Well, if you’re anxious to get rid of me, give me a few dollars, and I’ll stay away till tomorrow.”

“I have no money of my own, James.”

“Then whose money have you?”

“I have some money that Paul gave me to buy necessaries for your father.”

“Then give me some.”

“I have only a little of that left. I must ask Paul for more——”

“Oh, the telegraph boy’s got the money, has he? Look here, you young rapscallion, I’ll take charge of the old man’s money. I am his son, and I am the proper party to do it. So hand over!”

“I have no money of your father’s. I have been advancing money of my own.”

“That’s too thin. You haven’t got any money of your own.”

“I don’t care whether you believe it or not. However, I’ll give you two dollars if you’ll go away now.”

“Hand it over, then. I won’t come back till tomorrow.”

The old man was in such a nervous condition, that Paul was glad to obtain even such a brief respite as this. He drew from his pocket a two dollar bill, and handed it to James Barclay, who immediately got up and walked towards the door. [197]

“By, by!” he said, “I’ll be back to-morrow.”

“No, no,” said the old man, “I—I don’t want to see you.”

“Now, there’s an affectionate father for you!” said James Barclay, with a mocking smile. “He don’t want to see his only son.”

“You haven’t given him much reason to miss you, James,” said Ellen Barclay, mildly.

“So you turn against me, too, Mrs. Barclay,” said her husband, with a frown. “A nice wife you are, upon my word!”

“Shure you’re a jewel of a husband yourself!” interposed Mrs. Hogan, who had entered during the conversation.

“And you’re the woman who threw hot water upon me, you old jade!” retorted James, his face black with anger. “I’ve a great mind to wring your neck for you.”

He made a step forward, which alarmed Paul, lest he might proceed to carry out his threat.

“Oho!” laughed Barclay. “The kid is going to defend you.”

“And a fine boy he is!” said Mrs. Hogan. “But don’t you trouble yourself, Number 91. I’m a match for the ould brute any time.”

Mrs. Hogan, standing with her arms akimbo, looked thoroughly fearless and undaunted. She was a powerful woman, and, though James Barclay was of course her superior in physical force, he would not have found her an unresisting victim.

“Why don’t he go away?” was heard in a wailing voice from the bed.

“He is going directly,” answered Ellen Barclay, in a soothing voice. [198]

James Barclay’s brow contracted.

“So you’re sowing mischief between my father and me, my lady!” he said. “Well, it’s just what I expected. But don’t you forget one thing! I’m the rightful heir of that old ninny on the bed there, and if anybody tries to cut me out, he’ll find I’ve got something to say about it.”

“That’s a pretty way to talk of your father—as an ould ninny,” said Mrs. Hogan, indignantly.

“Never you mind! It’s none of your business. I suppose you’re looking for a slice of the property yourself.”

“No, I’m not Mr. James Barclay. I’m an honest woman, and can earn my own living.”

“I’m glad to hear it. But I’m not so sure of the telegraph boy. He’s been living on the old man all his life, and he means to be provided for when he dies.”

“I don’t know what your father would have done without him,” said Mrs. Hogan. “He’s worked for old Jerry ever since he was six years old—when his own flesh and blood deserted him. Isn’t it so, Jerry?”

“Yes, Paul is a good boy,” responded Jerry, feebly.

“Oh, no doubt; he’s an angel,” sneered James Barclay. “I say, Number 91, as you seem to have my father’s money, I’ll just mention that I shall want ten dollars tomorrow.”

“I have no money of your father’s, Mr. Barclay, and I shall not be able to advance you the money myself.”

“Well, it’s got to come from some quarter,” said Barclay; “whether he gives it to me, or you, I don’t care, as long as I have it.”

“You ought to earn your own living—you’re big and strong enough,” said Mrs. Hogan, with spirit.

“Thank you; you’re a fine woman,” said James Barclay, mockingly. “If Mrs. Barclay would only be [199] obliging enough to leave me a widower, I might take you for my second wife.”

“And leave me to support you!” retorted Mrs. Hogan. “Thank you for nothing. I’d rather be a widow all the days of my life than to marry you.”

James Barclay laughed.

“And yet some people think me good looking,” he said.

“Then they must be blind; however, it isn’t the way you look, it’s the way you behave that sets me aginst you.”

“That’s a pity; for your sake, my sweet Mrs. Hogan, I might be tempted to turn over a new leaf.”

“Shure, it’s more than one new leaf you’ll need to turn over, I’m thinkin’.”

Paul laughed at this retort, and even the victim of Mrs. Hogan’s sarcasm was forced to laugh, too. Then, greatly to the relief of all present, the unwelcome visitor left the house.

“Shure, I pity you, Mrs. Barclay,” said Mrs. Hogan, sympathetically, “for havin’ such a husband as that. What made you marry him?”

“Because I thought him a different man, but the delusion didn’t last long. Before three months had passed I found that he had married me for a few hundred dollars left me by my aunt. When he had spent them, he treated me with neglect.”

“Shure’s it’s the way wid the men!”

“I hope not with all of them, Mrs. Hogan,” said Paul, smiling.

“No, Paul, I don’t mean you. I wouldn’t mind marrying you if you were old enough.”

“There, I’ve had one offer,” said Paul. “Excuse my blushes!”

# CHAPTER XXXVII.

[200]

## JAMES BARCLAY'S SCHEME.

James Barclay presented himself the next day, true to his notice, and demanded ten dollars. Paul was not at home, and the only persons to whom he could appeal were his father, his wife, and Mrs. Hogan.

"I haven't any money, James," answered Mrs. Barclay, "except seventy five cents, and that I must spend for medicines for your father, and something for his supper."

"Where did that money come from?" inquired Barclay.

"From Paul."

"Number 91?"

"Yes."

"Just as I thought! He's got my father's money, and doles it out to you a little at a time."

"He says it is his own money."

"That's a likely story. When could a common telegraph boy get so much money?"

"He isn't a common telegraph boy! He is a very smart boy."

"An uncommon telegraph boy, then, if you prefer it. By Jove! I think he is that myself. It isn't every boy of his age who could so pull the wool over an old man's eyes as he has."

"He is a very good boy!" said Mrs. Barclay, who had learned to appreciate Paul, though she was at first inclined to do him injustice. [201]

"So he is—of the kind!" retorted her husband. "If you were not blind you would see that he has got hold of my father's property, and means to keep the lion's share of it for himself. When will he be home?"

"Not till six o'clock."

"And it's only three. I don't think I can wait."

It was fortunate that he did not see the look of satisfaction upon his wife's face. It would have incensed him, for his temper, as the reader has had occasion to learn, was not of the best.

"Look here!" he said, after a moment's reflection, "give me the seventy five cents. I'll make it do till I get a chance to see this telegraph boy."

"But, James, I really can't spare it. I need it to buy some supper and medicines for your father."

"And I need it to buy some supper for myself!" returned her husband, roughly. "There's plenty more money where that came from."

"Oh, James! how can you be so hard and selfish!"

"Hard and selfish, just because I don't want to starve. I s'pose you'd be glad to read my obituary in the paper some fine morning, Mrs. Barclay, eh?"

"Shure she wouldn't read much good of you, I'm thinkin'," said Mrs. Hogan.

"Don't be hard on me, Mrs. Hogan. Remember I've promised to marry you, if Ellen, here, ever gives me the chance."

"Shure thin I hope she'll live forever. She's welcome to you, though I wish she had a better husband, as she well desarves, poor dear!"

"I'll come around again tonight," was James Barclay's parting assurance.

"Don't you come if you've got any other business to attind to! We can spare you."

But James Barclay did come, and was fortunate enough to find Paul at home. There his good fortune ended, however. Paul positively denied having any money belonging to old Jerry, and as positively refused to advance James any money of his own. [202]

"Do you expect me to believe that story, Number 91?" demanded the visitor with lowering look.

"I don't care whether you believe it or not, but it's true all the same."

James Barclay was silent for a moment, and then, considerably to Paul's surprise, went out without further disturbance. The fact was that a new scheme had occurred to him. He was thoroughly convinced that Paul had his father's property in his possession. If he could get the telegraph boy into his power—kidnap him, in fact—he would be able to extort from him the money, or learn where it lay concealed.

"Good evening!" he said; "we shall meet again!"

But James Barclay's plans were frustrated in a tragic way. On leaving the house he met an old acquaintance who proposed to him to join forces in a burglary that evening. Barclay was at the end of his resources and readily agreed. He had so often got off scot free that he was disposed to underestimate the danger incurred. It was destined to be the last crime in which he was to take part. He was surprised at his work by a private watchman, and fatally shot dying almost instantly.

When Paul read in the morning papers the account of Barclay's tragic end he was shocked, though he could not mourn for one whose life had been a curse to himself and all connected with

him. To old Jerry his son’s death was a positive relief, as may readily be imagined.

# CHAPTER XXXVIII.

[203]

## CONCLUSION.

Three months passed, during which Paul faithfully attended to his duties as a telegraph boy. He was held in high consideration by the superintendent, who was very naturally influenced by the fact that Paul had made so many influential friends.

But the time was coming when he would no longer be Number 91.

One night he received a note signed Eliot Wade, asking him to call in the evening at the Albemarle Hotel. He presented himself promptly, and was cordially greeted by the young man from St. Louis, to whom he had rendered an important service.

“I am glad to see you, Paul,” said the young man.

“And I am glad you have not forgotten me, Mr. Wade.”

“There was no danger of that. Well, Paul, I have come to New York for the purpose I mentioned to you—that of starting a branch establishment here.”

“Have you secured a store, sir?”

“Yes, I shall be located at —— Broadway.”

“That is a fine location.”

“I hope it will prove so. And now, Paul, are you engaged—in business, I mean?” he added, smiling.

“I am still a telegraph boy—Number 91.”

“Will you resign your position, and enter my service?”

“Willingly, sir. In a year or two I shall be too old for a telegraph boy, and it will be well to learn some business. I suppose you will not want me for some time.” [204]

“On the contrary, I need you at once. There will be a good deal of work attendant upon getting started, and I shall find plenty of work for you.”

“I shall be glad to begin next Monday, sir. I don’t want to leave the telegraph office without notice.”

“Very well; let it be so. Will twelve dollars a week satisfy you at first?”

“Do you really mean it, Mr. Wade?” asked Paul, in surprise.

“Certainly.”

“But I shan’t earn so much.”

“Leave that to me,” said the young man, smiling. “I intend to have you earn that sum, and more next year.”

Paul expressed his gratitude, and immediately gave notice at the telegraph office that he was about to leave.

“I expected it, Number 91,” said the superintendent, “knowing what powerful friends you had secured. I am sorry to lose you, but I wish you success and prosperity in your new business.”

Paul thought best to make some change in his residence. He had already secured a separate room for himself in the old tenement house, Jerry’s sickness making it necessary. Now he persuaded old Jerry to pay the rent of a modest flat up town, to which he and James Barclay’s family removed. Paul hired a room not far away.

The location was not far from Central Park, and the better air and diet very much improved the health of the old man, who has become less miserly, and finds comfort in the society of his son’s family.

Paul makes frequent calls on Mr. Cunningham, who receives him as a valued friend. Whether Paul’s partiality for Jennie Cunningham will lead to anything when he gets older, I must leave the reader to conjecture. It must be remembered that he is no longer a telegraph boy, but a rising young business man. [205]

Mrs. Granville retains her partiality for him, and makes no secret of the fact that she has remembered Paul in her will. Paul would be surprised if he knew the legacy he is to receive; but he wisely keeps the matter out of his thoughts, and earnestly hopes the old lady may live many years yet.

It is rather a curious circumstance that Mark Sterling is employed as a boy in the same establishment where Paul is a clerk.

When Mark applied for the place he was not aware that the telegraph boy, upon whom he had looked down so scornfully, was also employed there. When he found it out, and that Paul was above him, he was tempted to resign; but the place was a good one, and he decided to wait awhile. He feared Paul would retaliate upon him, but he was soon undeceived.

The ex telegraph boy treated him so cordially, and showed such an obliging spirit, that Mark was won in spite of himself, and the two became friends. I have no doubt that the improved social condition of Paul, and the prospect that Mrs. Granville would leave him a legacy, influenced

Mark. At any rate, he has now become a friend of Number 91.

The telegraph boys who used to serve in the same office with Paul are proud to point him out as a graduate of the office, and his rise in life encourages them to hope for future advancement.

“I have had many boys in the office,” said the superintendent on a recent occasion, “but never one that came up to Number 91.”

THE END.

DARING ADVENTURES IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## By VICTOR ST. CLAIR

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Illustrations have been moved to paragraph breaks near where they are mentioned.

Punctuation has been made consistent.

Variations in spelling and hyphenation were retained as they appear in the original publication, except that obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

The following changes were made:

p. 190: “him” changed to “her” (eyed her gravely.)

p. 193: “a” added (found a great)

End-advertisements: “tractless” changed to “trackless” (the trackless forest)

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