



DILIGENT  
DICK

---

YOUNG  
FARMER

MADELINE LESLIE

***DILIGENT DICK;  
OR,  
THE YOUNG FARMER.***

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## CHAPTER I.

### *VISIT TO MR. JONES.*

MR. JONES sat in his office on Pearl Street one of the hottest afternoons in August, eighteen hundred and fifty-eight. His linen coat was thrown on the back of his chair, his vest was loosened from top to bottom, a pitcher of iced water stood convenient to his hand; but he puffed and panted continually.

"This is terrible!" he said to Mr. Follinsby a gentlemen sitting opposite, trying to lose the recollection of his discomfort in the columns of the newspaper, "Terrible! Thermometer ninety-eight in the shade. I pity the horses—"

"A boy to see you, Mr. Jones," said a clerk smiling.

"Ha! A boy is there? Well ask him in. Any body who ventures out in the street under such a sun ought to have important business."

The gentlemen both looked toward the door, and were rather surprised to see a little fellow, not more than twelve years of age, standing there, with his straw hat in his hand. He had on what is called a French shirt of some light material made loose with wide sleeves, to which his pantaloons were attached, and a small ruffled collar round his neck. Before he spoke a word, he took a handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, brushing back the heavy mass of curls which had fallen there. The only parts of his countenance which deserve particular notice at this time, were a pair of honest, earnest, blue eyes, which looked straight, without fear or hesitation, into the face of the one he addressed; and a small, well cut mouth, which told, without his speaking, a whole story of the possessor's sweetness of temper, and mirthfulness; and yet the manner of shutting it proved that he had firmness too.

All this, which has taken so long to describe, only cost the two gentlemen one searching glance; then the boy took two or three steps forward, saying in a pleasant, respectful tone—

"I want to see Mr. Jones."

"That is Mr. Jones," remarked Mr. Follinsby, waving his hand toward the gentleman.

"Are you the chairman of the Committee on decorating the St. Stevens' church?"

This question was so wholly unexpected by Mr. Jones, who supposed the boy had come to ask charity; or perhaps to seek a place as errand boy in his store, that for one moment he did not answer, but sat eyeing the lad with a perplexed smile, then he said:

"Hem! Yes, I'm the one."

"Have you engaged your evergreens for Christmas, sir?"

"For Christmas? Ha! Ha! Ha! We haven't begun to think of Christmas yet, my little fellow."

"I want to engage the job, if you please. I'll supply the evergreen as cheap as any body. I know, it's a good while before Christmas; but mother says it's best to be in season when you're to do any thing."

He said all this in such a matter-of-fact way, as though he had been used to business of the kind for years, that Mr. Jones, after a glance at his friend, burst into a hearty laugh, in which the boy joined with perfect good humor.

"What is your name?" was the next question.

"Richard Monroe Stuart, sir."

"How old are you?"

"Twelve last March."

"Have you ever decorated a church before?"

"No, sir; and I don't expect to decorate it this year. Mother says it takes tall men with ladders, to do that. I only want to supply the evergreens. I'll do it as cheap as any body, sir."

"Where do you live, Richard?"

"I live in Annesley, sir. They always call me Dick at home." He added this with a smile, so full of humor that both the gentlemen laughed.

"Is your father living, Dick?"

"Oh, yes, sir! He is the minister in Annesley."

"And you are doing the business on your own account?"

"Yes, sir. One of our neighbors has a church in the city to decorate every year; and he makes a good deal of money."

"I suppose your parents are willing you should do this; I mean that they knew of your coming here?"

"Mother does, sir, of course. I never do any thing without telling her."

"Why not your father, too?"

"I want to surprise him. The people are poor; and so they can't give much salary. If I get the job, I'm going to buy a new buffalo robe. We've needed one for the sleigh a good while."

"Whew!" ejaculated Mr. Jones. "Will it ever be cold enough to need buffaloes?"

Dick laughed aloud, mentally resolving to tell his mother what a very pleasant man Mr. Jones was.

"I don't know what Mr. Jones will do," said Mr. Follinsby; "but if I were the chairman of the Committee, you should have the job. I approve of boys who tell their mothers every thing."

"Thank you, sir. There's one thing I haven't told mother yet. Last spring our hod got broken. If I make enough I want to get her a new one."

"That's a good boy. I guess you'll have enough besides the buffalo robe. If you don't, it won't be a very profitable job. Shall you gather the evergreen yourself?"

"Yes, sir, in the vacation at Thanksgiving. Mother says she thinks she shall have time to help me wind it evenings; and then I can keep it fresh down cellar. Do you think, Mr. Jones, I can get the job?"

"Come here the first of November, and I will tell you. Our church are feeling rather poor this year; but if we decorate at all, you shall supply the evergreens. Here is my card. Shall you remember?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I should remember you, and where you live, without any card; but I'll take it if you please."

Mr. Follinsby put his hand in his pocket, and drew out his porte-monnaie.

"Suppose, Dick," he said, "that I give you enough to buy a hod now. It's inconvenient to do without one."

A flush of honest pride flew into Dick's checks, and even mounted to his forehead.

"I'm much obliged to you, sir," he said very seriously; "but I'd rather earn the money for it. Mother'd like it a great deal better. I'll be sure to be back, sir, the first of November."

He made a bow which would not have disgraced a drawing room, and was retiring when Mr. Jones held out his hand:

"Good bye, Dick," he said, "You've got a good mother, I'm sure."

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, his blue eyes dancing with pleasure. "She's the best woman in the world." He held out his hand to Mr. Follinsby, and said, "Thank you, sir," once more and went away.



## CHAPTER II.

### *DICK AT HOME.*

"I'D give a hundred dollars if my boy had been here to see Dick," said Mr. Follinsby. "He'll make his mark in the world. He's got the true grit."

"I'd give ten thousand if I had one like him," said the other. "The idea of Christmas decorations on this hot day!" And he ha-ha'd, till the ceiling rang with his mirth.

"We shall hear of Mr. Richard Monroe Stuart again; or I'm mistaken," he added presently.

In the mean time Dick, who had accompanied a neighbor to the city, hurried back to the main street to be in time to ride home with him in the covered wagon. But finding by the clock on the great steeple that he had still an hour, he set off on a tour of inspection through the streets.

In a small purse at the bottom of his pocket there was a fourpence-ha'penny, an old fashioned coin for which the half dime and a penny have long been substituted. This had been given him by his mother to spend as he pleased, and it was a matter of grave importance with him, that it should be well expended. He passed up and down the main street, gazing in at the windows, smiling at the many objects of interest, laughing outright at the swarthy figure of a man holding cigars at a shop door, laughing again at the toys displayed in a large window; but never dreaming of changing his coin for any thing he saw. He held it tightly in his hand, walking back and forth until it was time for him to meet the neighbor at the stable, and then with a smile concluded to give it back to his mother again.

Once more inside the wagon, he pulled from under the cushion a small paper bundle, and taking out a cake said, as he ate it with a relish—

"Nobody makes such good ginger snaps as mother does."

At home there were three boys younger than Dick all of whom were daily taking lessons of industry and thrift, as well as lessons in practical godliness.

Richard, though only a few months past twelve, had already made up his mind to be on the Lord's side. To be sure he knew little of the great army of foes arrayed against the Captain of his Salvation; the world, the flesh and the Devil; but he knew well the iniquity of his own heart. He knew how much easier it was to do wrong, to be lazy and selfish and unkind to his brothers when his interest crossed theirs, than to be diligent, generous, and thoughtful of their wishes; but he had also learned by a happy experience the delight of conquering himself, for the sake of pleasing his dear Saviour.

Richard being the eldest, somehow did not regard himself as a boy. He had always taken care upon himself, so as to relieve his mother, and though the merriest fellow alive, singing or whistling at his work, he had never within his recollection spent a whole day in play. "The fact is," said his father watching him as he took the milk pail, the night after his visit to Mr. Jones, and went out to do the barn chores, "the fact is, our Dick makes play of his work."

Mr. Stuart was a scholar, naturally absorbed in the duties of his profession. He betook himself to his study at an early hour and midnight very often found his lamp still burning. His wife was competent to manage the affairs of the little household, and he wisely left them to her, often wondering, however, how she made the small salary cover even their frugal expenses. Happily freed from this charge, he gave himself entirely to his work, and brought forth to his people deep, hidden treasures. As a pastor he was unwearied and almost unrivalled. Like a true shepherd he cared for his flock, leading them unto green pastures, and beside the still waters. In sickness he was by their side. In sorrow he wept with them. In all circumstances of life, their firm, faithful and

sympathizing friend, leading them through prosperity or adversity to look beyond this world to the mansions above the skies.

The minister's family lived in small house which they owned; and connected with it was a farm of fourteen acres. They kept a horse, cow, pig and chickens. In the spring a man was hired to plough, and assist in planting the corn and potatoes; and he generally came again in the fall to help get in the harvest. The hoeing and weeding of the vegetable garden was done mainly by Richard; his long summer vacation coming just in the time he was most needed. Eddy, the boy next in age, not yet ten, had this year assumed the responsibility of the chicken house and with his little saw and hatchet could cut kindlings as well as any body; but Richard was the one on whom his mother mainly depended.

After his visit to the city, the church decorations and the probability of his securing the job, were often the subject of discussion between himself and his mother. But Dick was shrewd as well as industrious.

"I'd better not tell the school boys," he said one day. "If I do, they'll be pulling all the evergreen in Mr. Pond's pasture; and there isn't any more within half a mile. How many wreaths can I make in a day?"

"I don't know, Dick. You may go, over some afternoon to Mr. McIntosh's and learn how; then you can teach me and I'll help you."

"Thank you, mother. I do hope the church wont be too poor to decorate. Mr. Jones was real kind about it."



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***DICK SWEEPING FOR HIS MOTHER.***

### CHAPTER III.

#### *DICK AT SCHOOL.*

THE fall term of the District school commenced in September. It was hard at first for Richard to take his mind from his work, and fix it upon his studies. He was up in the morning as soon as it was light, to feed the horse and cow and groom them, to feed the pig, and milk, and sweep out the barn floor. Then after breakfast and family prayers he was off to work in the garden till mother rang the bell for him to dress for school. Sometimes he had to go on an errand for her, or his father, and hurry Eddy and little Lyman along, so that by the time he was seated behind his desk, he was often sleepy. But he loved study and soon roused himself, resolved to do this term, as he had last, and keep his place at the head of the class.

Fortunately for Dick, the teacher, Miss Wheeler, was every way worthy of her trust. She had studied the character of every scholar. She loved them and spared no pains to help them to progress in their studies.

Richard, her dear minister's son, was a special object of interest to her. She trusted him implicitly. She was very strict in her government, a little stiff in her manners, but occasionally was thrown off her guard by some witty answer, and laughed more heartily than she herself approved.

Every Wednesday there was declamation by the boys, and reading of composition by the girls. Richard, as his teacher always called him, was fond of speaking; and not being timid, generally carried off the palm. He gathered his pieces for these occasions from a Third Class Reader,—selections from the speeches of Webster, Clay or Everett.

"Richard Stuart, you may come to the desk," called Miss Wheeler one morning. "Have you your piece ready?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What is the name of it?"

"The thunder storm."

"From what book did you learn it?"

"I didn't find it in a book. I found it in a paper."

"Are you sure you can say it without being prompted?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am!"

"Very well. I shall call you the first one after recess."

"The Thunder Storm, by Richard Stuart," called out the teacher at the appointed time.

Richard rose from his seat, and with a slight flush on his face, took his position on the platform, bowed and commenced, with great animation:

"The thunder roared,  
The clouds grew big,  
The lightning flashed,  
And killed a pig."

He had made his parting bow and taken his seat, before either his teacher, or the scholars, had time to recover from their surprise. Miss Wheeler stood in front of her desk, a little ruler, with which she thumped upon it to call the scholars to order, in her hand, staring at the place where the boy ought to be, but where he was not. Then recovering herself in a degree, she glanced toward Richard, whose eyes were fixed on a book before him, a suspicious smile playing about his mouth. She could endure it no longer; but burst into a hearty laugh in which all the scholars joined.

"Richard," said the teacher after school, "how came you to get such a piece as that? I supposed from the name it would be very fine."

"I thought it was a good one; and it was easy to learn. I said it to father first."

"What did he say to it?"

"He didn't say any thing; but he laughed till he choked himself. You see, he thought 'twould be a long piece."

The next time Richard's selection was a poem on the Union by Whittier; and he received ten good marks for it.

The week following, there were visitors present; and among them the Pastor; Richard, being the best speaker, was called out among the first.

After his bow, he announced as his subject, "The Seasons;" and then went on.

"Some people like Spring best, some like Summer best;" then with a sudden burst of feeling clasping his hand on his heart, he continued, "But as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

When he bowed himself off the stage the clapping commenced, while the dignified teacher, struggling between her inclination to join the laugh and to maintain order blushed crimson.

"That speech is impromptu, I presume," she said addressing the boy. "I would like you to repeat the one you gave us last week."

So, Dick, nothing loath, came out again, and this time acquitted himself with honor.

Miss Wheeler was on her way home when she heard her name called, and presently, Richard overtook her.

"Didn't you like my piece?" asked looking shyly in her face.

"No, I don't think I did."

"Then I never shall speak another without showing it to you."

"Thank you for the promise, Richard, I am entirely satisfied now."

## CHAPTER IV.

### *DICK IN TROUBLE.*

MANY of the children in Annesley were in the habit of going to school barefoot through the warm weather. Dick had often urged his mother to let him go without shoes. This she had decidedly refused.

The second week in September was extremely warm. One day Richard was going home from school with a companion, when the boy said:

"I wouldn't wear shoes this hot day, for any thing, it's so much cooler without them."

"I'd like to try it," answered Dick.

"Why don't you, then?"

"Perhaps I shall this afternoon."

He intended at the time to make one more plea with his mother; but when the hour came she was busy with household duties; and there was a grave expression on her face which did not look very hopeful. He went out the back door to be by himself.

"I have a good mind to try it," he began. "Mother hasn't said any thing about it this great while, so I shouldn't be disobeying. I'll hide my shoes here and put them on before she knows it."

"If you are not disobeying, why do you hide them?" asked conscience.

Dick knew he was doing wrong; and he did not deceive himself by any more arguing. "Mother don't know how hot my feet are with shoes and stockings," he said to himself, "or she wouldn't make me wear them."

After he had gone, the door bell rang; and Mrs. Stuart answered it. It was a beggar who wanted food and old clothes. When she had supplied his wants to the best of her ability, she saw



him take something from beneath the front steps, and hide it under his coat.

"Mother! mother!" cried little Lyman, rushing into the house. "Man has got Dick's shoes."

"Are you sure Dick did not wear shoes to school?"

"I saw him take 'em off under the steps."

Oh, Dick! Could you have seen your mother's face then, not angry; but, so sad, so grieved that you had disobeyed her, you would have been sorry I am sure!

Mrs. Stuart sat down with a sigh to a basket full of mending. She was not fond of mending, and now the holes to be patched were many and large. She felt discouraged but not at the work. She did not even think of that. She was grieving for her boy, who had disobeyed her and displeased his heavenly Father.

"I did hope he was a Christian child," she said half aloud. "I thought he had begun to remember that he was not his own—that he was bought with a price,—that he had pledged himself to obey Christ's commands. What if he had deceived himself?"

Tears rolled down her cheeks and fell on her work. At last she reflected that he was only a child, liable to fall into temptation. "I will wait and see whether he confesses," she said. "If he does, I will freely forgive him, and I will pray God to forgive him."

Her husband looked into the room and was surprised to see instead of her usual bright smile, a clouded face.

"What is it?" he asked.

She told him What had occurred and her own fears about her boy.

"Dick is trying to be like his Master," was his encouraging reply. "I am sure of that; but like all the rest of us, he sometimes yields to the temptations of the arch deceiver. I feel sure his conscience will not let him rest till he has confessed, both to God and to his mother."

"I hope not, husband."

In a few minutes a wagon drove up to the door, and one of their neighbors, a young farmer, sprang to the ground.

"Why there's Dick!" exclaimed Mrs. Stuart growing very pale. "I hope nothing has happened."

Mr. Pond took the boy in his arms and brought him into the kitchen.

"I was going by the school house," he explained, "while the children were out at recess. There was a scream and presently the teacher found that Dick had stepped with his bare feet on some glass. She tried to stop the bleeding and then asked me to bring him home."

"You'd better let me carry him up stairs. He's a pretty good armful."

All this time Dick had avoided his mother's eye; and did not speak a word. Only when his father took off the handkerchief bound around his foot, and pressed the place with his finger the tears ran down his pale cheeks.

"Does it hurt you, dear?" asked his mother.

He bowed his head.

"Was it a large piece of glass, Dick?"

"No, sir, it was window glass. We were playing catch and I stepped on it."

Dick sobbed so much his father could scarcely understand.

"I'm afraid there is glass in his foot now," urged the gentleman. "If so we must have the doctor here, with his forceps."

Dick gasped. "I don't think there's any in it," he sobbed.

"I'll do it up," said Mrs. Stuart. "If he is no better in the morning, we will have the Doctor examine it."

## CHAPTER V.

### *DICK'S PUNISHMENT.*

ALL this time not a word had been said about his disobedience. When he cried, his mother stooped over the bed and kissed him. Presently she left the room to get some bandages, and as soon as he was alone his tears burst forth afresh.

"Oh how sorry I am I was so naughty!" he said to himself. "How good mother is. I do love her dearly. I'm glad I meant to tell her before I got hurt."

"Will you please shut the door, mother," he said still sobbing. "I want to tell you something."

She came and stood by his side, putting her hand on his damp forehead.

"I disobeyed you, mother," he began. "I went without my shoes. I didn't feel happy because I knew how wicked it was to do it when you'd forbidden me. Will you forgive me, mother?"

"Yes, my dear; with all my heart. But you know there is another whom you have offended; One whose commands you have promised to obey."

"I know it, mother. I thought of it in school; and I couldn't study, so I lost my place in my class. I thought of it, and prayed in my seat that God would forgive me, and help me to be good. It was then, before I was hurt, that I resolved to tell you. I hid my shoes under the front steps, and I meant to put them on again before you saw me, my stockings are in my pocket."

"I knew it all before you came home, my dear. A beggar came here and when he went away he carried off your new shoes; but I scarcely thought of that; so pained was I that my son should disobey me and displease Cod."

"Oh mother! Mother! I never will do so again. I mean I'll try not to. You knew best when you said it was dangerous to go

barefoot. My foot does ache, mother. Do you think it will have to be cut?"

"I hope not."

The night following, neither Dick nor his mother slept one moment. As soon as it was light Mr. Stuart started off on horseback for the Doctor, who lived a mile away.

When the physician came, he loosened the bandage, and found the whole ball of the foot inflamed. He said there were small pieces of glass in it, and that getting them out would be a bad business.

"Dick is a brave boy," said his mother. "I'm sure he'll try to be quiet."

"If you will hold my hand, mother, I'll try not to move."

"You may scream as loud as you please," said the Doctor laughing, "if you'll keep your foot still."

But Dick did not even groan. He shut his teeth firmly together growing paler and paler every minute, until with a gasp, he lost his consciousness.

Mrs. Stuart felt his hand loosen its grasp on hers; and motioned her husband to run for the camphor bottle.

"Never mind," said the Doctor, "I've almost done. Let him be a minute. These little pieces must be got out or they'll make mischief."

Richard looked so much like death, that his mother could not let him be. She chafed his hands, and kissed his pale cheeks, murmuring words of love; while the faithful physician probed and pressed about the wound until he was quite sure he had removed all the glass.

Then he laid a towel under the foot to catch the blood when it began to flow, and threw a handful of water in the face of the fainting boy, which soon brought back the color to his cheeks.

"All right now, my brave fellow;" he said. "The glass is all out. Now, Mrs. Stuart, if you will give me four spoonsful of real cream, I'll make an ointment."

He poured some liquid from a bottle and gave the mixture a good stir, making a thick, nice salve. This he spread over the soft linen the mother had provided, and bound around the foot.

"You will have to give up farming for a week or two," said the Doctor laughing. "Perfect rest and daily applications of the ointment are all that will be necessary. Next time, Dick, I advise you to wear shoes."

It was a weary time for the poor fellow on many accounts. He worried secretly about the work and about his lessons. He sent to school every day by Eddy to find out who was at the head of the spelling and grammar classes; but he confessed to himself that his punishment was a just one.

After a long conversation with his mother on the subject, he covered his thee and thanked his kind Father in heaven for the chastisement which he could now see was sent in love to remind him of the truth of the words, "The way of transgressors is hard."

"You did just so, mother, when baby kept running to the stove, and you were afraid he would be burned up if he did not learn; so you let him burn his fingers a little mite. Oh, how he cried, and hid his face in your neck! But he knew he mustn't touch the stove again. Don't you remember how he would go toward it and then look at you and say so cunning, 'No! No! Berty burn!' And then he'd blow as you did on his poor fingers."

"Perhaps, mamma, God knew that if I went to school barefoot and came back without hurting me I should go on growing more and more disobedient, and so he let me hurt myself to save me a worse hurt as you did Berty."

"Yes, Dick, that is the right view to take of it. That is what St. Paul meant when he said: 'Now no chastening is for the present joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.'"

## CHAPTER VI.

### *DICK'S ADVENTURE.*

THANKSGIVING week and thanksgiving vacation came at last, but to the great disappointment of Richard, the ground was covered with snow. It was fortunate that he had already gathered one wagon load of evergreen at the time he learned to wind the wreaths at Mr. McIntosh's. This would give him employment for the vacation; and perhaps the snow would melt away before Christmas.

It was more of a job than he had imagined to wind the evergreen into wreaths. Though he worked with all his might, he only finished three the first evening.

Mrs. Stuart's mending prevented her helping him at this time; but she sat near and watched his progress. After he had retired, she took the basket of selected pieces, and finished the handsomest one yet made, in fifteen minutes.

"Let me help you plan your work," she said the next morning, after her wreath had been greatly admired.

"Eddy and perhaps Lyman, too, can help you pick over your evergreen during the day. Put the pieces ready to wind in a pile by themselves. This evening we will have a bee, and make up as many wreaths as we can."

"I shall only make a hundred in all, mother," exclaimed the boy clapping his hands with delight. "Mr. McIntosh has a hundred and fifty for his large church; and Mr. Jones told me they couldn't afford to decorate a great deal. About forty dollars, he said they would pay. Do you think I have enough to make a hundred, mother?"

"We can tell better to-night, my dear."

"It wont be so much work to wind the other for looping up, mother. It doesn't have to be done thick like the wreaths. Mr. Jones said I might bring what I could afford for forty dollars."

"So he thought you would forget the decorations before November, did he?"

"Yes, mother, and he shook hands with me as though he had always known me. I thanked him ever so much for his kindness."

Christmas came this year on Thursday. On the Monday previous Dick plead for leave to take his wreaths to the city, and engage the amount he wished to buy. The snow had lain on the ground nearly a month, and there had been no opportunity to gather more evergreen. A cold sleet had been driving against the windows all the morning and his parents could not consent to his riding so far in an open sleigh.

Poor Dick could think and talk of nothing but his decorations. He had obtained permission of Miss Wheeler to be absent from school on necessary business, on condition that he made up his lessons. This he had done for Monday; and it was a terrible disappointment not to be able to go. The morning was half past before he recollected that he might go to school to day and in the evening learn the lessons his class would recite on Tuesday.

The next morning was clear but very cold.

"I hate to have the child out all day in such weather," remarked Mrs. Stuart to her husband.

"He wont mind it, his blood runs briskly," answered his father with a smile.

So Dick started off, his hands and ears well protected, after receiving many cautions to be careful of his driving in the city, and to put the horse under cover as soon as possible.

Old Charley having eaten an extra feed of oats, felt pretty lively. He knew as well as any body that something unusual had taken him out of his warm stable, and turned to watch the last arrangements of his young master with a satisfied neigh.

"Good bye! Good bye! I hope you'll have great success," cried one and another shouting after him, as with a merry laugh Dick drove out of the yard.

"I don't think he'll make any thing by his speculation," remarked his father. "But it will be a good lesson for him."

About four o'clock Eddy and Lyman stationed themselves by the front window to watch for their brother's return. Early in the afternoon, the weather had grown cloudy again, and now the fine sleet had begun to fall.

"Bring Dick's Sunday jacket and shoes, and put them near the fire," said his mother. "He will be wet through."

After waiting supper an hour beyond the usual time they reluctantly took their seats at the table, wondering every moment why he did not come.

In the centre of the table there was a great dish of hasty pudding of which the absent boy was particularly fond. Mrs. Stuart took out a portion into a bowl, and set it into the top of the teakettle. By the time the dishes were cleared away, she had become really anxious.

It was now seven, a cold disagreeable night, where could the child be? Two or three times the mother went to the door, thinking she heard a cry of distress.

"We had better have prayers," urged Mr. Stuart. "Baby's eyes are growing very heavy."

Eddy brought the Bible and singing books; but the reading had not commenced when the sound of some one pushing open the barn door startled them.

"There's Dick?" cried Eddy.

"No, dear! We should have heard the bells."

Mr. Stuart, however, took the lantern down from its appropriate shelf, lighted it and prepared to assist his son.

"I've got home, father," called out Richard in a cheerful voice.

"Are you very wet? We have been quite anxious about you. How? Why? Where did you borrow this buffalo robe?"

Dick laughed merrily. "I'll tell you all about it, sir, when we go into the house."



"You'd better go in alone. I'll unharness, and put the horse up. The feed is all ready in his crib."

"Old Charley has done splendidly. He's been well fed too. I saw to it myself, and stood by till he had eaten his oats clean. Mr. Pond told me the tricks of the stable men. Now I'll run in with some of my bundles."

Once, twice, he ran with a load to the back kitchen seeing no one. Then perceiving that his father was ready, he said:

"Will you please carry the buffalo in? I must give it to the owner all safe." Then he took the last bundle from the sleigh, and followed his father to the sitting-room.

"'Tis Dick, mother! I hear his voice;" and out rushed the whole group to meet and welcome him.

Dick walked in, his head erect, his eyes twinkling with fun, while about his mouth was a peculiarly mysterious smile which his mother understood very well.

He presented rather a strange appearance. On his head was a cap of fur with ear pieces fastened under the chin. Over this his common cap was tied with a scarf. His hands were protected by a pair of fur gloves with deep gauntlets.

He took these last off, and tossed them upon the table with an air of unconcern; then untied his scarf, and did the same with his cap.

"You must have come into a fortune somehow," said his father smiling. "I was never the owner of a pair of gloves like these. Are they yours, Dick?"

## CHAPTER VII.

### *DICK'S STORY.*

RICHARD drew a chair up to the fire and sat down.

"I'll tell you all about it," he began.

"Not till you've had some supper," urged Mrs. Stuart.

"I'm not a bit hungry. Old Charley trotted off well, I tell you. Just as I was going over the car bridge, three miles this side of the city, a gentleman hailed me."

"Can you give me a ride, my boy?" he asked.

"I looked at him sharp for a minute, and when I saw that he was a true gentleman, I said—

"Yes sir, I'm pretty full; but if you wont mind your feet being crowded, I can take you as well as not."

"He told me he had been waiting for an omnibus; and he wanted very much to catch the train from the city to Providence."

"He asked me my name and a great many questions; and I liked him so well I told him all about the chance I'd got to decorate St. Stevens' church."

"By and by he took out his pocketbook full of bills and currency, and offered me fifty cents."

"Thank you, sir. I don't want any pay. I can take you to the depot if you'll show me the way."



***ANYBODY WILL TELL YOU WHERE GOV. BLAKE LIVES.***

"He urged me a good deal and tried to press the money into my hand, but I kept saying:"

"No, sir, I thank you just the same; I'd rather not take it."

"After this he seemed pleasanter than before. He told me he lived in Providence; and then I said, 'My mother has a cousin there. He is Professor in the college; and I hear that he is very rich. His name is Mr. Grath.'"

"Ah! Is he your cousin? I know him very well. I was at a dinner party at his house last week. Perhaps you'll go to Providence some time. If you do, you must call on me; my name is Blake. Anybody will tell you where Governor Blake lives."

"That is really an adventure, Dick," said his mother.

"Yes, and I mean to call. He reminded me of it again, when he got out; and he shook hands as hearty as could be, and wished me great success."

"When I went to the place where Mr. Jones told me to carry the evergreen,—the vestry back of the church, I found ever so many people there, ladies and boys. As soon as they saw me with some wreaths on my neck and on my arms, they cried out:"

"'Oh! here is our young hero We are all ready for you. You're just in time.'"

"The boys helped me bring the wreaths from the sleigh. They said they were beautiful,—the handsomest they'd ever had.

"'I have only ten yards of wound evergreen here.' I said. 'I want to know how much you need; and I'll have it here in a few minutes.'"

"I saw some on my way, and found how much I could buy it for. So when they told me, I drove Charley right back, and bought it with the money father lent me. Just as I was going in, I heard one lady say:"

"'I knew he'd be sure to bring it in season. Father told me about his coming to the store one of the hottest days in August.'"

"I carried in all they wanted; and they thanked me over and over for being in season. If I'd gone yesterday, mother, the vestry would have been locked up."

"I put up Charley then, and gave the man his blanket to cover him; and I didn't leave till I'd seen his rack full of hay."

"I staid in the stable-office a little while to warm myself; and I wanted to count how much I had made. It was twenty dollars, besides twenty which I gave for the evergreen I bought. There's your money, father, all in new bills; and here's a buffalo robe for your Christmas present."

"Will you please come to the kitchen, mother, for yours."

"I heard you say you wanted a new hod, and so I bought you one, and some knives for the table. There's half a dozen, good steel too."

"My dear boy," said his mother. "I didn't expect any thing. You should have bought for yourself."

Dick undid a bundle and distributed a tooth-brush to each member of the family, except baby. For him he had a sugar horse.

"I bought the cap and gloves for myself," Dick went on, "and those fowls are for all of us."

He pointed to the table where lay two turkeys weighing nine pounds each, and a pair of chickens.

"Wonders will never cease," said his mother, laughing heartily. "You don't mean that you bought all these things for twenty dollars."

"Please come in where it's warm; and I'll tell you all about it."

"I meant all the time to buy a turkey for Christmas dinner, and I went to the market to see how much it would cost. There were crowds and crowds of them; but they were very high. As I came out I saw a man getting into a pung. He was grumbling awfully. I went up to him and found he'd got turkeys and chickens; but they were not very fat and he couldn't sell them.

"How much do you ask?" I said."

"Just what I can get," he answered real cross. "I'm twenty miles from home and the rain is coming on heavy."

"I picked out the best two turkeys and two chickens which I could find; and I said—"

"I'll give you a dollar and a half for those."

"Clear out!" he screamed. "I'll carry 'em home first."

"So I cleared out and went to the other end of the market. In half an hour I came back. 'Haven't you gone yet?' I asked laughing."

"Come," says he, "I can't wait here. I'll sell dirt cheap."

"So I said again, 'I'll give you a dollar and a half for those I've picked out.'"

"I aren't quite a fool yet," he answered growling. "I 'spose you think I haven't cut my eye teeth."

"I went back into the market out of the rain; but I didn't look for a turkey. I knew the man would let me have 'em if I waited long

enough. When I went back again I saw him standing in his pung waiting for me.

"'Boy! boy!' he shouted, 'Here! This way a minute.'"

"I didn't hurry much."

"I shall freeze and so will my horse,' he said growling again."

"'You may have the lot for a dollar and a half.'"

"I've concluded not to give so much now,' I told him. 'I'll pay you a dollar for 'em.'"

He waited a minute. It was growing real dark and then he snatched 'em out of the pung.

"'There take 'em,' says he. 'It's just giving 'em away.'"

"I took out the dollar and gave it to him and thanked him, and took the blanket off his horse, and tucked it round his knees so that he might be warm.

"'Which way are you going, youngster?' he asked."

"I'm going twelve miles to Annesley. I've got a horse in the stable on Blossom street."

"'Jump in, then,' says he; 'and I'll carry the stuff there. I go right past the stable.'"

"We only rode a little way; but I got him to laughing, and he said he wished I'd ride all the way home with him. He added 'if you are only twelve, you've got your eye teeth cut, no mistake; I've allus heard that ministers had smart chaps.' He shook hands real hearty when I left him."

Mr. Stuart threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"I forgot to tell you," said Dick, "that when I carried my bill to Mr. Jones, he was just going to dinner, and he made me go with him. He lives a little way from the State House and his parlors were fixed up big. Now I'll eat some hasty pudding and go to bed."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *DICK TAMING THE HORSE.*

"I AM disappointed," said Mr. Stuart coming into the house one warm day the following spring. "Mr. Fuller has sold his oxen, and can't plough my land this year."

"Let me plough the garden, father," exclaimed Dick. "I'm sure old Charley and I can do it."

"You," repeated the minister smiling. "I think that would be an odd sight."

"May I try, father? It wont do any hurt for me to try."

A few days later Mr. Stuart was returning from a call on a sick parishioner, when he saw a number of men standing near the wall which separated his garden from the main road. Wondering what had called the people together, he hurried toward them.

Standing in the midst of the ploughed ground was Dick talking to old Charley, who it seemed had been inclined to be refractory, and who had been dealt with after the Rarey fashion.

This method of taming refractory horses was much talked of at the time, and though Dick had never seen it actually put in force, he had seen and studied the illustrations in a popular pictorial.

Accordingly when Charley was fastened to the plough; and when after being politely requested to move along, he did not budge an inch, but only looked around at his young master with disdain, Richard thought it a good opportunity to show him that he must submit.

When Mr. Stuart came in sight, he had been thrown to his knees twice by the wonder working strap, and now seemed quite subdued.

After patting his head and speaking a few encouraging words, Dick once more fastened the chains to his harness, and the old

fellow walked off as steadily as one could desire; the spectators meanwhile shouting and clapping their hands.

"A smart chap, your son is, Parson," remarked one stout farmer laughing. "'Twas as good as a show to see him manage the dumb creature."

"I'm afraid Dick will get hurt some of these days," said his father, "he is so fearless."

Having proved conclusively that he could plough the garden, Dick plead with his father to allow him to hire another horse and plough the field for corn and potatoes.

"The very idea is absurd, Richard, very few men can drive a pair of horses, and plough at the same time."

"You thought I couldn't plough with one horse," urged the boy glancing archly in his father's face. "I wish you'd let me try. I saw how Mr. Kingsbury managed. He put the reins round his neck. Charley goes as steady as an old sheep; and if I can hire Mr. Fuller's one day I aren't afraid to try."

"Well," was the reluctant reply.

"I wish father'd sell Old Charley and get a better horse," Dick went on, when the gentleman had left the room. "He's such an awkward looking creature. He never goes out of the gate head first unless he goes backward."

"That is because he likes to see what is going on behind him," suggested his mother laughing.

"Charley is a good creature," added Mr. Stuart returning. "He has served well in his day and generation. I couldn't get another that would stand as he does. Why he'd stand at the gate of one of my parishioners all day if I wished it."

"But we want a horse to go, father, and not to stand. Charley stops short when we come to a hill. I'm curing him of it, though."

Dick went the same evening to engage Mr. Fuller's horse, and the next morning his mother heard him going softly down the stairs a few minutes after four.



At half past five a gentleman, just arrived from New York by the express train, was hurrying to his home a short distance beyond the minister's house, when he saw a novel sight.

He waited until the horses had reached the wall close to the road, watching with a pleased curiosity the ingenuity of the child who was working them.

"How do you do, Richard?" he asked. "It seems to me you have a new method of ploughing. You do not work on the ten hour system, I see."

Dick tossed back his curls. He wanted to wipe the perspiration from his face, but his hands were too dirty. "I like farming," he said with a merry laugh; "but I never knew before why farmers wiped their faces on their shirt sleeves," suiting the action to the words. "Father thought it was absurd for me to try," he went on; "I want to show him I can plough with a span and without a driver too."

Richard pulled the rein as it hung about his neck and the horses started on the next furrow. Though he had no idea at the time that the gentleman watching him had any thing more than mere curiosity, yet subsequent events proved that this morning's work had a great effect on his future life.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *DICK AND THE DEACON.*

THE next winter the teacher of the advanced school did not prove satisfactory. Mrs. Stuart urged that Dick ought to be sent to an Academy, where he could attend to the higher branches. Her husband agreed with her; but where was the money to come from to pay his expenses?

"It does seem best," the minister said one evening when they had together asked God to lead them in the path of duty; "and if it is best the means will be provided."

"I can wear my cloak another winter," said the mother, cheerfully. "That will save ten dollars towards it."

Mr. Stuart rose and walked the room, his hands joined behind him as was his habit when meditating. At last he said:

"By a little extra effort, I can finish a series of articles for our religious paper. One of the Editors pressed me for them when I was in the city."

"Dick is such a good boy and has done so much for us I want to give him an education. That is all I expect to give my children."

In consequence of these plans, Richard was sent to an Academy in a neighboring state where he remained a year. He boarded in the family of a deacon, who had a large farm, but whose health did not permit him to work upon it. He was often in the habit of hiring the young men connected with the Academy to pick apples; husk corn, or do other chores not interfering with their lessons.

The Deacon was very strict in his religious opinions. At home Richard had always been in the habit of joining with the family in singing a hymn at morning and evening devotions, and on Sabbath evening each one selected his or her favorite hymn and tune, which were sung in turn. Richard had a very fine treble voice, which had

been carefully trained. He greatly missed the singing at prayers, and suggested to his roommate that they should sing on Sunday night in their chamber.

They commenced with the hymn:

"Jesus lover of my soul."

And then proceeded to another:

"Salvation, oh the joyful sound."

When they were interrupted by a loud voice at the foot of the stairs.

"Boys, boys! What are you doing up there?"

"We're singing the praises of God," answered Richard opening the door.

"Well, you must stop. I can't have any such noise in my house. It's Sunday; and I'm not used to it."

After this unusual strictness, Richard looked of course for a corresponding uprightness of character. Brought up as he had been, and with his eyes wide open to what passed around him he noticed some traits which in his opinion were not exactly consistent. For instance, in the fall when the immense orchard was stripped of its apples, the boy observed that there was one basket kept for measuring those to sell and another to send to the store when there was any thing to be bought.

Soon after the corn was gathered into immense heaps and carried into the barn floor.

"Would you like the job of husking, Richard?" the deacon asked.

"Yes, sir. How much will you give a bushel?"

"The usual price is three cents."

"I'll do it, sir. I'll begin now. I have ten minutes before school."

"Score the number of bushels on the barn door," added the deacon.

Catching up the small basket, Dick ran to the barn, and filled it half full of ears. When he came home he went to finish the bushel before dinner. It was only by improving his odd minutes that he could do the work without neglecting his lessons. He smiled when he saw that the small basket had been taken away and a large one substituted.

He filled it and said nothing. Then he went on husking as fast as he could, waiting for the dinner bell, throwing the ears into a pile. He did the same after school at night,—until he had accumulated a good many bushels. Then with, a curious smile, which his mother would have well understood, he walked into the kitchen where the Deacon sat tipped back in his chair, talking with a neighbor, and asked:

"Have you done with that bushel basket, sir? I want it to carry away my corn."

"Why don't you use the one I put there?" inquired the Deacon, his face growing red. "It's exactly the size of the other."

"Yes, sir, but 'tisn't half so handy to carry; besides it doesn't fill up near so quick. You say, sir, they're exactly alike in measure; so I suppose you'd just as lief I'd use one as the other."

Richard looked straight into the Deacon's eye; but there was a comical smile playing around his mouth which told the other that his trick had been discovered. He hemmed a little, before he answered:

"Certainly! certainly!" and then turned the subject at once. So Richard husked two hundred bushels: of corn, and made, as nearly as he could calculate, about two dollars by a change of baskets.

While in New Hampshire Dick sung regularly with the choir, as he had done at home. He also took a class in Sunday school, though he would have preferred being a pupil. But as there was a want of competent teachers he reluctantly consented, if his mates would join him to act as teacher, though it soon became by his management a class for mutual instruction. The preparation for this exercise, aided as it was by books from the Pastor's library, freely

offered for the benefit of the young men, was perhaps his favorite employment of the week. First he read the passage with some commentary; then he looked out in the Bible atlas, any place mentioned and found whatever he could in relation to it; and last of all, he examined Robinson's researches in the holy land in search of any thing in connection with the subject.

From the very first evening of his arrival, he had maintained the habit of secret devotion in his room; a habit which his chum though not a professor of religion always respected. Soon after his connection with the school, he invited the boys to form a meeting for social worship.

For weeks six young men, all professors of religion, met in the Academy out of school hours, and sung, and read, and prayed together. One day Richard was on his way to the room when he overtook a gay youth, and invited him to the meeting. Out of curiosity he consented, another and another followed, until these were so many, that they adjourned to the vestry by the advice of the Pastor, where he took charge of it.

## CHAPTER X.

### *DICK'S VISIT TO MAINE.*

BUT, going back a few months, during the winter vacation at the Academy, Dick persuaded his parents to allow him to go to Maine for the purchase of a cow.

He was now nearly fourteen years of ages was tall and stout; but his father needed much arguing, both from Dick and his mother, before he gave his consent.

"What do you know about the selection of a good cow?" the minister asked.

"I have read the Agricultural reports, father, and the Farmers' journals, about the good points in a milker. I can learn the rest."

"But you will have to carry the money about you; what if you should be robbed?"

"I'll venture that," answered Dick, his eyes twinkling. "I shall take your oldest carpet-bag, with a few clothes in it; I shall carry my money in that. When I go into the boat, I shall throw it under the seat. No one will imagine it contains any thing of value or I should take better care of it."

"I consent," said his father laughing; "but it's a mystery to me how you have learned so much of the world."

It was near the close of a cold winter's day, that Richard left the cars at Newark, and started on foot for the back country where he had heard cows were very cheap. He had his half-filled carpet-bag in his hand and was trudging through the snow in the middle of the street, feeling, I will not deny it, rather homesick. He was only a boy after all, fondly nurtured in a sweet home. He was alone in a strange land. He knew not where he should find a place to sleep. One thing Dick did know. He was sure that he had not gone beyond the notice of his heavenly Father.

"I can't be lost," he said half aloud, "while He sees me, and He knows that I need help," and up his heart flew on wings of faith and love to the throne above the skies.

"I want to do what is right," he said. "Dear Lord, lead me in the way, and help me in my business, so I can return home in safety."

His heart felt lighter after this, and he trudged on sometimes through drifts over the half broken road, for near a mile. It was growing quite dusky, and still no house in sight.

"I wont be afraid," said Dick to himself. "God knows just where I am, and how much I want some supper." To keep up his spirits he began to sing:

"The Lord my Shepherd is."

Presently he heard the sound of sleigh bells, coming swiftly toward him. He turned in the direction, and stood still. Soon he saw a man with a heavy beard, alone in a pung. His heart beat wildly.

"Shall I speak? He may be a robber."

The man had checked his horse and was staring hard at him.

"Wont you ride, stranger?" asked a friendly voice.

"Thank you, sir, I will."

"I reckon you aren't from these parts," said the man after a more careful survey of his companion.

"No, sir, I'm from Massachusetts. I'm a stranger here. I came to buy a cow for my father, who is a clergyman. Do you know any for sale about here?"

"Well," said the man laughing, "I reckon any o' my neighbors'd sell if they could get their price. But to-morrow'll be time enough to talk about it. We're most home now. Wife'll have supper ready."

Tears gushed to Dick's eyes, though they were not often seen there. How kindly had his heavenly Father provided for him. He almost wished to hug the kind man. One mile more was soon passed; but not before Dick had told much of his personal history

and of his own wishes for the future, to all of which the man listened with intense interest.

They drove at last up to a one story white house large on the ground floor and chambers in the attic. The curtains were drawn up, and a bright wood fire blazing inside. How pleasant it all looked to poor Dick. At the sound of the bells a woman's face appeared at the windows.

"Walk right in, Mr.—" he hesitated.

"My name is Richard Stuart."

"Mr. Stuart, wife," said the man, "I'll be in directly."

"Let me help you," urged Richard. "I'm used to that sort of work."

"No, not to-night. Walk right up to the fire, and make yourself at home."

"Where did you happen to meet Mr. Brown?" asked the wife after a cordial grasp of welcome to the stranger.

"About two miles back. He was very kind to bring me home. I didn't know the way to a tavern."

"'Twouldn't have been like Thomas Brown to leave a stranger by the road side," she said laughing. Then she busied herself pouring a pan of steaming hot biscuit upon a plate, and setting the yellow earthen teapot on the table. Mr. Brown and a young man, his son, came in just as she had completed the arrangements, and after a vigorous washing said, "Draw up now;" and he took his seat at the table.

They sat quiet for a minute looking at Dick, who blushed furiously. At last Mr. Brown said, "I didn't know but you'd say grace. I reckon you're a professor."

Richard instantly folded his hands and asked God's blessing on the food before them.

Every one then took hold in earnest of the business of eating; and Dick perceiving from a dish being pushed toward him that he was expected to help himself, did so. Biscuit and butter and maple



molasses, gingerbread and sugar cookies, blackberry preserve and pumpkin pie, and crullers, made a most tempting repast to the hungry traveller.

When they rose from the table the men tipped their chairs back and began to ask questions of Dick, while Mrs. Brown cleared the table, and washed the dishes, occasionally adding a word. In an hour or two the boy had given his new friends a brief history of his life at home, and the occasion of his journey.

Soon after seven a neighbor came in having driven his horse and sleigh into the barn floor. Dick's eyes twinkled at the introduction he received.

"Mr. Manly, Mr. Stuart; Mr. Stuart's a minister's son, from Massachusetts come to buy a cow. He's a professor,—attends school in New Hampshire,—going to stay with us a spell."

"You must stop with me part of the time," urged Mr. Manly after a searching gaze in Richard's face.

At home and among his mates Dick was always called good company; but never had his conversational powers been appreciated and admired as this evening.

With an occasional question and a "You don't say, now!" from one and another, the boy went on from agricultural to educational subjects, and back again. He told of his Rarey experience; of his declamations at school; of his speculations in poultry; of the state of religion in the different denominations, of the great salaries received by famous singers in church. He stated that he sung in church himself, and after some urging consented to end the evening by singing a hymn.

A little before nine the visitor began to grow restless, hitching his chair back and forth, and looking at the clock. At last Mr. Brown took the hint and said:

"Wont you stop, neighbor. Mr. Stuart'll be likely to conduct worship, I reckon. We'll be glad to have you join us."

"I'll stay then," answered Mr. Manly, letting his chair rest on the floor.

Richard's heart beat so fast that he could scarcely breathe. "How can I pray before these strangers?" he asked himself. But without one doubt that a minister's son, who could discuss so many subjects with perfect ease would wish to conduct the service, Mr. Brown asked his wife to bring the Bible, and pushed the candle nearer the youth.

"I'll try at any rate," was Dick's resolve. "I won't deny my Lord."

He selected the ninety-first psalm, but before he read sung the hymn commencing:

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned  
Upon the Saviour's brow."

To this Mr. Manly beat time loudly with his foot on the floor. Richard's voice trembled as he began:

"O God, we are strangers who have met here; but thou knowest our hearts, and whether we love thee."

"Amen!" shouted Mr. Manly.

This response so disconcerted the poor boy, unused to such interruptions, that, he was obliged to begin his prayer again. He had repeated his first words when the visitor called out in a more earnest tone—

"Hallelujah!"

The perspiration started in great drops all over Richard's face. He paused a minute. There was no help for it, he must begin again. This time he went on a little farther, when a loud shout—

"Praise the Lord!" set to flight every proper thought. He said, "amen," and arose from his knees, in a singular state of mind, between laughing and crying.

The limits of my true history of Richard Stuart, only allow me to add in brief, that having accomplished the object of his journey in a most satisfactory manner; and having made friends for life of good Mr. and Mrs. Brown, he returned home, and soon went back to school where he remained till the end of his year.

Of his subsequent career, and his success in professional life, perhaps I shall speak in another volume. I can only say here, that the principles of his childhood, his love to the Saviour, his trust in the dealings of Providence, grew stronger as he advanced in years; while the same habits of industry and thrift, the sweetness and mirthfulness which had made him a favorite, gained for him warm and enduring friends, when he most needed them.