

"NED,"

The FARMER BOY

A Possible Result of a Lad's Industry and Foresight.

By GEO. E. FOSTER.

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Not long after the graduating exercises, as Mr. Sharp was driving along the highway adjoining that part of his farm farthest from his residence, he saw Ned standing on a knoll which overlooked a very rough piece of land, which Mr. Sharp had never thought it worth while to cultivate. There was an acre in the lot where Ned stood, which was separated from the low land by the highway. This lot was common pasture land, but of good quality and could be easily worked. But the land below was apparently valueless. Here and there great bunches of laurel grew thick in tangled masses; in fact nearly an acre was covered with this shrub, another acre was covered with a thick growth of young birches, but they were not large enough for wood. Still another part which bordered a brook was covered with elder, and the remainder was covered with hard-back and small shrubs.

"What are you looking at?" at length asked Mr. Sharp, amused at the intentness of Ned's observations.

"Oh, Mr. Sharp, is it really you? Is not this strip of land yours?" exclaimed Ned.

"It is, Ned, and I am really at hand of it. It is the only useless piece of ground I have. It does not grow wood nor hay, or bear fruit. It is so tangled down there with 'Spoon-hunts' that even a calf could not get through. If there was grass enough to make pasturage in other parts of the lot."

"What are you going to do with it?" queried Ned, trying not to show the anxiety that was really burning within him.

"Do with it?" said Mr. Sharp.

"Yes, shall you ever utilize it?" responded Ned.

"I guess not," laughed Mr. Sharp.

"What could I do with it?"

"You might sell it," said Ned.

"I do not know of any one that would be foolish enough to buy it," said Mr. Sharp, "without they took the farm and had it thrown in as it was in my case."

"I will buy it, sir," said Ned, leaving his high perch and coming down towards the wagon.

"You buy it?" questioned Mr. Sharp in surprise.

"Yes, if I can get it at a fair price," said Ned.

"What do you want of it, Ned?"

"That is my secret, sir," was the reply.

"But, Ned, you ought not to buy it. I tell you the land is worthless. I thought you had more shrewdness," continued Mr. Sharp.

"But I want that piece of land, Mr. Sharp, and am willing to pay for it, and I wish the knoll above the road too," said Ned.

"There might be some sense in buying that lot," replied Mr. Sharp, "for in time you might be sure of getting one acre of good land."

"How many acres are there?" queried Ned.

"There is one acre above the road, and five below," replied Mr. Sharp.

"What will you take for it?" persisted Ned.

"Have you spoken to your father about it, Ned?" asked Mr. Sharp.

"No, sir," replied Ned. "It is my speculation. Three years ago father gave me the use of my little farm to do as I choose with it. He said I might do as I chose with it, and what I made from it I was to have for mine to speculate with as I chose. He wished me to work out my own problems. If I was shrewd, he said, I might make quite a little sum before I was of age, and if I was not he warned me that I might be worth nothing at that time. He said he would advise me if I asked, but he intimated I better go on my own account. Will you sell me the land?"

"I can't tell you now, Ned. I will let you know before Saturday," said Mr. Sharp, and he drove away and left Ned working his way into the brush.

As Mr. Sharp passed Ned's home, he saw Mr. Jackson in the yard, and mentioned to him to come to him.

After a short conversation on general matters, Mr. Sharp said:

"Mr. Jackson, I have been to me and is anxious to purchase that wild lot, which with the exception of the upper acre is practically worthless. He is waste land, and ways will be. He is persistent in his desire, and I cannot talk him out of it. It looks foolish of me that he should put money into it, and as it counts in acres I should not care to give it away. There are seven acres in all, with one acre that may be called really good. Ned is a minor, and I did not wish to sell it at any price until I saw you. So I told him I would think of it."

"Did he say what he wanted of it?" queried Mr. Jackson.

"No, he said it was his secret," replied Mr. Sharp. "But I have no idea what he could do with it."

"I have learned this much," replied Mr. Jackson, "when Ned says he has a secret, it is a sure sign that he has marked out one of his successful speculations. I have no idea what he will do with the low land, but I think I know what he might do with the upper lot. Ned has worked out some good results from his thoughtfulness since he began farming. I warn you to go careful and he has never failed yet. He has been very thoughtful of the past week, and has been over towards that piece of land a dozen times. He has been consulting all the real-estate books in the house, evidently working up some particular point. I do not think he is rushing into anything rashly, though it may not prove all he expects. He has quite a sum of money that he has saved right to do as he pleases with. What do you say the land worth?"

"Well, except in making an aggregate of land in acres it is worth very little. It is the upper field that contains the value as I see it. There are seven acres in both lots; would seventy-five dollars be too much?" queried Mr. Sharp.

"That is as low as I should sell it as it is situated," replied Mr. Jackson. "I know you do not care about disposing of the upper lot as it puts into your field, but if Ned persists, let him have it, if you will. If he has not counted the cost, it will be a lesson for him. Yes, let him buy it if he insists. I shall ask him nothing about it, unless he begins the subject. Thank you for your kindness in seeing me first, however," and with those words Mr. Jackson returned to his work, and Mr. Sharp rode away.

On the Saturday following, Mr. Sharp received an early call from Ned.

"What have you concluded in regard to the land, Mr. Sharp?" said Ned.

"I do not care to sell it for less than seventy-five dollars," replied Mr. Sharp.

"But you say the land is no good," replied Ned, with an eye to getting the best bargain possible.

"That is in a measure true, and so the price has been made very low," replied Mr. Sharp. "In fact, I have no great desire to part with it, and I will give you seventy dollars now or a fifty-five in one year, just as you please." replied Ned. "I have made up my mind that the land is worth ten dollars per acre, but if you are in no hurry for your money, I will give you seventy-five a year hence. I can secure you on funds in the bank if you wish."

"Well, it is a bargain, Ned," said Mr. Sharp. "I will give you a bond for a deed until you get your money, providing it is not over a year hence, but I fear, Ned, you have not made a good speculation. You will have taxes to pay on it you know, and there is the interest on your money, and it is a very unproductive lot. In fact, had you not better think it over more fully?"

"I have thought it over; I think I know what I am about, and I wish the writing made to-day. Shall I pay you seventy to-day or seventy-five at the end of the year?" said Ned.

"As you like, my boy."

"One year from to-day I will place seventy-five dollars in your hands. I think that will be better for me than to pay seventy now."

"All right, Ned," said Mr. Sharp. "I will go over to Lawyer Hartson now and have the writings made, and in one hour from that time Ned was owner of the most unproductive lot of ground in town.

"Ned, you will never get enough off that land to pay the taxes," said an old farmer who stood by, when the papers were made out. "Mr. Sharp, you ought to know better than to take the lad's money."

"He did not want to, sir. I insisted upon it. It is my affair entirely," said Ned, bound to defend his friend.

"Besides, sir, I shall pay no taxes on it. Before the assessors come around in the spring, that piece of land will be untaxable for ten years at least."

"Untaxable for ten years, what do you mean by that?" asked Mr. Sharp, surprised.

"Do you ever read the state laws?" asked Ned.

"Of course I do," replied Mr. Sharp.

"Well, four years ago, did not the state pass a law that waste land reclaimed and made productive should be free from taxation for ten years?" queried Ned.

"I had forgotten it, Ned, but I believe you are right; but do you expect to make that piece productive?"

"I do," said Ned.

"Just hear the young upstart!" said Mr. Sharp, looking at Ned with a twinkle in his eye. "Here I have been paying taxes on a worthless piece of land all these years, and as soon as I sign the deed, he turns about and declares he is going to have it productive and pay no taxes on it for ten years to come."

Ned laughed, and carefully placing the paper in his pocket, that made him a land owner, he hurried away, not even waiting to ride back with Mr. Sharp, who offered to take him home in his carriage.

"A smart boy," said Mr. Sharp to the crowd.

"Never saw his like," replied one. "Knows more about farming than any of us now, I begin to think," answered another.

And so, as Ned was hastening home, the lawyer and the people who were gathered in the office spoke only words of praise concerning Ned.

CHAPTER XIV.

In Which Ned Takes A Journey

"Father," said Ned, on the evening after the land purchase, "you let me go away for a few days?"

"Where are you going, Ned?"

"I desire to visit Portland."

"Have you friends there?"

"No, I wish to make a business trip. A business trip?" queried Mr. Jackson.

"Yes, a business trip," replied Ned.

"But, you never have been in so large a place in your life, said his father, shall you go alone?"

"Yes, sir," replied Ned.

"Well, I suppose it is time you did get outside of this place to see a little of the world. Yes, you may go. Better not take any more money than you need, you might have your pocket picked."

"Can I start on Monday morning?" asked Ned.

"Yes," replied Mr. Jackson. "You can go then as well as any time. Are you ready to divulge the important business that takes you there?"

"That is my secret," said Ned.

"All right, Ned; it was a bargain that the land business was yours, and yours alone. A city is a bad place to be in, and there is someone always on the watch for people from the country. You must be very careful."

"I will look out for No. 1," replied Ned.

On Monday morning Ned started for the city. He took an extra change of clothing for besides business, he desired to thoroughly explore the city, and might stop a week. Before he reached the city, a very neat, affable, and gentleman in a black dress suit and white necktie, took the vacant seat beside him. Ned concluded by the appearance of his clothes, and by the solemn look on his face that he was a clergyman, and this was made further plain to Ned from the fact that once or twice, he took from his pocket a well thumbed prayer book, and for some time turned its pages.

At last he put it away, and for a time looked in a dreamy manner over the fields, at last he spoke to Ned.

"Going to the city?" he inquired.

"I am," said Ned.

"First time?"

"Got friends there?"

"No."

"Business?"

"Yes."

"The city is a wicked place," replied Ned's seat-mate. "There are snares and temptations on every hand. A youth not accustomed to the ways of a great city should take great care."

"What business are you in?" said Ned's new friend, after a long pause.

"I do some farming at home, and have speculated a little."

Had Ned looked in his companion's eye at that moment, he would have seen a gleam within it that would have caused him to be suspicious at once, but his companion turned away, as if the matter was of no consequence whatever.

"What hotel do you stop at?" said the clerical looking gentleman.

"I do not know," replied Ned. "I shall be in the city a week, and shall try and get a quiet boarding house."

"You are wise, my friend," said Ned's companion, the hotel is no place for the young. Far too many of our young men in Portland learned their first steps in vice, by frequenting hotels, and they are expensive houses at best. He then looked out of the car window, and finely took out his prayer book and began reading again.

"I have been," he said at last, to read the burial service over one of our church members that only a few weeks since removed some distance from Portland, and who on his death bed requested that I should officiate at his funeral. Truly in the midst of life we are in death."

As they drew near Portland, Ned's friend turned suddenly toward him, and said:

"My young friend, I have been much attracted toward you, and knowing the dangers of a great city, I have been thinking about you. I know of a woman who keeps a boarding house, it is not very elegant, but is good enough for ordinary purposes. You are a stranger to me, and this house is kept by a poor woman. Can you assure me that you have the means to pay her should I introduce you to her home, she could ill afford to lose her pay?"

"I have enough I think," said Ned, displaying the contents of his pocket-book, and I have more besides, and a bank account at home. Ned said as a little proudly. In fact, he had received so much praise of late that he was becoming a little vain.

"I am satisfied," replied the clergyman, you must excuse me for asking, but I could not bear to have my friend in any way a loser by a person whom I introduced. I was sure, however, by your honest face, that I had made no mistake. I will gladly take you there as I go home."

Just then the train boy came along, and seeing some five oranges in his basket, Ned purchased several and placed them in his satchel. Five minutes after he was ordering why he did so, for during a little ride he had not even looked at the boy as he passed through the train with a package of purchasing any of his wares. Perhaps it was a good omen that directed him to do it, for the oranges proved to be to him a blessing in disguise, when he was in danger in the great city.

CHAPTER XV.

In Which Ned Finds Himself Duped.

When the train reached Portland, it was after sundown, but Ned had nothing to worry about, as his new friend had promised him a boarding place. As they left the train Ned thought his companion hustled him through the crowd with undue haste, and would- ed why he left by a side entrance. He also noticed that he and his friend were scrutinized very sharply by a policeman whom they met on the sidewalk a few moments after. In fact, that official turned about and followed along a few steps, but finally returned to his post. All this Ned remembered afterwards, but he thought little about the matter then. In fact, Ned was anxious to reach his boarding place to get washed, and have supper and go to bed. His journey had greatly fatigued him.

Ned noticed that his companion kept in the back streets; they were ill-lighted, and on them there were but few people traveling. Ned wondered if these streets were fair samples of those usually found in cities, and how it was that several soon keepers on a low street happened to wink so familiarly to his clergyman friend.

"He has probably ministered to them in some time of trouble," Ned said to himself, but he began to wish he was at home again.

At last Ned's friend stopped before a three-story brick building. He rung the bell, and a coarse looking woman came to the door. A look of intelligence passed between the two that Ned did not see.

"I had been into the country to attend a funeral," said the clergyman to the woman, "and I had the good fortune to meet this young man, who is making his first visit to our city. He knows no one here, and I told him some of the dangers that might beset him in the city, and I took occasion to recommend your house as a good stopping place. He has assured me of his ability to pay."

"Always doing good, parson, whenever you can," said the woman with a wink. The words were intended for Ned's ears. The wink was to the parson.

"If it is convenient let him have my old room in the second story," said the clergyman, "found it very comfortable when I roomed here. I will call and see my young friend again. Take good care of him." As he made the last remark he winked to the landlady and she winked in return, but Ned did not see these silent communications passing between the two.

"And by the way, I would not go out to-night," said the parson, "as you are a stranger in the city." Ned being tired, was only too glad to promise.

The clergyman turned away, and Ned stepped within the hallway, and as he did so he noticed that the woman turned the key and placed it in her pocket. Seeing that Ned was watching her sharply she remarked: "We have to be pretty particular about locking up in cities. It is different here than in the country."

She led the way into a dingy looking parlor, that was only lighted by a small lamp, and went out to prepare supper. The more Ned looked at his hostess and thought about his surroundings the more he did not like them, and if it had not been for the recommendation of his clerical friend, he would have been very uneasy.

As he sat waiting for his supper a little girl not fourteen years of age looked into the room. She was a sad looking child, and appeared a little fed and half fed. Her forlorn appearance made Ned feel sad, and he thought of the oranges he had bought. She left the doorway and was gone some time, and meanwhile Ned had taken the oranges from his satchel, and when she came to the door again he held them toward her.

Ned was surprised to see her glance anxiously into the room from whence she came, and where the landlady was, and then she sprang quickly forward, took the oranges, concealed them in her apron and evidently watching for a time when the landlady was not looking, she slipped out and was seen no more by Ned until supper time.

All the time that Ned was eating she watched him closely, and he thought once when her mistress was not looking that she tried to motion or say something to him with her lips, but he was not certain.

When supper was over the landlady at once proposed to how Ned his room and he was anxious to be alone. As he followed her into the hall to go up stairs, he saw the little girl holding her finger toward him as if in a warning manner.

Ned found his room to be comfortably furnished, but there was no lock on the door. The bed was a very old fashioned one and had four heavy posts. When Ned was left alone he sat down to think about it. It being the first time in his life that he had been away from home he felt very lonely. Then he began to think over the events of the day, his new friend, the action of the police near the depot, the walk in back streets, the coarse looking landlady, the sad faced girl, the big lock and the key in the woman's pocket, the little girl's queer motion to him the more Ned thought of it the more he wished he had never come to Portland, or at least had gone directly to a hotel. Then he began to think about the clergyman, the more he thought about him the less he felt confidence in him; he remembered too that the clergyman had very adroitly led him to tell him his business, and even to show his money. "Well, I believe I have been duped," said Ned to himself. "I may be smart at home, but I am no great shakes in a big world." He continued, "I am a prisoner here, as sure as I am alive, and I shall be robbed before morning," and Ned felt the hair raising on his head.

He arose and went to the window and looked down. He saw his room on the back side of the house, and there was a closed yard below. If he could reach that he could get over the fence and escape if worse came to worse. Then Ned began to laugh at his fears and accused himself of childish nervousness, and began to prepare for bed resolved to think no more about it.

Just as he was about to blow out his light he thought a pebble struck the window pane. He listened a moment and all was still, and again he heard something strike the window glass.

Again he looked out but saw nothing. He then extinguished his light taking the precaution to place matches where they could be easily found.

Again came that peculiar sound.

Now that the lamp in his room was out he could see more clearly what was outside, and he sat down by the window to see if he could discover the cause for the noise.

Again something hit the window pane, and directly in front of Ned's eyes. To his surprise he could see a small string with something white at the end. It looked like a piece of paper tied about some heavy substance which had struck the window several times.

"Wonder what that string is hanging from above for," said Ned, "just to be blown against my window by the wind."

And then Ned's hair began to rise again, for he remembered that there was no wind at all.

As Ned watched, the window was again hit, this time harder than before. That never moved of itself, said Ned, and it means something. That string comes down from above, and somebody is at the other end of it. That party is evidently trying to attract my attention. Ned then thought about the warning movement of the sad-faced girl as he left the room. It must be her, he thought; anyway I will find out what it means.

Ned very quietly raised the window and caught the string and pulled in the ball at the end. As he surmised it was a paper wrapped about a small weight.

Ned lit his lamp again and unfolded the paper and after much study made out the following:

"I was glad to see you, my friend, go or be midnite. This will rob you, He no preest, jump up winder."

The note was so illy written that it took Ned some time to make it out. The city clock was already striking half past twelve, and it was evident that he must get quickly. He reached his head out of the window and looking up saw that the string had been let down from a small window in the garret, but the string had disappeared now and no one could be seen. Below him was darkness. In spite of his peril, he laughed as he thought of the girl's advice to jump out of the window. The remedy he thought, would be worse than the disease. His eye ran rapidly over the room to find a means of escape. He examined the bed at last, and to his delight, he found that

it was a corded one, and the cord appeared to be strong. It took but a short time to get the bed uncoiled, and using the bed-posts for braces, he now had a safe means of getting into the yard below, and then to get into the street. He quietly made his preparations for departure and before the clock struck eleven, he let himself down the rope, and was soon safe upon the ground. He did not dare to stop here long, and taking a plank he had noticed before, he laid it against the side of the high fence and worked himself up toward the top. He then began to let himself down on the other side, and as he struck the ground he felt a hand grasp his collar, and found himself in the hands of a city policeman.

"I arrest you for housebreaking," said that official and began marching Ned toward the station.

CHAPTER XVI.

In Which Ned Is His Own Lawyer.

When Ned found himself in the hands of a policeman, he was more terrified than ever; he protested that he was no burglar, but all the comfort he received from that official was the command to "shut up."

In five minutes from the time Ned swung himself from the house where his clerical friend had left him, he was locked up in the station. "Well, I am safe from robbers now," said Ned, "the idea of being taken for one myself. It will probably come all right in the end, but how can I prove that I am not what I must seem to be. I was certainly caught under very suspicious circumstances."

To say Ned slept much that night would be untrue; but toward morning he fell asleep, and when he awoke he felt quite refreshed. The officer in charge gave him a few crackers to eat and some water to drink, and at nine o'clock he was brought before the judge.

What is the charge against this man, said the judge to the policeman who had brought him in.

"Burglary, sir, or an attempt of it," said that officer.

"Are the complainants here," said the judge.

"I am the only one at present," said the policeman.

"You may be sworn," said the judge.

"Now state what you know," he continued.

"As I was passing near Commercial street about eleven o'clock last night, said the policeman, "I saw in the darkness something that looked like a man sliding down a rope from the rear of a house, occupied by persons to me unknown. I hurried toward the spot, and by the time I reached the high fence that surrounds the yard, he had reached the ground in safety. I listened and heard him climbing up the inside of the fence, I kept quiet and when he dropped into the street I caught him, and took him to the station."

"Have the occupants of the house been summoned," queried the judge.

"Called there a short time ago, but couldn't raise no one," said the policeman. "I made inquiry and learned that the people were at home last night, and that they are a new family in the place. But I have another witness."

"Let him be sworn, then," said the judge.

This witness proved to be the policeman whom Ned had seen watching himself and clerical friend as they left the depot.

"What do you know about the case," said the judge.

"Nothing directly, but I saw him leave the train last night in company with that well-known crook, 'Billy the slick'."

"Is that all," said the judge.

"All that I know," said policeman No. two.

"Well, young man what have you to say for yourself," said the judge. "You were caught, evidently clandestinely, leaving the house that you had entered. It appears that you are a stranger in the city and came here last night in company with a notorious crackman and confidence man. What have you to say in your behalf?"

"Has there been any proof that a burglary was committed," replied Ned. "Has any one lost anything? Has any proof been presented to prove that I entered any place with intent to burglarize? Did I have stolen goods on my person? I admit coming down from the house on a rope, and quite lively, too, but is there any law against that? What proof is there that I did not enter that house by permission of the occupants? Did your policemen think I threw up that rope to the second story and then climb up on it? Does that look reasonable, Mr. Judge? I think not. I went in at the door, and as none come here to accuse me of entering without permission, I do not see as you have much of a case."

"That is true, I am inclined to think," said the judge, "but it is rather a suspicious circumstance to be found escaping from a house by rope at midnight, after having been seen an earlier hour with a well known crook. I think I must hold you until we investigate the matter. We must see what they have to say about the matter at the house."

"I am anxious to be about my business, sir," said Ned, now really alarmed at the thought of being longer confined. "I am innocent of all crime. I came here on a business trip, and to visit your city, and I am getting a cold reception."

"You can state your case in full," said the judge, leaning back in his chair as if he had already made up his mind to pronounce sentence as soon as Ned got through.

"May I please your honor," continued Ned, "about one week ago, I noticed an advertisement in your local paper, that a man desired a lot of spoon-hunt sticks for manufacturing purposes, and to apply in person at his room on Congress street. I also saw that another person desired a lot of birch hoop poles for his fish keg manufacturing. Last Saturday I purchased a lot of land, on which was a large quantity of both spoon-hunts and birch poles. I have here in my pocketbook these two advertisements, which I herewith produce as evidence." And Ned laid them before the judge.

"On my way here yesterday to meet these gentlemen in answer to their advertisements, I was met by a man

whom I took for a clergyman, as he read considerably from a prayer book, and in fact, he told me that he was on his way home from attending the funeral of one of his former church members. During our conversation, I was so foolish as to let him know that I had some money about me, and that I was coming here on a business trip. He then talked much about the dangers of young men who come to the city from the country, having no friends here, and then proposed to take me to a safe boarding house kept by a lady friend of his, who was in very needy circumstances. I gladly accepted his kindly offer, and was taken to the house from which the policeman saw me escape."

"What happened in the house?" spoke up the judge now really interested.

"The door was shut and bolted behind me, I was given supper, and while I was there I was warned by a sad looking girl of about fourteen years that I was in danger. She looked as if she led a very unhappy life. She was so hungry looking that I gave her some oranges. She had a red-looking scar over her eye. I think she must have had hard usage sometime."

At this point a gentleman, who had just come into the court room, spoke up suddenly.

"Judge, may I ask a question?"

"Certainly," said the judge.

"Did you notice what eye the scar was over?" queried the new gentleman.

"The left," replied Ned.

"Was there any other peculiarity about it?" said the man, eagerly.

"I noticed that it was very red," replied Ned.

"Anything else?" pressed the man, in great excitement.

"I noticed that the scar curved like a letter C or a half moon," replied Ned.

"How old do you think the girl was?" almost shrieked the man, in the intensity of his excitement.

"Fourteen, perhaps," said Ned.

"It must be her," said the man, and he rushed up to the judge's stand, and held a hurried conversation. "Be quiet Mr. Martin," Ned heard the judge say at last, "nothing can be gained by too much haste. You must not be too confident."

"Go on with your story, sir," said the judge turning to Ned.

"There is not much more to say. I soon made up my mind that I was in a bad place, and was in danger. When I went to bed I received another warning motion from the little girl." Ned further told the story of the message on the string which he had received from the little girl. "And this letter I produce as evidence to the truth of what I have said," continued Ned as he laid that document before the judge.

"You are honorably acquitted," said the judge.

"Mr. policeman," he continued, after a few moments writing, "go at once with this search warrant, to the house where this young man stopped, search every room in it, find that girl if possible, bring all the inmates to the station."

"I want my satchel," put in Ned.

"Judge," said the excited gentleman, "take that young man to the hotel, tell them to give him the best house affords at my expense. I will see that his baggage is found and sent there. Look after the young man, Judge. Come Mr. policeman, let us hurry," and they hastened away.

"Well, my man," said the judge, "it looks now as if you had been a blessing to that man by coming to the city. If it were not for that I should regret what you have suffered in the hands of our officers."

"Oh, there is no great harm done," said Ned. "In fact I have learned a lesson. It has taken some of the conceit out of me. I had begun to think I was very smart. It is all right, sir, but what is that man so anxious about that girl? Her description answers exactly to that of his lost daughter who was kidnapped five years ago, and if it so proves, you will be entitled to a reward of \$1,000, which he offered for information that would lead to her recovery," said the judge. "But here we are at the hotel."

"Landlord, give this boy a breakfast now, the best the house affords, Mr. Martin will be responsible for his board so long as he remains here."

The judge shook Ned by the hand and left him, and Ned settled back in an easy chair, in the parlor to wait for his breakfast, and wonder what would happen next.

CHAPTER XVII.

In Which Mr. Martin Pays His Debts of Gratitude.

For the remainder of the day Ned did very little but stay in the hotel. After he had eaten the bountiful breakfast provided for him, he asked to be shown to his room, as he felt disposed to sleep, and thus make up the loss of the night before. Just as the porter was about to show him to his room his baggage was sent in.

"Well, Richard is himself again," said Ned, as he closed the door on the porter and unlocked his satchel, the contents of which he found all right. Before taking his nap he sat down and wrote a letter to his parents, in which he informed them of his arrival, good health, and that he was quartered for the present at the hotel. He said nothing of his adventure, as he desired to tell it in his own way at home; and he thought should he write of his mishap his parents would be in a continual worry during his absence. When the letter was written he took it down to the office to be mailed, and then returned to his room, and throwing himself on his bed he fell asleep and did not awake again until late in the afternoon.

How long he might have slept it is hard to tell, if he had not been awakened at last by a knock at his door. He jumped up as he heard it and opening the door Mr. Martin stood before him.

"You have done me a great service," said that gentleman as he stepped into the room and grasped Ned by the hand.

"Was it really your long lost daughter?" said Ned with the greatest possible interest manifested on his countenance.

To be continued.