

A BOY'S LESSON.

"HAVE you examined that bill, James?"

"Yes, sir."

"Anything wrong?"

"I find two errors."

"Ah! let me see."

The lad handed the employer a long bill that had been placed upon his desk for examination.

"Here is an error in the calculation of ten dollars which they have made against themselves; and another of ten dollars in the footing."

"Also against themselves?"

"Yes, sir."

The merchant smiled in a way that struck the lad as peculiar.

"Twenty dollars against themselves," he remarked in a kind of pleasant surprise. "Trusty clerks they must have."

"Shall I correct the figures?" asked the lad.

"No! let them correct their own mistakes; we don't examine bills for other people's benefit," replied the merchant. "It will be time to rectify those errors when they find them out. All so much gain as it now stands."

The boy's delicate moral sense was shocked at so unexpected a remark. He was the son of a poor widow, who had given him to understand that to be just was the duty of men.

Mr. Carman the merchant, in whose employment he had been for only a few months, was an old friend of his father's, in whom he reposed the highest confidence. In fact, James had always looked upon him as a kind of model man, and when Mr. Carman agreed to take him into his store, he felt that a good fortune was in his way.

"Let them correct their own mistakes." These words made a strong impression on the mind of James Lewis. When first spoken by Mr. Carman, and with the meaning then involved, he felt, as we have said, shocked; but as he turned them over again in his thoughts, and connected their utterance with a person who stood so high in his mother's estimation, he began to think that the thing was fair enough in business. Mr. Carman was hardly the man to do wrong. A few days after James had examined the bill, a clerk from the house by which it had been rendered called for settlement. The lad, who was present, waited with interest to see if Carman would speak of the error. But he made no remark. A check for the amount of the bill rendered was filled up and a receipt taken.

"Is that right?"

James asked himself this question.—His moral sense answered no; but the fact that Mr. Carman had acted so bewildered his mind.

"It may be the way in business"—so he thought to himself—"but it don't look honest. I wouldn't have believed it of him."

Mr. Carman had a kind of way with him that won the boy's heart, and naturally tended to make him judge whatever he might do in a most favorable manner.

"I wish he had corrected that error," he said to himself a great many times when thinking in a pleased way of Mr. Carman, and his own good fortune in having been received into his employment. It don't look right, but way be it's the way of business."

One day he went to the bank and drew the money on the check. In counting it over he found that the teller had paid him fifty dollars too much, so he went back to the counter and told him of his mistake. The teller thanked him and he returned to the store with the consciousness in his mind of having done right.

"The teller overpaid me fifty dollars," he said to Mr. Carman, as he handed him the money.

"Indeed!" replied the latter, a light breaking over his countenance; and he hastily counted over the bills.

The light faded as the last bill left his fingers.

"There's no mistake, James." A tone of disappointment was in his voice.

"Oh, I gave him back the fifty dollars. Wasn't it right?"

"You simpleton!" exclaimed Mr. Carman. "Don't you know that bank errors are never corrected? If the teller had paid you fifty dollars short he would not have made it right."

The warm blood mantled the cheek of James under this reproach. It is often the case that more shame is felt for a blunder than for a crime. In this instance the lad felt a sort of mortification at having done what Mr. Carman was pleased to call a silly thing, and he made up his mind that if they should ever overpay him a thousand dollars at the bank he should bring the amount to his employer, and let him do as he pleased with the money.

"Let people look after their own mistakes," said Mr. Carman.

James Lewis pondered these things in his heart. The impression they made was too strong to be forgotten. "It

may be right," he said, but he did not feel altogether satisfied.

A month or two after the occurrence of that bank mistake, as James counted over his weekly wages, just received from Mr. Carman, he discovered that he was paid half a dollar too much.

The first impulse of his mind was to return the half dollar of his employer, and it was on his lips to say, "You have given me a half dollar too much, sir," when the unforgotten words, "Let people look after their own mistakes," flashing upon his thoughts, made him hesitate. To hold a parley with evil is to be overcome.

"I must think about this," said James, as he put the money into his pocket. "If it is true in one case it is in another. Mr. Carman don't correct mistakes that people make in his favor and he can't complain when the rule works against himself."

But the boy was far from being in a comfortable state. He felt that to keep half a dollar would be a dishonest act. Still he could not make up his mind to return it, at least not then.

James did not return the half dollar, but spent it for his own gratification.—After he had done this it came suddenly into his head that Mr. Carman had only been trying him, and he was filled with anxiety and alarm.

Not long after Mr. Carman repeated the same mistake. James kept the half dollar with less hesitation.

"Let him correct his own mistakes," said he resolutely; "that's the doctrine he acts on with other people, and he can't complain if he gets paid back in the same coin he puts in circulation. I just wanted half a dollar."

From this time the fine moral sense of James Lewis was blunted. He had taken an evil counselor into his heart, stimulated a spirit of covetousness—latent in almost every mind—which caused him to desire the possession of things beyond his ability to obtain.

James had good business qualifications and so pleased Mr. Carman by his intelligence, industry and tact with customers, that he advanced him rapidly, and gave him, before he was eighteen years old, the most reliable position in the store. But James had learned something more from his employer than how to do business well. He had learned to be dishonest. He had never forgotten the first lesson he had received in this bad science; he had acted not only in two instances, but in a hundred, and always to the injury of Mr. Carman. He had long since given up waiting for mistakes to be made in his favor, but originated them in the varied and complicated transaction of a large business in which he was trusted implicitly; for it had never occurred to Mr. Carman that his failure to be just to the letter might prove a snare to the young man.

James grew sharp, cunning, and skillful; always on the alert, always bright and ready to meet any approaches towards a discovery of his wrong doing by his employer, who held him in the regard.

Thus it went on until James was in his twentieth year, when the merchant had his suspicions aroused by a letter which spoke of the young man as not keeping the most respectable company, and spending money too freely for a clerk on a moderate salary.

Before this time James had removed his mother into a pleasant house, for which he paid a rent of four hundred dollars; his salary was eight hundred but he first deceived his mother by telling her it was fifteen hundred.—Every comfort that she needed was fully supplied, and she was beginning to think that after a long and painful struggle with the world, her happier days had come.

James was at his desk when the letter was received by Mr. Carman. He looked at his employer and saw him change countenance suddenly. He read it over twice, and James saw that the contents produced disturbance. Mr. Carman glanced towards the desk, and their eyes met; it was only for a moment, but the look that James received made his heart stop beating.

There was something about the movements of Mr. Carman for the rest of the day that troubled the young man. It was plain to him that suspicion had been aroused by that letter. O, how bitterly did he repent, in dread of discovery and punishment, the evil of which he had been guilty! Exposure would disgrace and ruin him, and bow the head of his widowed mother even to the grave.

"You are not well this evening," said Mrs. Lewis, as she looked at her son's changed face across the table, and noticed that he did not eat.

"My head aches."

"Perhaps the tea will make you feel better."

"I'll lie down on the sofa in the parlor for a short time."

Mrs. Lewis followed him into the parlor after a little, and sitting down on the sofa on which he was lying, placed her hand upon his head. Ah, it would take more than the loving pressure of a

mother's hand to ease the pain from which he was suffering. The touch of that pure hand increased the pain to agony.

"Do you feel better?" asked Mrs. Lewis. She had remained some time with her hand upon his forehead.

"Not much," he replied, and rising as he spoke, he added, "I think a walk in the open air will do me good."

"Don't go out, James," said Mrs. Lewis, a troubled feeling coming into her heart.

"I'll only walk a few squares." And James went from the parlor and passed into the street.

"There is something more than headache the matter with him," thought his mother.

For half an hour James walked without any purpose in his mind beyond the escape from the presence of his mother. At last his walk brought him near Mr. Carman's store, and at passing he was surprised at seeing a light within.

"What can this mean?" he asked himself, a new fear creeping, with its shuddering impulse, into his heart.

He listened by the door and windows, but he could hear no sound within.

"There's something wrong," he said, "what can it be. If this is discovered, what will be the end of it? Ruin! ruin. My poor mother!"

The wretched young man hastened on, walked the streets for two hours, when he returned home. His mother met him when he entered, and with unconcealed anxiety, asked him if he were better.—He said yes, but in a manner that only increased the trouble she felt, and passed up hastily to his own room.

In the morning the strangely altered face of James, as he met his mother at the breakfast table, struck alarm into her heart. He was silent and evaded all her questions. While they sat at the table the door bell rang loudly. The sound startled James, and he turned his head to listen in a nervous way.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs. Lewis.

"A gentleman who wishes to see Mr. James," replied the girl.

James rose instantly, and went out into the hall, shutting the dining-room door as he did so. Mrs. Lewis sat waiting her son's return. She heard him coming back in a moment; but he did not enter the dining-room. Then he returned along the hall to the street door, and she heard it shut. All was silent. Starting up she ran out into the passage, but James was not there. He had gone away with the person who had called.

Ah, that was a sad going away. Mr. Carman had spent half the night in examining the accounts of James, and discovered frauds of six thousand dollars. Blindly indignant he sent an officer to arrest him early in the morning; and it was with this officer that he went away from his mother, never to return.

"The young villain shall lie in the bed he has made for himself!" exclaimed Mr. Carman, in his bitter indignation. And he made the exposure completely.

On the trial he showed an eager desire to have him convicted, and presented such an array of evidence that the jury could not give any other verdict but guilty.

The poor mother was in court, and audible in the silence that followed came her convulsed sobs upon the air. The presiding judge addressed the culprit, and asked if he had anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced against him.

All eyes were turned upon the pale, agitated young man, who rose with an effort, and leaned against the railing by which he stood, as is needing the support.

"Will it please your honors," he said, "to direct my prosecutor to come a little nearer, so that I can look at him and your honors at the same time?"

Mr. Carman was directed to come forward to where the boy stood. James looked at him steadily for a few moments, and then turned to the judges.

"What I have to say to your honors is this," (he spoke calmly and distinctly) "and it may in a degree extenuate, though I cannot excuse my crime. I went into this man's store an innocent boy, and if he had been an honest man I would not have stood before you to-day as a criminal."

Mr. Carman appealed to the court for protection against an allegation of such an outrageous character; but he was peremptorily ordered to be silent.

"Only a few weeks after I went into his employment I examined a bill by his direction and discovered an error of twenty dollars."

The face of Mr. Carman crimsoned.

"You remember it, I see," said James, "and I shall have cause to remember it while I live. The error was in favor of Mr. Carman. I asked if I should correct the figures, and he answered, 'No, let them correct their own mistakes; we don't examine bills for other people's benefit.' It was first lesson in dishonesty. I saw the bill settled, and

saw Mr. Carman take twenty dollars that was not his own. I felt shocked at first; it seemed such a wrong thing.—But soon after he called me a simpleton for handing back a fifty dollar bill to the teller of a bank, which he had overpaid me on a check, and then—"

"May I ask the protection of the court?" said Mr. Carman.

"Is it true what the lad says?" asked the judge.

Mr. Carman hesitated and looked confused; all eyes were on his face; and judges and jury, lawyers and spectators, felt certain that he was guilty of leading the unhappy young man astray.

"Not long afterwards," resumed the young man, "in receiving my wages I found that Mr. Carman had paid me fifty cents too much. I was about to give it back to him, when I remembered his remark about letting people correct their own mistakes, and said to myself, 'let him correct his own errors,' and dishonestly kept the money. Again the thing happened, and again I kept the money that did not of right belong to me. This was the beginning of evil, and here I am. If he had shown any mercy I might have kept quiet and made no defense."

The young man covered his face with his hands and sat down overpowered with his feelings. His mother, who was near him, sobbed aloud, and bending over, laid her hands on his head, saying:

"My poor boy! my poor boy!"

There were few eyes in the court-room undimmed by tears. In the silence that followed, Mr. Carman spoke out:

"Is my character to be thus blasted on the words of a criminal, your honors? Is this right?"

"Your solemn oath that this charge is untrue," said the judge, "will set you in the right."

It was the unhappy boy's only opportunity, and the court felt bound in humanity to hear him.

James Lewis stood up again instantly and turned his white face and dark piercing eyes upon Mr. Carman.

"Let him take his oath if he dare?" he exclaimed.

Mr. Carman consulted with his counsel and withdrew.

After a brief conference with his associates, the presiding judge said, addressing the criminal:

"In consideration of your youth and the temptation to which in tender years you were unhappily subjected, the court gives you the slightest sentence, one year imprisonment. But let me solemnly warn you against any further steps in the way you have taken. Crime can have no valid excuse. It is evil in the sight of God and man, and leads only to suffering. When you come forth again after your brief incarceration, may it be with the resolution to die rather than to commit a crime."

And the curtain fell on the sad scene in the boy's life. When it was lifted again, and he came forth from prison, a year afterward, his mother was dead.—From the day her pale face faded from his vision as he passed from the court room he never looked upon her again.

Ten years afterwards a man was reading a newspaper in a far western town. He had a calm, serious face, and looked like one who had known suffering and trial.

"Brought to justice at last!" he said to himself, as the blood came to his face; "convicted on the charge of open insolvency, and sent to State prison.—So much for the man who gave me in tender years the first lessons in ill-doing. But, thank God, the first lessons have been remembered. 'When you come forth again,' said the judge, 'may it be with the resolution to die rather than to commit a crime,' and I have kept this injunction in my heart when there seemed no way of escaping except through crime; and God helping me, I will keep it to the end."

A Neat Swindle.

A notion peddler named Wildman has frequently called on John Logue, of Clarion county, recently. A few nights since he claimed to have dreamed that \$5,000 in silver were hid in a tree in the neighborhood. He induced Mr. Logue to accompany him to the place and offered him half the money if found provided he would assist in cutting down the tree. When it fell supposed coin to the amount of \$5,000 was discovered.—The peddler said he did not know what to do with so much silver and inquired where he would likely get greenbacks for the money. Mr. Logue accommodated him. The peddler went off and has not since been heard from. On endeavoring to pass some of the money it was found to be counterfeit of the poorest kind. Mr. Logue is \$2,500 out, and the story ends. It was a clever job of a gang of counterfeiters which probably infest that county.

It is easy to pick holes in other people's work, but it is far more profitable to do better work yourself.

VEGETINE

Purifies the Blood & Gives Strength.

DE QUOIN, Ill., Jan. 21, 1878.

MR. H. B. STEVENS:—Dear Sir—Your Vegetine has been doing wonders for me. Have been having the Chills and Fever, contracted in the swamps of the South, nothing giving me relief until I began to use your Vegetine, it giving me immediate relief, toning up my system, purifying my blood, giving strength; whereas all other medicines weakened me, and filled my system with poison; and I am satisfied that if all families that live in the malarial districts of the South and West, would take Vegetine two or three times a week, they would not be troubled with the Chills or the malarial fevers that prevail at certain times of the year, save doctors' bills, and live to a good old age.

Respectfully yours,
J. E. MITCHELL,
Agent Henderson's Looms, St. Louis, Mo.

ALL DISEASES OF THE BLOOD. If Vegetine will relieve pain, cleanse, purify, and cure such diseases, restoring the patient to perfect health, after trying different physicians, many remedies, suffering for years, is it not conclusive proof, if you are a sufferer, you can be cured? Why is this medicine performing such great cures? It works in the blood, in the circulating fluid. It can truly be called the Great Blood Purifier. The great source of disease originates in the blood; and no medicine that does not act directly upon it, to purify and renovate, has and just claim upon public attention.

VEGETINE

Has Entirely Cured Me of Vertigo.

CAIRO, Ill., Jan. 23, 1878.

MR. H. B. STEVENS:—Dear Sir—I have used several bottles of Vegetine; it has entirely cured me of Vertigo. I have also used it for Kidney Complaint. It is the best medicine for Kidney Complaint. I would recommend it as a good blood purifier.

Respectfully yours,
N. YOCUM.

PAIN AND DISEASE. Can you expect to enjoy good health when bad or corrupt humors circulate with the blood, causing pain and disease; and these humors, being deposited through the entire body, produce pimples, eruptions, ulcers, indigestion, costiveness, headache, neuralgia, rheumatism, and numerous other complaints? Remove the cause by taking Vegetine, the most reliable remedy for cleansing and purifying blood.

VEGETINE.

I Believe it to be a Good Medicine.

KENIA, O., March 1, 1877.

MR. H. B. STEVENS:—Dear Sir—I wish to inform you what your Vegetine has done for me. I have been afflicted with Neuralgia, and after using three bottles of the Vegetine was entirely relieved. I also found my general health much improved. I believe it to be a good medicine.

Yours truly,
FRED. HAEVSTICK.

VEGETINE thoroughly eradicates every kind of humor, and restores the entire system to a healthy condition.

VEGETINE.

Druggist's Report.

H. B. STEVENS:—Dear Sir—We have been selling your Vegetine for the past eighteen months, and we take pleasure in stating that in every case, to your knowledge, it has given great satisfaction.

Respectfully,
BUCK & COWGILL, Druggists,
Hickman, Ky.

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Newport, Perry County, Pa.

ESTATE NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary on the estate of Lydia Mader, late of Perry county, Pa., deceased, have been granted to the undersigned, residing in same township.

All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment and those having claims to present them duly authenticated for settlement to

I. J. HOLLAND,
Executor.

July 15, 1878—6t pd.