THE TIMES, NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA. DECEMBER 14, 1880.

What a Listener Heard. A Story For Parents.

TWENTY years ago Peter Raymond owned a hard, stony farm, eighteen miles from Hartford. One September evening, about nine o'clock, as he was returning home from a neighbor's, he suddenly recollected that he had left his bridle hanging on a bar-post, by his sheep-barn, when he turned his old white mare into pasture that afternoon. He sprang over the wall and across the lots, hoping to secure it before any greedy-mawed bovine should make it forever useless for bridle purposes. As he drew near the barn he thought he heard volces inside. What any one should be there for, he could not conjecture. He stepped lightly as he could on the unmowed rowen and slipped in behind the door which was standing ajar, and listened.

Philip, his eldest son, was there, and Clinton Dexter, a son of the man at whose house he had been to call. The lads were about of an age-both fifteen. Philip was talking when his father went up to the barn, but he finished what he was saying just as Mr. Raymond got into a position to catch the words, and young Dexter commenced to reply. He said:

" Well, Phil, my father is just as inconsiderate as your father is. I don't think he remembers he was ever a boy. There is searcely a day in the year he does not ride out-he rides more'n he used to before he was selectman, and you may be sure that he always has something on hand to be done, just as your father does. Soon as the frost is out of the ground, in the spring, he tells me before he rides off that I may pick up stones or spread manure till it is time to milk and fodder. After that time plowing and planting. A little later in the season he tells me to hoe the potatoes, or weed the garden, till it is time to get up the cows; and if he is at home when'l take up the pails to go out and milk, he always tells me to be sure and strip the cows clean, just as though I should be lazy and dishonest enough to leave balf the milk in their bags if he did not tell me so; and he would be just as likely to tell me before visitors as any way-makes a fellow feel mighty uncomfortable, you know. In the winter I have to chop wood most of the time that I am not in school; and I don't think my father feels quite satisfied if I don't chop as much as a fullgrown man could do in the same time. I didn't know till the other day just how it was with you, Phil I don't wonder that your patience is worn out, and I assure you that I am quite as tired of living in this way as you are."

"I hesitated a good while, Clint," Phil replied, "before I decided to speak to you about it; but I made up my mind in having time that it was the last summer that I should stay at home and help hay it and fare as I did then. Father is always ready to find fault-he generally says when he gets home, 'I don't think that you've hurt yourself working to day, Philip.' And sometimes he asks me if my back doesn't ache, I've chopped so much or hoed so much, and, no matter if I work as hard as I can, from sunrise till sundown, I never hear anything more encouraging -never get one word of praise. I feel sorry to clear out on mother's account. I love her and I believe she loves me: but if father loves me he never shows it -never speaks a tender, loving word to me. My mind is fully made up Clint. I am going to run away and I want to get off to-night. Never mind about your clothes-1've got shirts, handkerchiefs and stockings enough put up and I'll divide with you until we can earn more. Last week I thought it over and thought it would grieve mother, so I pretty much decided to give it up; but I got so provoked the day father went to Hartford, I determined that I would go anyway. You see, here I've lived ever since I was born, within eighteen miles of Hartford, but I never was there, nor in any other city. I asked father if I might go with him last June, when he was going, and he said I couldn't go very well then, but I should go with him the very first time he went after haying. Well, when he spoke of going last week I asked him if he was going to take me along and he answered pretty erabbedly: 'No, sir; pretty time to think of going when the hired man is gone !' I told him I would get you to come and do the chores and you would be as faithful in doing them as I would be; but he wouldn't hear a word about it. I didn't feel very light-hearted after he was gone, but I tried to brave it out the best that I could and I worked hard all day. That afternoon was a dark, cloudy one and I got up the cows and milked them a little earlier than I supposed I did, but don't think the sun was five minutes high when I got the chores done. I took the newspaper and sat down in the doorway so as to be on hand to take care of the horse when father came, and I hadn't read a quarter of a column when he drove up. Well, Clinton, as true as I live and breathe, after his promising that I should go to Hartford with him the first time that he went after baying and then breaking his word and leaving me to work hard all day, the first thing he said to me was: ' What are you sitting there reading for? Why aren't you doing your chores ?' It galled me, I tell you, but I replied that the chores were all done, and he said : 'O, ho, that is it. You do the chores in the middle of the afternoon when I am gone, and then sit down and read, do you ?" It was confounded cutting ; if he had stuck a knife into me it wouldn't have hurt any worse. I vowed then I would see Hartford on my birthday, and I shall be much mistaken if I am not there tomorrow morning, and if my father sees me again for a year he will see more'n I think he will. I will be at the barn just at midnight. My bundle of clothes is here now in the out-bin. Don't fail to be on time, Clint. We must get a single plimpse of the city befor the steamboat goes out. I don't know shat the fare is to New York. I doubt if we have money enough to take us there. If we haven't we can stop at some of

the landing places on the way." What a variety of feelings Peter Raymond had in the fifteen minutes he stood behind that barn door and listened. At first he was utterly surprised, he could hardly believe his own ears, but as he took it all in-as he comprehended what his son contemplated doing, he was in high dudgeon ; he unconsciously clenched his teeth very firmly and clenched his right fist tightly. He could hardly refrain from pouncing upon his son then and there and giving him a sound drubbing; but be decided that it would be wise to hear the boys' talk out, and learn all their plans and then confront them. But as Philip talked on Raymond's teeth were less firmly closed and his fist relaxed. and when Philip said in a half sad tone, " I doubt if my father loves me at all,' a dozen different feelings strove for the mastery.

"Don't love him ?" he repeated to himself, "the ungrateful rascal ! Haven't I been scrubbing along as savingly as possible and privately putting little sums in the savings bank so that 1 could send him away in a year or two, and give him a better chance for an education than I ever had ? Haven't I often said to my friends that he was one of the most faithful, trusty boys in the world ? and that I could leave home any time, day or night, and never worry about things as long as he was there to take care? If he does doubt my love, up to this time I have loved him and have been proud of him. I haven't been very demonstrative about it, to be sure. I never thought it was wise to pet and praise children. Perhaps I have been a little too unsocial and cold and straight-laced with him. Maybe I'd better not let him know I've heard this talk about their running away; but I shall of course do something to prevent their going. I'll go up to the house and think over what course to take."

And Peter Raymond crept away from the barn as though he was a sneak thief and hurried home as fast as he could, not once thinking of his bridle. He had hardly got seated in his big arm chair before Philip came in. Philip exexpected his father would say, gruffly : " It is high time you were in bed." And so he was quite taken by surprise when he said gently :

Clinton Dexter would come to the barn at midnight, and-Philip was arrested in his cogitations

by his father's saying :

"I have so many cares, so many things to think of that I can hardly keep track of my children's ages. I believe, Philip, your birthday comes the thirtieth day of September, doesn't it ?" " Yes, sir,"

"And so you will be fifteen years old to-morrow. Well, well, it does beat all how the time flies. Fifteen years! It doesn't seem more than half that time since you were a baby. Let me see, I believe I promised to let you go to Hartford this fall, didn't I ? We shall be half-way there when we get to Skidmore's, seeing to-morrow is your birthday, perhaps we had better keep on, I don't know as we shall have any better time to leave. We can start-have breakfast at half-past five, and get off by six, and by nine, if we have good luck, we shall be there. We can stay there till three o'clock in the afternoon and then you wouldn't be late home. It will be light to-morrow evening-there is a good moon now. Well, you may as well go to bed and get all the sleep that you can. I shall call you up at four

o'clock." Philip started the second time to go, but just as he got his hand on the door latch, his father said :

"Wait a minute, Philip. If you had some one to keep your company from Skidmore's and help you drive the heifer, I wouldn't mind staying till night before we left the city. Perhaps Clinton Dexter would be willing to walk up from there with you and help drive her, if he could go with us to Hartford and spend the day. If you think that he would, and you would like to have him go, you may run over to Mr. Dexter's and tell him if it is convenient for him to spare Clinton, I would like to have him go to Hartford with us tomorrow, and walk home from Skidmore's with you in the evening. And be sure to tell Clinton, if his father consents to his going, that we will call for him as early as six o'clock."

Philip said: "Yes, sir," and took up his hat and went into the hall; but before he got to the outside door, his father called out :

"One thing more, Philip. I left my bridle hanging on a bar-post down by the sheep-barn this afternoon. If you'll come back across lots and bring it up, it'll save going for it in the morning. I intended to get it myself, when I came home from Mr. Dexter's, but it slipped my mind."

"Lucky thing it did," Philip said to himself, as he stepped out of the door. "If he had come around that way and heard Clint and me talking in that barn. I guess he wouldn't be in so gentle a mood to-night. He would have given me ' Hail Columbia,' right and left, and Clint would have fared worse than I; for when his father's back is up, he's as savage as a tiger. Strange what has come over father to-night. I noticed that mother was surprised to see him so much more social and gentle than common."

On his way over to Mr. Dexter's, Philip had a great variety of feelings and as great a conflict with them as his father had while standing behind the barn door; but before he got there, the summing up was, that he was an ungrateful scamp and that his father was all right, only he had so many cares and anxieties that it sometimes made him a little stern and crabbed. Mr. Dexter was always ready to oblige his neighbor Raymond and he cheerfully gave his consent to Clinton's going. Clinton didn't know what to make of this sudden turn of affairs. As he went with Philip to the door, he whispered : "What's up, Phil? What has happened? Has your father found out anything ?" "Not a thing-not a thing," Philip hurriedly whispered back. "You don't suppose, Clint, he'd be taking us to Hartford to-morrow if he had? It's all right, but it's the strangest thing that ever happened-I'll tell you all about it to-morrow - can't stay long enough now." Mr. Raymond took up a newspaper and bowed his head over it as soon as his son started for Mr. Dexter's, but if his wife had observed him closely she would have seen that he did very little reading and there was a troubled expression on his countenance. He did not raise his eyes from the paper when he heard returning footsteps, but he listened very intently and he knew that Philip stole softly and hurriedly to the back end of the hall and opened the chamber-door before he came into the sitting-room. A look of relief came over his face and he straightened up as if a great burden had been lifted from him. He had no doubt that the bundle of clothing had been brought up from the oat-bin and left on the chamber stairs till Philip should go up to bed. That is what he hoped his boy would do when he asked him to come around by the barn and get the halter. He had no

forther fear that he would attempt to give him the allp that night.

Mr. Raymond and Philip rode up to Mr. Dexter's door for Clinton the next morning, just as the sun was peeping over the hills. It was as delightful a September morning as they could desire. As soon as they were all well on the road, Mr. Raymond said :

"Now, boys, you must keep your eyes open-see all there is to be seen and get all the enjoyment out of going that you can. We don't have holidays very often and we must make the most of them when we do have them. Philip and I have worked pretty hard lately and I guess, Clinton, you have. I believe a play will do us all good. I made up my mind, this morning, to try and leave all my cares and business behind me, for once; so you may ask me as many questions as you wish and you need have no fears that it will disturb me at all."

It did not escape Mr. Raymond's observation that his remarks caused the lads to glance at each other in blank astonishment, and it cut him to the quick. "What kind of a father have I been," he asked himself, "not to be able to speak a few civil and kind words to my son without having it received with such surprise. Poor boy! Wonder, pleasure, guilt and grief are all depicted in his countenance to day. After this, with God's help, I'll so manage that he'll never doubt my loving him-never plan to run away from his father's

again." Mr. Raymond spared no pains to have the boys enjoy their first trip to Hartford He called their attention to every thing that he thought would interest them on their way. He told them who owned such and such a farm when he was a boy-what the land was worth an acre then, and what was its market value now-who built this house and that, and he pointed out where General - was born, and where Hon. lived till he went to college. He was no less painstaking when they got to the city. He took them past Trinity College, the State House, the High School ; he pointed out the different churches and told who preached in them; he went with them to the Athenaeum and spent an hour with them there.

Sometimes Philip looked at his father in dumb bewilderment, wondering if they really were in Hartford or if it were all a dream. How social and interesting his father was! He felt as if he was never acquainted with him before. What a delightful time he should have if he had not been planning to do so mean a thing. If father knew it how he would despise him ; he looked at him so earnestly sometimes, he was afraid that he saw guilt in his countenance. If he could only get up the courage he would confess the whole to his father and implore his forgiveness.

Thus the day wore away and Philip was not sorry when it was time to start for home. After Mr. Raymond had left the lads to follow on with a heifer they talked over the events of the last twentyfour hours together, and they were both very decidedly of the opinion that they had a very narrow and providential escape from committing a very disgraceful act; and they both agreed, after a

fidence, sympathy and affection between Mr. Raymond and Philip, and, by reason of a private interview that Mr. Raymond had with Clinton Dexter's father, Clinton's life was much more agreeable than heretofore.

Philip has always looked back to his fifteenth birthday as a remarkable epoch in his life; and he never ceased-until his aged father recently visited him and heard him speak rather harshly to his own little son-to marvel at the wonderful change that came over his father, himself, or both at that time .--Then his father told him the story, and cautioned him against growing into the habit of speaking in that way to his children.

"Always remember, Phillp," he said, "that crustiness and unhappiness are no more agreeable to a child's feelings that they are to a grown person's and that they are more likely to lead any one out of the right path than into it, and they never will forget love."

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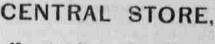
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"Won't you hand me the almanac before you sit down, Philip ?"

Philip's mother raised her eyes from her sewing and glanced at her husband as though she wondered what had called forth such unusual gentleness. Raymond opened the almanac at September and after glancing down the page he turned to his wife and asked :

" Is to-day the third or fourth Tuesday of the month ?"

" The fourth," she replied. " To-morrow is the last day of the month."

"Are you quite sure about it?" he queried. "If you are correct, I am a week behindhand in my reckoning. I've had so many things crowding upon me lately, I've hardly known which way to turn first. I promised Mr. Skidmore that I would take the two-year-old heifer away that I bought of him before the first of October. She must be got home to-morrow."

Philip got up to go to bed. Mr. Raymond said :

"Don't hurry, Philip, I'm thinking how to get that heifer home. I believe I will take you down there early in the morning and leave you to drive her up. It is nine miles there, but you can come back leisurely and let her feed alongside the road. You'd like it as well as to stay, home and work, wouldn't you, Philip ?"

"Yes, sir."

Philip replied in an absent-minded way. He was in a quandary. Perhaps he had better try to stay at home a little longer and see if things didn't seem more agreeable to him. Maybe he had judged his father a little too harshiy. little discussion on that point, that they would never divulge to any human being that they had ever dreamed of running away.

It was half-past nine when Philip drove the helfer into his father's barnyard. After he had his supper, his father asked him to step out to the shed and get a package that was under the wagon-seat. When he brought it, Mr. Raymond opened it and took from it "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary," and sat down and wrote on the fly leaf:

" Presented to Philip C. Raymond on his fifteenth birthday, by his father, Peter Raymond," and then without closing the book he passed it over to

Philip. Philip could bear no more. Tears that had come to his eyes twenty times had been forced back, now overflowed his eye lids had ran down his cheeks .---He stammered :

"You are too kind to me, father ; I do not deserve this."

"Do not deserve it, Philip!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, with apparent surprise. "I think you'd better leave that to my judgment. I should like to know what boy does not deserve the kindness from his father if you don't? If I had a dozen sons I could not ask them to be more faithful and industrious than you have been. There, there ! don't shed any tears over it-you're tired-better get to bed soon, so as to feel fresh, in the morning. If it's a good day to-morrow we must secure that rowen."

"Thank you, father," Philip said, with a quivering voice, and went immediately up-stairs. If he had been a little less overcome himself he would have noticed that his father's voice was a little shaky; and if he had looked back as he passed out of the door he would have seen his father hastily brush a tear or two from his own eyes.

Henceforth there was no lack of con-

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