

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, William rose with the sun, nor did he (as I am sorry to say some boys do, who pray at night) forget to return thanks to his heavenly Father for his kind protection, and for the prospect of another pleasant day, with so much of happiness before him.

Soon after prayers and breakfast, Mr. Herbert sent for him into his study.

"William," said he, "how old are you?"

"Fifteen years old last May, sir."

"I have been thinking," continued his father, "that I shall send you to Wilton to school, as there is an excellent one at that place; how should you like it?"

"Very much, father. I have been hoping you would let me go, for a long time."

"If you do go," said his father, "I shall expect you will make the best use of your time and advantages, as my salary will not allow of any extravagance, nor should I allow it if I were rich, as you

know I am not. And remember, my son, that you must give an account for the use of your time and opportunity, when you stand before God in judgment.

“Let every action of your life be regulated by that thought. It is now nearly two years since you professed to have obtained a hope of God’s mercy in Christ, and, about one year since, you united yourself with the church. You ought by this time to have made some progress in the divine life, and I would enjoin upon you ever to live, not only in the daily practice, but in the full enjoyment, of religion. I trust you will not neglect the daily, prayerful study of the Bible, and the reading of other religious books. Avoid such company and such reading as would have a tendency to corrupt your morals, or divert your mind from your studies.

“Strive to let your light so shine before men that others may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. And while you endeavour to become a proficient in study, remember that all knowledge gained at the expense of purity and virtue will be purchased too dear. It

has been my constant practice to inculcate the truths of the gospel upon you, so that I trust I have no need to go further into detail. You will find the precepts of the Bible as applied by the Holy Spirit, (whose influences are to be obtained by prayer,) the best guide and standard of action."

"Beware, my son," said Mr. Herbert, with a solemn and tender tone; "beware of the first step in sin."

"I think I shall send you next week. On Tuesday your mother will have the necessary articles for your outfit ready, and the term commences on Thursday. So if you have any arrangements to make, you will have a week for the purpose."

William thanked his father for his kind intentions and good advice, and said he hoped he should be enabled to follow it—and then hastened to tell the good news to his brothers and sisters.

William Herbert was at this time nearly sixteen years old; slender, or rather tall of his age, and of prepossessing appearance. His naturally quick temper had been softened by the power of Divine grace—which had rendered still brighter the

generous, frank, and amiable traits which adorned his character. His father was a clergyman in the town of Marlboro', where he resided—and sought, both by his precept and example, to bring up his children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And the sequel will show how far he was successful, at least as it respects his son William.

“Henry King has called for you to go to school with him, William,” said his mother.

“Well, mother, I am going.”

“Good morning, Henry.”

“Good morning. Did not we have a fine time skating?”

“Very fine,” replied William, “but I suppose I shall not go skating with you again after next Saturday,—at least not this winter.”

“Why,” inquired Henry with astonishment, “did your father say you should not go?”

“No, but I am going to Wilton, to school, on Tuesday.”

“What, next Tuesday?” asked Henry, still more astonished.

“Yes,” replied William, “father says so.”

“I am sorry for that,” said Henry. “Why I never knew that you thought of it before.”

“Nor I, either, till this morning,” returned William.

“Halloo, Johnny Arnold! are you going to school?”

And John came running down the path to join the other boys, who, thus reinforced, pursued their way, occasionally sliding on the places which the sleighs had made smooth, and again tossing a snow-ball into the trees, to see the sleet come rattling down, and then blowing their fingers to keep them warm, till at last they reached the school-house, where they applied themselves diligently, for an hour and a half, to their books.

“The boys may go out,” said the teacher, and every one sprang for his hat, as if the house had been on fire—and before the echo had fairly died away, the whole school were eagerly engaged making snow-balls, and running about as if they had a holiday’s work to perform in the few minutes of recess. Presently

something is whispered about, and the boys, one after another, gather in a circle.

“Who?”

“Willy Herbert going away!”

“Where?” “For what?” “When?”

were the rapid and anxious inquiries from twenty mouths at once.

When the teacher's rap was heard on the window, summoning the snow-ballers to their tasks, you might have seen many a boy look more sorrowful than usual at that noise, and as they hung their hats in the entry, and took their seats one by one, the teacher observed an unusual quietness, and significant glances towards William's bench, which he could not misinterpret, for he was a favourite among the boys.

When school had closed, Mr. Lathrop called William aside, and having learned that he was about to leave school, gave him his parting blessing and bade him an affectionate farewell.

William's heart was touched, and for the first time he began to look upon the other side of the picture. He had heretofore been filling his mind with the new scenes in which he was about to be en-

gaged—the new associations he should form, the new class of studies he should pursue, and the various sights which should meet his eye whilst travelling to Wilton—but now he began to reflect how he was to be separated from the scenes of his earlier years, from the company of his parents, from the society of his teachers, and the sports of his companions. All these thoughts crowded upon him—and he felt sad. He could hardly bear the thought of tearing himself from the joyous scenes and associations which now seemed dearer than ever. Musing thus he reached home.

“What is the matter, Willy?” asked his sister.

“Oh, I was thinking,” said William,—but he checked himself, for he felt almost ashamed to say of what he had been thinking.

“William,” said his father, observing the unusual expression of his face, “have you every thing ready to go to Wilton?”

William could scarcely give any reply. At length, he reluctantly answered,

“Yes, sir, nearly, but—”

“But what?” said Mr. Herbert.

"I think, perhaps, I should rather not go this winter."

Mr. Herbert understood his feelings, and thinking a little reflection might serve to change his mind, he told William to think over the matter till the next morning, before he decided. Just then the bell was rung for dinner.

During the remainder of the day, William appeared thoughtful and perplexed, but at night his cheerfulness returned, and as they sat down to tea, he told his father he was ready to decide then.

"How?" inquired Mr. Herbert.

"To go," replied William.

"Very well," said his father, turning to the other children, who were more engaged in talking about "Willy's going to Wilton" than with the nice maple molasses and buckwheat cakes, which were smoking invitingly before them.

"How will you learn to skate," said Mr. Herbert to John, "now William is going away?"

John did not know. He was sorry Willy was going, and so were the girls, for they could not slide down hill half as well

without Willy to guide the sled and draw it up again.

The next was Sunday, and William listened more attentively than usual to the sermon. The prayers seemed more fervent, and the hymns sweeter than ever; and as the day of his departure drew near, his heart almost failed him; but he had resolved to go, because his father thought it best, and he was determined to abide his decision.

