

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

BUT the time was drawing near when the term at Wilton should close. The students who had not seen home for so long a time, having long counted the weeks, were now telling the number of the days before the vacation.

William received a card one morning from the principal, appointing him one of the declaimers at the exhibition, which was to be held on the last day of the term. He felt and appreciated the honour of the appointment, and endeavoured to be prepared to do himself and the institution justice. The day at length arrived, with all its excitements and anxieties. William acquitted himself to the satisfaction of all; and now came the sad parting from kind teachers and beloved companions. The many happy hours at Wilton rushed upon the memory. All difficulties were adjusted, and all un-

pleasant feelings and unkind words were forgotten, and they seemed to remember nought but the pleasant in the past; and many cheeks were wet with the tear of affection and regret. William, accompanied by his friend Charles, once more visited the forest; once more prayed where they had so often kneeled together; once more saw the glorious sunset from the hill, and the beautiful sky; watched the swallows' circling train descend into the chimney of the old church, and then turned their footsteps towards the Institute, to prepare for the morrow's journey.

Early on the following morning, (it was a beautiful day in the latter part of June,) William and Charles took their seats in the stage for Marlboro. Several of their fellow-students were with them the first day, and the time passed in talking over the events of the late term, or speculating on the prospects of the future. Many were the scenes they reviewed, and the games they played over again in their conversation, and as they, one after another, left for a different route, or because they had reached their home, William could not refrain from whispering to them

some Christian word of advice at parting, and more than once did the sparkling eye moisten as they said "farewell!"

Towards the close of the second day the stage entered the village of Marlboro. Here William was at home; not a house, nor a tree, scarcely a stone could they pass, but he had something to say of it. The grass seemed greener, the sun shone pleasanter, and every thing was more beautiful than at any place they had seen since they left home. The very dust seemed dear to him.

"There was the widow Johnson's, where I used to buy butter. Back of those willows is where I used to bathe. That man we just met used to bring my father meat. Over there, the railroad was going to run; and back in the woods is where we used to go to get hickory nuts.

"There is Henry King's house, and there he is himself! How do you do, Henry?"

But the stage did not stop for Henry to return the salutation, and before he could distinguish who addressed him, they reached the top of the hill.

"Over there, in that white house, our

Dr. Jameson lives; and just beyond, you can see the church spire."

"Oh, yes," said Charles; "is that where your father preaches?"

"Yes, and there is our house," exclaimed William, his heart almost leaping into his throat at the sight.

"Where?" said Charles, jumping up and looking out of the window.

"There, just beyond those trees, on the right hand."

"Oh, yes, I see it."

Here the driver, after cracking the whip several times about the horses' ears in a very practised style, laid it back on the stage-box, and taking up his horn, blew a long and echoing blast, that resounded over the hills, and called all the children to "see the stage go by." Then giving a short cluck, he reined up the horses before the door of the parsonage, with as much ceremony as if he had been the President, and it was far more pleasant to the good minister and his family, than if he had brought that personage. The driver's horn and the rumbling of the stage-coach had not been heard in vain. Mr. Herbert, and his wife and

children stood ready to welcome the expected son and his friend at the gate. But how shall I describe the happy meeting?

William could scarcely wait the opening of the door and letting down the steps, before he rushed into his parents' embrace, and kissed all the children, from the baby up.

"This is your young friend, Charles Seymour, is he not, William?" inquired Mr. Herbert.

"Yes, sir, I had almost forgotten to introduce him."

"We feel as if that was not needful, since you have spoken so often of him," said his mother.

"Yes, and you are quite welcome to our house," continued Mr. Herbert, taking Charles by the hand.

Charles thanked Mr. Herbert, and as soon as William could extricate himself from his sister's arms, and old Towser's caresses, long enough to see to the trunks, they walked into the parlour to take a little rest from their journey, before tea.

"Why, how you have grown? When did you leave Wilton? Charles is not

going back this week, is he?" were some of the many questions which his brother and sisters put him, without awaiting a reply.

It was not long before Charles was as much at home with the children as William himself; and how beautiful it was at evening, to see them all surround the family altar, and pour out grateful praise to God for such a happy meeting! And as William and his friend retired, how sweet their communion with each other, and with their Saviour!

"Willy," said Charles, "do you remember our first walk in the woods, at Wilton?"

"Charlie, I trust we shall have cause to remember that with joy, for ever."

Reader! do you think William Herbert was happy? and, would you be so?

Then you must be like him, for William Herbert was a Christian. It is true "religion will cost you something, as it did him, but the want of it will cost you infinitely more."

THE END.