

going to bear me any ill will; you know it was an accident, and you can't think how badly I felt about it. Father would take the jacket off of me quick enough, when I get home, if he heard of it; can't we let bygones be, and begin a new deal?"

Edward remained silent. He was wide enough awake now, and his eyes were gleaming with a light that was not fever.

"Be a good fellow," added Bracebridge Martin. "Bob never meant to hurt you; and you know he's your cousin. He is going home in a day or two for the holidays, and he wants to straighten this up."

"A sweet, affectionate sort of a cousin he is. I want nothing to do with him—or you either. Go away, and let me alone!"

It seemed as though he was struggling to prevent an outburst of passion. He closed his lips firmly, and turned his face away. If they had been wise or tender hearted, they would have done as he said. Instead, they lingered, Robert Hunter never even moving in his chair, whilst Bracebridge stood by his side with a sullen look upon his face.

"I'm sure, Ed," continued Robert, "we came here as friends. If you want to cut up rough we can go out, but you needn't think I'm going to go round begging your pardon any more. If you don't want to be friends its all right, but all the boys will know that its not my fault."

"Friends!"

It seemed that Edward could stand it no longer. He turned, raised himself in the bed, and glared at the two visitors.

"You my friend! Ever since I came here I have had but one foe, and that was you, Robert Hunter. Bracebridge Martin would have treated me well enough if you had let him alone. You told tales against me and set the boys all against me; you misrepresented me to your father; a dozen times you have tried to ruin me with the doctor; and only this week you stole my questions and speech, so that I might fail at examination. To crown it all you have tried to murder me. No, we will never be friends. I hate you; I always will hate you, and I never will have anything more to do with you and yours until the day comes when I can have my revenge!"

His excitement triumphed over his weakness, so much that he actually thundered out these last words of defiance; and the boys cowered back, at last thoroughly dismayed. He might have gone on, but fortunately at this juncture the nurse came in, accompanied by the doctor.

"Ah! What is all this?" exclaimed the latter, and without waiting for an answer, he bundled the two boys out of the room, just as Edward fell back, white and trembling, from exhaustion.

This affair of course had an evil effect on Edward, but he was young and had a stout constitution. In a few weeks he crawled out into the sunlight, to find the vacation already far advanced. He had already received a cold letter from his uncle, who, after hearing Robert's account of the accident, seemed to be satisfied that there was no one specially to blame.

Dr. Inman was not so sure, but he was too busy to investigate at the close of the session, and contented himself with seeing that the injured boy had every attention. When the session closed he had his arrangements made, and left to attend his synod. When he returned, he found that Edward, who had been convalescing rapidly, had disappeared only the day before. Search was made, even a liberal reward was offered, but Dr. Inman never saw him again.

Ten years of a man's life represent a long time, after all. So much of success or failure can be crowded into that period that for some it has seemed almost an eternity. In ten years Robert Hunter had changed from a school-boy to a man of business, with a fund of experience and a fortune that was placed at a pretty high figure by those who had noted the almost invariable success that had attended his ventures. He had gone into business at an early age, and his father dying a few years later, he had gone his own gait, untrammelled by advice or lack of capital. To the surprise of some of his friends, he had stuck closely to business, and there seemed little danger now that he would go wrong, as they had once predicted. On the contrary, many of his old traits had faded away, and he seemed only intent on getting money, though he was not at all penurious, spite of his lonely life.

Certainly he had done better than his old schoolmate, Bracebridge Martin, who had cast ten years more or less recklessly away.

Some such idea even penetrated to the brain of Bracebridge one evening, as he halted for a moment at the door of the parlor, listening to the sounds of music that drifted out from the room beyond. Then he threw open the door and stalked into the presence of the musician, who was a fair young lady of twenty.

As he entered she ceased playing, and looked up with a gaze that might have been anxious, or only inquiring.

"Vida!" said he, "I've known Robert Hunter a great many years; I went to school with him; I've been in business with him, and we seemed to be friends. Let me tell you he was the worst enemy I ever had. If you ever hear that I have done anything desperate, you may know that he was more than half to blame. It seems to me that he has his eyes on you. I don't like to talk about men, but I can't see him looking at you without giving you a warning. Vida, I'd sooner see you dead and in your coffin than Robert Hunter's wife."

"Do not fear for me, Bracebridge. I will confide to you what I have told no one else. He proposed to me and I rejected him. I understand his nature and will keep him at arm's length, but, oh, beware of him yourself."

"Thank heaven for that! As for me I am lost already."

And so saying, Bracebridge rushed from her presence. That evening Vida saw nothing of her brother; and was not surprised, though she pondered long and anxiously over his passionate exclamation. When he did not make his appearance the next morning, something of