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Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Vinci
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Gogol Busch
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Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
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Walter Harland Or, Memories of the Past

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CHAPTER I.

Left entirely alone on a quiet afternoon, the unbroken stillness which surrounded me, as well as the soft haze which floats upon the atmosphere, in that most delightful of all seasons, the glorious "Indian Summer" of Eastern Canada, caused my thoughts to wander far away into the dreamy regions of the past, and many scenes long past, and almost forgotten, passed in review before my mind's eye on that quiet afternoon. While thus musing the idea occurred to me that there are few individuals, however humble or obscure, whose life-history (if noted down) would prove wholly without interest to others, in the form of a book; and this thought caused me to form the idea of noting down some passages from my own life—as they were on that day recalled to my mind. Like the boy who dreamed a most remarkable dream and, when asked to relate it, "didn't know where to begin," so was I puzzled as to how I should make a beginning for my story. But the incidents of one particular day when I was about thirteen years old were so vividly brought back to my mind, that I have decided upon that day as a starting-point; and now to my story.

"Where alive has that lazy, good-for-nothing boy taken, himself off to now, I wonder, and the weeds I left him to pull in the garden not half done yet; but it's just like him, as soon's my back's turned to skulk off in this way. I'll put a stop to this work one of these days, see if I don't. Its likely he's hiding in some out-of-the-way corner with a book in his hand as usual." These and many other angry words came harshly to my ears, on that June afternoon now so long ago. I was seated in the small room over the kitchen which was appropriated to my use in the dwelling of Farmer Judson, where I was employed as "chore boy," or, in other words, the boy of all work.

"Walter, Walter Harland, come down here this minute, I say."

I started up, trembling with fear, for the angry tones of the farmer made me aware that he had come home in one of his worst tempers, and his best were usually bad enough; and, more than this, I knew myself to be slightly in the fault. Before leaving home that morning Mr. Judson had ordered me to clear the weeds from a certain num-

ber of beds in the garden before his return. I worked steadily during the forenoon, and for a portion of the afternoon, when, feeling tired and heated, I stole up to my room, thinking to rest for a short time and then again resume my labors. I was very fond of study, and, as my Algebra lay before me upon the table, I could not resist the temptation to open it, and I soon became so deeply absorbed in the solution of a difficult problem that I heeded not the lapse of time till the harsh voice of my employer fell upon my ear. I had learned by past experience to fear the angry moods of Mr. Judson. In my hurry and confusion I forgot to lay aside my book, and went downstairs with it in my hand. I stood silent before the angry man, and listened to the storm of abuse which he continued to pour upon me, until sheer exhaustion compelled him to stop.

"And now," said he (by way of conclusion) "be off to your work, and don't be seen in the house again till the last weed is pulled from them air beds." This was even better than I had dared to hope, for, on more than one former occasion, I had borne blows from Mr. Judson when his anger was excited. As I turned to leave the room the quick eye of the farmer fell upon the book which before had escaped his notice. Stepping hastily toward me he said:

"I see how it is, your head is so filled with the crankums you get out o' them books, that you are good for nothing else, but I'll stop this work once for all;" and, ere I was aware of his intention, he snatched the book from my hand, and threw it upon the wood-fire which burned in the kitchen fire-place. I sprang forward to rescue my book from the flames, but, before I could reach it, it was burned to ashes. As I have before stated I was then about thirteen years old, tall and strong for my age. I was usually quiet and respectful, but for all this I possessed a high spirit. I could easily be controlled by kindness and mild persuasion, but never by harsh and unkind treatment, and this act of Mr. Judson's enraged me beyond all control, and in a moment all the smouldering anger occasioned by his past harshness shot up as it were in a sudden blaze. I have often heard it said, and I believe with truth, that there is something almost appalling in the roused anger of one of those usually quiet and submissive natures. I have often since thought that passion rendered me partially insane for the time being; trembling with anger, I confronted my employer fearlessly, as I said "How *dare* you burn

my book? you bad, wicked man, you are just as mean as you can be."

This sudden outbreak from me, who hitherto had borne his abuse in silence, took Mr. Judson quite by surprise. For a moment he looked at me in silence, then, with a voice hoarse from passion, he addressed me, saying, "such talk to *me!* you surely have lost any little sense you ever may have had." Then seizing me roughly by the shoulder he continued: "I'll teach you better manners than all this comes to, my fine fellow, for I'll give you such a flogging as you won't forget in a hurry, I'll be bound."

Instantly my resolution was taken; he should never flog me again. Shaking off the rough grasp of his hand, I stepped backward, and drawing myself up to my full height (even then I was not very tall) I looked him unflinchingly in the face as I said,—"*touch me* if you *dare*, I have borne blows enough from you, and for little cause, but you shall *never* strike me again. If you lay a hand upon me it will be worse for you." Wild with anger I knew not what I said. The strength of a lad of my age would, of course, have been as nothing against that of the sturdy farmer; but, had he attempted to flog me, I certainly should have resisted to the utmost of my ability. I know not how it was, but after regarding me for a few moments with angry astonishment, he turned away without any further attempt to fulfil his threat of flogging me. I turned and was leaving the house when he called after me, in a voice, which upon any previous occasion, would have frightened me into submission.

"Come back, I say, this instant." I had now lost all fear and replied, in a voice which I hardly recognized as my own, "go back, *never*. Should I be compelled to beg my bread from door to door, I will never stay another day under your roof." With these words I ran from the house, and soon reached the little brown cottage in the village three miles distant where lived my mother and sister Flora.

CHAPTER II.

I never knew a father's protecting care and watchful love; for he died when I was but little more than three years old; and my sister Flora a babe in our mother's arms. No prettier village could at that time have been found in Eastern Canada than Elmwood, and this village was our home. Its location was romantic and picturesque. Below the village on one side was a long stretch of level meadowland through which flowed a clear and placid river—whose sparkling waters, when viewed from a distance, reminded one of a surface of polished silver. The margin of this river, on either side, was fringed with tall stately trees, called the Rock-Elm. According to the statement of the first settlers in the vicinity, the whole place was once covered with a forest of those noble trees and to this circumstance the village owed its name of Elmwood. The number of those trees which still shaded many of the streets added much to the beauty of the village. The village was small, but much regularity had been observed in laying out the streets. The buildings were mostly composed of wood; and nearly all were painted a pure white with green blinds, which gave a very tasteful appearance to the place. It had its two churches, and three stores, where all articles necessary to a country trade were sold, from a scythe down to cambric needles and pearl buttons. There was also an academy, a hotel, one and two public schools, and I believe I have now mentioned the most important of the public buildings of Elmwood, as it then was. The cool and inviting appearance of the village, as well as its facilities for fishing, boating and other healthful recreations, caused it, in course of time, to become a favorite summer resort for the dwellers in the large cities; and for a few weeks, once a year, Elmwood was crowded with visitors from many distant places, and, as may be readily supposed, these periodical visits of strangers was something which deeply interested the simple residents of our village. In looking back to-day through the long vista of years which separate the past from the present, the object on which memory is inclined to linger longer is a little brown house near one end of the village of Elmwood. Kind reader that was the home of my childhood. There was little in the external appearance of the house or its surroundings to win admiration from the passer-by, but it was my home, and

to the young home is ever beautiful. Recalled by memory the old house looks very familiar to-day, with its sloping roof covered, here and there, with patches of green moss; and the large square chimney in the centre. Between the house and the street was a level green, in which were several fine shady trees, and one particular tree which stood near the centre was what I most loved of every thing connected with the surroundings of my early home—this tree was of the species known in Canada as the Silver Fir, and I am certain that every one familiar with this tree will testify, as to its beauty; they grow to a large size with very thick and wide-spreading branches, which extend downward upon the trunk in a circular form, each circle from the top growing larger, till the lower limbs overshadow a large space of ground beneath. This tree was my delight in the sunny days of childhood and early youth, and in summer most of my school-tasks were committed to memory beneath its friendly shade; and I loved it, in the dreary season of winter, for the deep green which it retained, amid the general desolation by which it was surrounded. When left a widow my mother was poor, so far as worldly riches is considered. My father had once been in moderately easy circumstances, but the illness which terminated in his death was long, and the means he had accumulated gradually slipped away, till, at the period of his death, all my mother could call her own was the little brown house which sheltered us, and very thankful was she to find, (when every debt was paid even to the last fraction) that she still possessed a home for herself and children. My mother possessed much energy of mind, as well as a cheerful, hopeful disposition, and, although she sorrowed deeply for her sad loss, she did not yield to despondency; but endeavored to discharge faithfully her duty to her children, and to this end she sought employment, and toiled early and late that she might provide for our wants, and so far did Providence smile upon her efforts that we were enabled to live in comfort and respectability. By close industry and economy she kept me at school from the age of six to thirteen, and would willingly have allowed me to remain longer, as she considered my education of the first importance, but during the last year I remained at school (although only a child of twelve years) I grew discontented and unhappy, by seeing my mother toiling daily that I might remain at school. And many a night did I lay awake for hours, revolving the question in my mind of how I could

assist my mother, for I felt that, young as I was, it was time for me to do something for my own support. Had circumstances allowed, I would gladly have remained at school, for I was fond of study; but I believe I inherited a portion of my mother's energetic disposition, and I felt it my duty to leave school, and seek some employment whereby I might support myself, and possibly assist, in a small way, my mother and little sister. My mother was reluctant to yield her consent that I should leave school, but when she saw how much my mind was *set* on it, and knowing the motives which influenced me, she finally gave her consent, and leaving school I began looking about me for employment. My mother's wish, as well as my own was that I should, if possible, obtain some situation in the village where I could still board at home, but, as is usually the case, no one needed a boy at that time. After spending several days in search of work, without success, I became disheartened. My mother advised me to return to my books, and think no more about it; but I was unwilling that my first attempt toward taking care of myself should prove an entire failure.

CHAPTER III.

A few miles from the village of Elmwood lived Mr. Judson, a rich farmer, he might properly be termed rich in this world's goods, for, besides the broad acres which comprised the two farms in one where he resided, he was the owner of several houses in the village, which brought him a handsome annual income. The chief aim of his life appeared to be the acquisition of money, and, when once it came into his possession, it was guarded with miserly care. The very countenance and manner of the Farmer bespoke his nature. Aided by memory, I see him now as I saw him years ago:—he was of medium height, strong and muscular, but thin in flesh. His hair had once been black, but was then sprinkled thickly with gray; he had small piercing, restless black eyes that seemed to look several ways at once. His nose was of the form which I have often heard styled a hawk-bill; and, altogether, there was a sort of dry, hard look about the man which rendered his personal appearance repulsive and disagreeable. His constant care and anxiety was to get the largest possible amount of labor out of those in his employ; consequently, he was always in a hurry himself, and striving to hurry every one else. His farm-laborers used to say that he kept his eyes in such unceasing motion, to see that every thing went right on all sides, that a restless, roving expression of the eyes had become natural to him. Though living only a few miles distant, neither my mother nor myself knew any thing of the character of this man; and when he came to engage me to do "chores and light work" as he termed it, we gladly accepted his offer, as my mother had the idea that residing for a time upon a farm (if not overworked) would have a beneficial effect upon my health and constitution. Many wondered when it became known that I had gone to live with Farmer Judson; but each one kept their thoughts to themselves. When I took my place at the Farmer's I soon found that, if my work was light, there was likely to be plenty of it. I did not complain of this, for I expected to work; but what made my position almost unbearable was the constant habit of fault-finding in which my employer indulged. He was dreaded and feared by all under his roof. He was constantly on the watch for waste and expenditure within-doors, and without there could never be enough done to satisfy him; do

your best, and he always thought you should have done more. As I have before said, I was very fond of books, and I had counted upon having my evenings at my own disposal that I might still do something in the way of self improvement; but I soon learned that books were quite out of the question in my new home. There was either corn to shell or errands to perform; in short, there was something to keep me busy till nearly bed-time every night. I used sometimes to think the farmer used to study up something to keep me busy on purpose to keep me from study. I believe my greatest fault in his eyes was my love of books. He was entirely without education himself, which, (in a great measure) accounted for his narrow and sordid mind; he looked upon any time devoted to books or mental culture as a dead loss.

"What's the use of botherin' over books," he would often say; and would often add in a boasting manner, "I don't know *a* from *b*, and if I do say it myself, where will you find a man who has got along better in the world than I have done." If getting along well with the world consists only in hoarding up dollars and cents till every feeling of tenderness and benevolence toward the rest of mankind becomes benumbed and deadened, then truly Mr. Judson *had* got along remarkably well. His door was but a sorry place to ask charity, as every one could testify who ever tried the experiment. It was reported that a poor woman once called at the house and asked for food. The farmer chanced to be from home, and his wife, thinking he might not return for a time, ventured to prepare a comfortable meal for the poor traveller; but, as fate would have it, he returned before the weary traveller had partaken of the meal prepared for her. As soon as he saw how matters stood he gave his wife a stern rebuke for "encouraging beggars"; and, with many harsh words, ordered the woman to leave the house. The poor woman rose wearily to obey the command, and, as she was passing from the room, she turned, and fixing her eyes upon Mr. Judson, said in a stern voice, "I am poor and needy—it was hunger alone which compelled me to ask charity—but with all your riches I would not exchange places with you who have the heart to turn from your door one in need of food; surely, out of your abundance you might have at the least given food to one in want; but go on hoarding up your dollars, and see how much softer they will make your dying pillow." It was

said that the farmer actually turned pale as the woman left the house. Perhaps his conscience was not quite dead, and it may be that a shadow from the events of future years, even then, fell across his mind. It would have been difficult to find two natures more unlike than were those of Mr. Judson and his wife. The former was stingy, even to miserly niggardliness, as well as ill-tempered, sullen and morose, while the latter was one of the most kind-hearted and motherly old ladies imaginable, that is, had her kindly nature been allowed to exhibit itself. As it was, not daring to act according to the dictates of her own kind heart, through fear of her stern companion, she had in the course of years, become a timid broken-spirited woman. In her youthful days she had been a regular attendant at church, she also was a valuable teacher in the sabbath-school; but, after marrying Lemuel Judson, she soon found that all religious privileges of a social nature were at an end. Poor man, money was the god he worshipped; and so entirely did the acquisition of wealth engross his mind that every other emotion was well-nigh extinguished. He seldom, if ever, entered a place of public worship, and did what he could to prevent his wife from doing so. She did at the first venture a feeble remonstrance when he refused on Sundays to drive to the village church, but, as this was her first attempt at any thing like opposition to his wishes, he determined it should be her last, for he assailed her with every term of abusive language at his command, and these were not a few, for his command of language of this sort was something marvelous too listen to, and, if his words and phrases were not always in strict accordance with the rules of grammar, they certainly were sharp and pointed enough to answer his purpose very well. From the sour expression of his countenance, as well as the biting words which often fell from his tongue, the village boys applied to him the name "vinegar face," sometimes varied by "old vinegar Judson." Like all village boys, they were inclined on holidays and Saturday afternoons to roam away to the neighbouring farms. Mr. Judson always drove them from his premises the moment they set foot hereon, and in a short time he learned that, as the saying is, there was no love lost between them. He one day gave one of these boys a smart blow with his horse-whip the boy had ventured into the hayfield among the laborers. The blow of course caused him to take to his heels, but from that time the whole band were in league against the farmer. If he left a horse tied in the

village, he would sometimes find him shorn of his mane, and often a hopeless rent in his buffalo; and, as far as he could find out, the deed was done by "nobody at all." As he was driving leisurely homeward on a very dark night he suddenly came upon a number of boys near the end of the village street, and one of the boys called out loud enough for him to hear, "there goes old vinegar Judson;" another emboldened by his companion, next addressed him with the question; "What's the market price of vinegar, old man? you ought to know if any one does, for you must drink a lot of it or you wouldn't be so cross and ugly." It was a very dark night, and the farmer was unable to distinguish one from the other, and horse-whip in hand he made a rush among the whole crowd, who dispersed in all directions. He was not agile enough to overtake a fast retreating army in the dark, and was forced to abandon the pursuit. As he turned to pursue his journey homeward, a voice from out of the darkness, again addressed him, saying, "don't you only wish you could catch us, old vinegar man?" Knowing that further pursuit would be useless, he proceeded on his way, uttering threats of future vengeance. He did spend a portion of the following day in trying to find out the boys who had insulted him; but all his efforts to that end were without success. A gentleman to whom he complained ventured to remark: "I fear, Mr. Judson, that in a great measure you have yourself to blame for all this, for you ever treat the boys with unkindness; and, without reason and experience to guide them, can you wonder that they render evil for evil. If you exercised more of the spirit of kindness in your casual intercourse with the boys, I think it would be better for both you and them." This advice was very good, but it is to be feared that the farmer profited but little by it. Through fear of her stern husband Mrs. Judson finally ceased to mention attending church; but often on a Sunday afternoon, when he was either asleep or walking over his farm, she would seat herself in a quiet corner of the large kitchen and read her Bible, and perhaps sing a hymn to some of the old-fashioned plaintive airs, which formed a large portion of the Church Music in her youthful days. I remember when I lived at the Farmer's, I used often to think it no wonder that Mrs. Judson almost always sung her Sunday hymn to the air of "Complaint," and read more frequently in the book of Job and the Lamentations of Jeremiah than any other portion of the Bible. The poor lonely woman