



Frontispiece

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

The object of this little work, and of others of its family, which may perhaps follow, is, like that of the "Rollo Books," to furnish useful and instructive reading to young children. The aim is not so directly to communicate knowledge, as it is to develop the moral and intellectual powers,—to cultivate habits of discrimination and correct reasoning, and to establish sound principles of moral conduct. The "Rollo Books" embrace principally intellectual and moral discipline; "Caleb," and the others of its family, will include also *religious* training, according to the evangelical views of Christian truth which the author has been accustomed to entertain, and which he has inculcated in his more serious writings.

J. A.

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CALEB IN THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER I.

CALEB'S DISCOVERY.

Caleb was a bright-looking, blue-eyed boy, with auburn hair and happy countenance. And yet he was rather pale and slender. He had been sick. His father and mother lived in Boston, but now he was spending the summer at Sandy River country, with his grandmother. His father thought that if he could run about a few months in the open air, and play among the rocks and under the trees, he would grow more strong and healthy, and that his cheeks would not look so pale. [Pg 6]

His grandmother made him a blue jacket with bright buttons. *She* liked metal buttons, because they would wear longer than covered ones, but *he* liked them because they were more beautiful. "Besides," said he, "I can see my face in them, grandmother."

Little Caleb then went to the window, so as to see his face plainer. He stood with his back to the window, and held the button so that the light from the window could shine directly upon it.

"Why grandmother," said Caleb, "I cannot see now so well as I could before."

"That is because your face is turned away from the light," said she.

"And the button is turned *towards* the light," said Caleb.

"But when you want to see any thing reflected in a glass, you must have the light shine upon the thing you want to see reflect [Pg 7] ed, not upon the glass itself; and I suppose it is so with a bright button."

Then Caleb turned around, so as to have his *face* towards the light; and he found that he could then see it reflected very distinctly. His grandmother went on with her work, and Caleb sat for some time in silence.

The house that Caleb lived in was in a narrow rocky valley. A stream of water ran over a sandy bed, in front of the house, and a rugged mountain towered behind it. Across the stream, too, there was a high, rocky hill, which was in full view from the parlour window. This hill was covered with wild evergreens, which clung to their sides, and to the interstices of the rocks; and mosses, green and brown, in long festoons, hung from their limbs. Here and there crags and precipices peeped out from among the foliage, and a grey old cliff towered above, at the summit. [Pg 8]

Caleb turned his button round again towards the window, and of course turned his face *from* the window. The reflection of his face was now dim, as before, but in a moment his eye caught the reflection of the crags and trees across the little valley.

"O, grandmother," said he again, "I can see the rocks in my buttons, and the trees. And there is an old stump," he continued, his voice falling to a low tone, as if he was talking to himself,— "and there is a tree,—and,—why—why, what is that? It is a bear, grandmama,"—calling aloud to her,— "I see a bear upon the mountain."

"Nonsense, Caleb," said the grandmother.

"I do certainly," said Caleb, and he dropped the corner of his jacket, which had the button attached to it, and looked out of the window directly at the mountain.

Presently Caleb turned away from the [Pg 9] window, and ran to the door. There was a little green yard in front of the house, with a large, smooth, flat stone for a door-step. Caleb stood on this step, and looked intently at the mountain. In a moment he ran back to his grandmother, and said,

"Grandmother, *do* come and see this black bear."

"Why, child," said she, smiling, "it is nothing but some old black stump or log."

"But it moves, grandmother. It certainly moves."

So his grandmother smiled, and said, "Well, I suppose I must come and see." So she laid down her work, and took off her spectacles, and Caleb took hold of her hand, and trotted along before her to the step of the door. It was a beautiful sunny morning in June.

"There," said Caleb, triumphantly pointing to a spot among the rocks and bushes [Pg 10] half-way up the mountain,— "there, what do you call that?"

His grandmother looked a moment intently in silence, and then said,

"I do see something there under the bushes."

"And isn't it moving?" said Caleb.

"Why, yes," said she.

"And isn't it black?"

"Yes," said she.

"Then it is a bear," said Caleb, half-delighted, and half afraid, "Isn't it, grandmother? I'll go and get the gun."

There was an old gun behind the high desk, in the back sitting-room; but it had not been loaded for twenty years, and had no back upon it. Still Caleb always supposed that some how or other it would shoot.

"Shall I, grandmother?" said he eagerly,

"No," said she. "I don't think it is a bear [Pg 11] ."

"What then?" said Caleb.

"I think it is Cherry."

"Cherry!" said Caleb.

"Yes, Cherry," said she. "Run and see if you can find the boys."

Cherry was the cow. She had strayed from the pasture the day before, and they could not find her. She was called Cherry from her colour; for although she had looked almost black, as Caleb had seen her in the bushes, she was really a Cherry colour. Caleb saw at once, as soon as his grandmother said that it was Cherry, that she was correct. In fact, he could see her head and horns, as she was holding her head up to eat the leaves from the bushes. However he did not stop to talk about it, but, obeying his grandmother immediately, he ran off after the boys.

He went out to the back door, where the boys had been at play, and shouted out, "*David!* Da-vid! Dwi-ght! Da-vid [Pg 12] !" But there was no reply, except a distant echo of "*David*" and "*Dwight*" from the rocks and mountains.

So Caleb came back, and said that he could not find the boys, and that he supposed that they had gone to school.

"Then we must call Raymond," said she.

"And may I ring for him, grandmother?" said Caleb.

Grandmother said he might: and so Caleb ran off to the porch at the back door, and took down quite a large bell, which was hanging there. Caleb stood upon the steps of the porch, and grasping the great handle of the bell with both hands, he rang it with all his might. In a minute or two he stopped; and then he heard a faint and distant "*Aye-aye*" coming, from a field. Caleb put the bell back into its place, and then went again to his grandmother.

In a few minutes Raymond came in. He [Pg 13] was a thick-set and rather tall young man, broad-shouldered and strong,—slow in his motions, and of a very sober countenance. Caleb heard his heavy step in the entry, though he came slowly and carefully, as if he tried to walk without making a noise.

"Did you want me, Madam Rachel?" said he, holding his hat in his hand.

Caleb's grandmother was generally called Madam Rachel.

"Yes," said she. "Cherry has got up on the rocks. Caleb spied her there; he will shew you where, and I should like to have you go and drive her down."

Caleb wanted to go too; but his grandmother said it would not do very well, for he could not keep up with Raymond; and besides, she said that she wanted him. So Caleb went out with Raymond under the great elm before the house, and pointed out the place among the rocks, where he had [Pg 14] seen Cherry. She was not there then, at least she was not in sight; but Raymond knew that she could not have gone far from the place, so he walked down over the bridge, and soon disappeared.

While Caleb stood watching Raymond, as he walked off with long strides towards the mountain, his grandmother came to the door and said,

“Come, Caleb.”

Caleb turned and ran to his grandmother. She had in her hand a little red morocco book, and taking Caleb's hand, she went slowly up stairs, he frisking and capering around her all the way. There was a bed in the room, with a white covering, and by the window an easy chair, with a high back, and round well-stuffed arms. Mad-am Rachel went to the easy chair and sat down and took Caleb in her lap. Caleb looked out upon the long drooping branches of the elm which hung near the window. [Pg 15]

Caleb's countenance was pale; and he was slender in form, and delicate in appearance. He had been sick, and even now, he was not quite well. His little taper fingers rested upon the window-sill, while his grandmother opened her little Bible and began to read. Caleb sat still in her lap, with a serious and attentive expression of countenance.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a pharisee, the other a publican.”

“What is a pharisee and a publican?” asked Caleb.

“You will hear presently. 'And the pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers.”

“What are all those?” asked Caleb.

“O, different kinds of crimes and sins. [Pg 16] The pharisee thanked God that he had not committed any of them.”

“Was he a good man, grandmother?”

“Very likely he had not committed any of these great crimes.”

“Very well, grandmother, go on.”

“'Or even as this publican.' A publican, you must know, was a tax-gatherer. He used to collect the taxes from the people. They did not like to pay their taxes, and so they did not like the tax-gatherers, and despised them. And thus the pharisee thanked God that he was

not like that publican. 'I fast twice in the week. I pay tithes of all that I possess.'

"Tithes?" said Caleb.

"Yes, that was money which God had commanded them to pay. They were to pay in proportion to the property they had. But some dishonest men used to conceal some of their property, so as not to have to pay so [Pg 17] much; but this pharisee said *he* paid tithes of *all* that he possessed."

"That was right, grandmother," said Caleb.

"Yes," said his grandmother, "that was very well."

"If he really did it," continued Caleb doubtfully. "Do you think he did, grandmother?"

"I think it very probable. I presume he was a pretty good man, *outside*."

"What do you mean by that, grandmother?"

"Why, his heart might have been bad, but he was probably pretty careful about all his *actions*, which could be seen of men. But we will go on."

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell [Pg 18] you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

"Which man?" said Caleb.

"The publican."

"The publican was justified?" said Caleb, "what does *justified* mean?"

"Forgiven and approved. God was pleased with the publican, because he confessed his sins honestly; but he was displeased with the pharisee, because he came boasting of his good deeds."

Here there was a pause. Caleb sat still and seemed thoughtful. His grandmother did not interrupt him, but waited to hear what he would say.

“Yes; but, grandmother, if the pharisee really was a good man, it wasn't right for him to thank God for it?”

“It reminds me of Thomas's acorns,” said Madam Rachel.

“Thomas's acorns!” said Caleb, “tell me about them, grandmother [Pg 19] .”

“Why, Thomas and his brother George were sent to school. They stopped to play by the way, until it was so late that they did not dare to go in. Then they staid playing about the fields till it was time to go home. They felt pretty bad and out of humour, and at last they separated and went home different ways.

“In going home, Thomas found an oak-tree with acorns under it. 'Ah!' said he, 'I will carry mother home some acorns.' He had observed that his mother was pleased whenever he brought her things; and he had an idea of soothing his own feelings of guilt, and securing his mother's favour, by the good deed of carrying her home some acorns. So, when he came into the house, he took off his hat carefully, with the acorns in it, and holding it in both hands, marched up to his mother with a smiling face, and [Pg 20] look of great self-satisfaction, and said, 'Here, mother, I have got you some acorns.'”

“And what did his mother say?” asked Caleb.

“She shook her head sorrowfully, and told him to go and put the acorns away. She knew where he had been.

“Then presently George came in. He put away his cap, walked in softly, and put his face down in his mother's lap, and said, with tears and sobs, 'Mother, I have been doing something very wrong.' Now, which of these do you think came to his mother right?”

“Why,—George,” said he, “certainly.”

“Yes, and that was the way the publican came; but the pharisee covered up all his sins, being pleased and satisfied himself, and thinking that God would be pleased and satisfied with his *acorns*.”

Here Madam Rachel paused, and Caleb sat still, thinking of what he had heard. [Pg 21]

Madam Rachel then closed her eyes, and, in a low, gentle voice, she spoke a few words of prayer; and then she told Caleb that he must always remember in all his prayers to confess his sins fully and freely, and never cover them up and conceal them, with an idea that his good deeds made him worthy. Then she put Caleb down, and he ran down stairs to play.

He asked his grandmother to let him go over the bridge, so as to be ready to meet Raymond, when he should come back with the cow. She at first advised him not to go, for she was afraid, she said, that he might get lost, or fall into the brook; but Caleb was very desirous to go, and finally she consented. He had a little whip that David had made for him. The handle was made from the branch of a beach-tree, which David cut first to make a cane of, for himself; but he broke his cane, and so he gave [Pg 22] Caleb the rest of the stick for a whip-handle. The lash was made of leather. It was cut out of a round piece of thick leather, round and round, as they made leather shoe-strings, and then rolled upon a board. This is a fine way to make lashes and reins for boys.

Caleb took his whip for company, and sauntered along over the bridge. When he had crossed the bridge, he walked along the bank of the stream, watching the grass-hoppers and butterflies, and now and then cutting off the head of a weed with the lash of his whip.

The banks of the brook were in some places high, and the water deep; in other places, there was a sort of beach, sloping down to the water's edge; and here, the water was generally shallow, to a considerable distance from the shore. Caleb was allowed to come down to the water at these shal [Pg 23] low places; but he had often been told that he must not go near the steep places, because there was danger that he would fall in.

Now, boys are not very naturally inclined to obey their parents. They have to be taught with great pains and care. They must be punished for disobedience, in some way or other, a good many times. But neglected children, that is, those that are left to themselves, are almost always very disobedient and unsubmitive. Caleb, now, was not a neglected child. He had been taught to submit and obey, when he was very young, and his grandmother could trust him now.

Besides, Caleb, had still less disposition now to disobey his grandmother than usual, for he had been sick, and was still pale and feeble; and this state of health often makes children quiet, gentle, and submissive.

So Caleb walked slowly along, carefully [Pg 24] avoiding all the high banks, but sometimes going down to the water, where the shore was sloping and safe. At length, at one of these little landing places he stopped longer than usual. He called it the cotton landing. David and Dwight gave it that name, because they always found, wedged in, in a corner between a log and the shore, a pile of cotton, as they called it. It was, in reality, light, white froth, which always lay there; and even if they pushed it all away with a stick, they would find a new supply the next day. Caleb stood upon the shore, and with the lash of his whip, cut into the pile of "cotton." The pile broke up into large masses, and moved slowly and lightly away into the stream. One small tuft of it floated towards the shore, and Caleb reached it with his whip-handle, and took a part of it in, saying, "Now I will see what it is made of [Pg 25]."

On closely examining it, he found to his surprise, that it was composed of an infinite number of very small bubbles, piled one upon another, like the little stones in a heap of gravel. It was white and beautiful, and in some of the biggest bubbles, Caleb could see all the colours of the rainbow. He wondered where this foam could come from, and he determined to carry some of it home to his grandmother. So he stripped off a flat piece of birch bark from a neighbouring tree, and took up a little of the froth upon it, and placed it very carefully upon a rock on the bank, where it would remain safely, he thought, till he was ready to go home.

Just above where he stood was a little waterfall in the brook. The current was stopped by some stones and logs, and the water tumbled over the obstruction, forming quite a little cataract, which sparkled in the sun. [Pg 26]

Caleb threw sticks and pieces of bark into the water, above the fall, and watched them as they sailed on, faster and faster, and then pitched down the descent. Then he would go and *whip* them into his landing, and thus he could take them out, and sail them down again. After amusing himself some time in this manner, he began to

wonder why Raymond did not come, and he concluded to take his foam, and go along. He went to the rock and took up his birch bark; but, to his surprise, the foam had disappeared. He was wondering what had become of it, when he heard across the road, and at a little distance above him, a scrambling in the bushes, on the side of the mountain. At first, he was afraid; but in a moment more, he caught a glimpse of the cow coming out of the bushes, and supposing that Raymond was behind, he threw down his birch bark, and began to gallop off to meet him, lashing the ground with his whip. [Pg 27]

At the same time, the cow, somewhat worried by being driven pretty fast down the rocks, came running out into the road, and when she saw Caleb coming towards her, and with such antics, began to cut capers too. She came on, in a kind of half-frolicsome, half-angry canter, shaking her horns; and Caleb, before he got very near her, began to be somewhat frightened. At first he stopped, looking at her with alarm. Then he began to fall back to the side of the road, towards the brook. At this instant Raymond appeared coming out of the bushes, and, seeing Caleb, called out to him to stand still.

“Stand still, Caleb, till she goes by: she will not hurt you.” But Caleb could not control his fears. His little heart beat quick, and his pale cheek grew paler. He could not control his fears, though he knew very well that what Raymond said must be [Pg 28] true. He kept retreating backwards nearer and nearer to the brook, as the cow came on, whipping the air, towards her to keep her off. He was now at some little distance above the cotton landing, and opposite to a part of the bank where the water was deep. Raymond perceived his danger, and as he was now on the very brink, he shouted out suddenly,

“Caleb! Caleb! take care!”

But the sudden call only frightened poor Caleb still more; and before the “Take care” was uttered, his foot slipped, and he slid back into the water, and sank into it until he entirely disappeared.

Raymond rushed to the place, and in an instant was in the water by his side, and pulling Caleb out, he carried him gasping to the shore. He wiped his face with his handkerchief, and tried to cheer and encourage him. [Pg 29]