

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BUREAU-SHOP.

"BENNY," said John, one cold morning in the latter part of November, when the autumn was nearly gone, "I am in a kind of a trouble."

"What is the trouble?" asked Benny.

"Why, you see, the winter is coming on," said John, "and pretty soon it will be too cold for me to work in my shop, and what shall I do then? I can't move my bench into the house."

"You must keep yourself warm a-sawing," said Benny.

"Yes," said John; "I can keep warm well enough when I am doing any hard work, like sawing and planing; but when it comes to standing still at the bench doing the nice work, then it will be too cold."

"You must put on your coat and mittens," said Benny.

"Hoh!" exclaimed John; "a man can't

do any carpenter-work with his coat and mittens on!"

"You are not a man," said Benny.

"It is all the same thing," said John.

Benny did not think that it was the same thing, at all, but as he was not fond of contradicting and disputing, he said nothing to this, but after a pause he asked, —

"Could not you move the chimney from our camp into your shop, and so have a fire there?"

"Oh, no!" said John.

"Or build a new one," suggested Benny, "out of stones?"

"No," said John, shaking his head.

"Then," said Benny, "I don't know what you will do."

"If I only had a bureau-shop like uncle Edward's," continued John, "I could work in the house."

"I never saw uncle Edward's bureau-shop," said Benny.

"It is a very nice shop indeed," said John, — "all in a bureau. There are four drawers to it. The upper drawer holds the small tools, the second one holds the large tools, the third one the pieces of wood and

the unfinished work, and the lower one the chips and shavings. You don't know what nice order he keeps it in."

"Can't you get a bureau-shop somehow?" asked Benny.

"If I could only get a bureau," said John. "I have got all the tools I should want to put in it,—

"Except a little plane," he added, after a moment's pause. "Uncle Edward has got the cunningest little plane you ever saw. He planes with it on a bench-hook."

"A bench-hook?" repeated Benny.

"Yes," said John. "You see, the top of his bureau is of marble, and it would not do to plane on that. Besides, there could not be any block set in the marble to plane against. So he planes on a bench-hook, and he planes *from* him,—from front to back, instead of along the side, as we do at a big bench."

"I don't understand that very well," said Benny.

"You will," rejoined John, "when you see the bureau. You and I will go there some day, and then you shall see it."

"If I could only get a bureau," continued John, "and a place to put it in the house, I would fit me up a bureau-shop for this winter."

"Could not mother let you have one of her bureaus?" asked Benny.

"No," said John, shaking his head; "her bureaus are all full. I must contrive some way to earn the money and buy one. If I could only get another contract for teaching you."

"Well," said Benny, "I will learn; and then I can own a share in your bureau-shop."

As soon as this idea had fairly entered John's mind, he began to take great interest in it. In the course of the day he proposed the plan to his mother. He asked her whether she would be willing to give him another contract—for example to teach Benny to read in words of one syllable—in order that he might earn money enough to buy a bureau, so as to have a bureau-shop in the house, where he might work in the winter.

The first thought which came into Mrs. Gay's mind on hearing this proposal, was,

that she could let John have one of her bureaux just as well as not. She, however, seldom acted in such cases on the first thought, but took time to consider.

"That is quite an idea," said she. "It strikes me favorably. Still I must take time to consider the question a little. I advise you, when you become a man, never to enter into any important contract without first taking time to consider it well. But how is it about a bureau-shop? Tell me what it is."

"Why, it is made with a common bureau," said John, "high enough to stand at to work. We keep the tools and the work in the different drawers, and the chips and shavings in the lowest one of all; and we do our work on the top of it."

"Then I should think the top of it would soon get defaced and spoiled," said Mrs. Gay.

"No," said John. "Uncle Edward's bureau has a marble top, and it is as nice now as ever it was. You see, he never works on the marble directly, but always puts on a board."

"How do you do your sawing?" asked Mrs. Gay.

"Uncle Edward has a little flat-topped foot-bench," said John, "and saws on that. He opens the lower drawer and brings the bench close up to it, so as to saw over it and let the sawdust all go over into the drawer. But he does not have much sawing to do, for he only does light and small work at his bureau-shop. He saws all his small pieces on the top of the bureau by a bench-hook."

"A bench-hook?" repeated Mrs. Gay

Mrs. Gay pictured to her mind some kind of iron hook, but she could not imagine how a person could saw by means of one.

"Yes," replied John; "and he planes upon a bench-hook too, which is a very good way. He let me try planing with his little plane on his bench-hook once, and I liked the way very much."

Mrs. Gay was more puzzled than ever. She had some idea of a plane and of planing, — but how anybody could plane *on a hook* of any kind passed her comprehension entirely.

In fact, what the carpenters call a bench-hook is by no means made of iron, nor has

it anything sharp about it, nor is it curved in form like any other kind of hook. It is a very simple thing when you come to see it, and a very easy thing to make, and withal an extremely convenient thing for many purposes, — but it is not very easy to describe. They are made of different sizes and proportions, according to the purpose for which they are intended.

To get an idea of Edward's bench-hook, you must imagine a board about six inches wide and one foot long, with two cross-pieces of wood glued firmly to the two ends, one on the under side and one on the upper side. The piece which is on the under side is about an inch and a half thick, and that on the upper side about a quarter of an inch thick. The thick block on the under side is called the *hook*.

If now you place the bench-hook cross-wise on the bureau with the end that has the hook — that is the block which is fastened on the *under* side — at the front, and the other end back, and fit it there so that the block on the under side will shut down over the edge of the bureau, and *hook* itself there as it were, then the board will be

kept from sliding back; and you can put any short piece of wood which is more than a quarter of an inch thick on the top, with the end of it against the *upper* block, and so can plane it very easily; only you have to work the plane from front to back, instead of from side to side, as in a common bench. Still you can plane very well in this way, especially with a small plane and for small work.

You can put such a bench-hook upon any table, and so plane upon it very well, provided the table is solid and heavy, or is placed against the side of the room, so as to make it steady.

If the piece which you wish to plane is of less thickness than the block on the upper side which you plane against, then you can put a thin board underneath it, so as to raise it. Or you can have different bench-hooks of different sizes and with blocks of different thicknesses on the end, fitted to different kinds of work; though of course it is only small and comparatively delicate work which can be done with such appliances as these.

When you wish to saw with the bench-

hook, you lay down the piece of wood across it, at the farther end against the block, and in such a position that the place at which you wish to saw shall come just beyond the edge of it. You then hold it firmly there by pressing it against the block with one hand, while you saw it off with the other.

If, however, you are doing this work on a bureau or table, you must always have a thin board under the bench-hook, to cover all that part of the table or bureau, so as to protect it from the saw. And it is better always to make the *hook*, that is the block on the under side which shuts down over the edge of the table, deep enough to allow of your putting under such a board, without lifting the bench-hook up so high that the block will not take hold of the edge.

On the afternoon of the day on which John made the proposal to his mother, she told him that she was inclined to make the contract with him to teach Benny to read in words of one syllable; and she sent him into town, to a certain furniture-store, to see if he could find there any bureau which was of the right size and shape for his purpose.

He was not to inquire the prices of any of the bureaus, but only to choose the one which he should like the best, and tell the furniture-seller which it was, and then she would go afterward herself and see it.

John accordingly went and chose a bureau, and his mother afterward went to see it, and liked it very much.

She then made a contract with John that he should teach Benny to read in words of one syllable, and when he had taught him so that he could read well in any book of large print, and small words which she might give him, she promised to buy him that bureau. In the mean time he might be getting his tools ready, and making his bench-hooks.

Mrs. Gay's first idea, as has already been said, was to provide John with a bureau at once, either by giving him one of her own, or buying him a new one; but she was so well convinced that he would value and enjoy it much more, if it cost him some labor and pains to acquire it, and that the mental discipline and development, too, which his faculties would receive in the work of teaching Benny, would be so valuable to him, that she concluded to adopt

the plan above described. So John immediately commenced the work of teaching Benny to read, and she sent into town at once privately, and bought the bureau — agreeing with the man, however, that it should remain in his shop until she should send for it.

Benny made rapid progress in learning to read, and in due time John's pupil passed a very satisfactory examination, and the bureau was brought home. Mrs. Gay gave him, as a place for it, the window in the back-hall, where he used to work at a table when he first began his carpentry. This was a very nice place, as the back-hall was always kept warm, and John worked here at different times all the following winter.

He fitted up the drawers with various sliding-trays, and with partitions, forming different compartments, and arranged his tools in them very nicely. He always kept them, moreover, in such excellent order, that he took a pride and pleasure in showing the establishment to visitors when they came, and they all thought that a bureau-shop was the nicest kind of shop they ever saw.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MARTIN-HOUSE.

OF all the undertakings in the way of carpenter-work that John engaged in during the year when he first learned the use of tools, the one which remained longest on hand, and which was yet the most satisfactory in the end, was his martin-house.

Indeed, it is very often the case that the work which is longest on hand is the one that is the best executed, when at last it is finished, for the greatest and most frequent cause of the failure of children, in any work which they undertake, is the urgent haste which they are in to complete their work and realize the fruits of it, as soon as possible after they first conceive the idea. This eagerness to get what they are making done, produces hurry, and hurry produces carelessness, and carelessness produces bad work and mistakes, which lead to vexation, disappointment, and failure.

When John began his martin-house, — or