There was a fascinating little stream just at the other side of the low wall that bounded the garden, and this stream had more attractions for Sydney than anything else about the holiday home.

It was not for its cool murmuring sound that Sydney liked it, nor for its crystal clearness—though he must have felt the charm of all this during those hot August days. He had found a beautiful place where he could put a water-wheel, and he was as busy as he could be planning and making one. He had his little box of tools with him, and it was easy to get pieces of wood; and for the rest Sydney's cleverness in "making things" was well known to his sisters and brother, and held in great reverence by them. They never "meddled," and so were graciously allowed to come and admire.

"O, bother!" exclaimed Sydney, "here's this little plague! You can't come here, Walter," he called out. "Go back to the garden and play there."

But little Walter had already climbed over the loose stones and was running towards the stream.

Sydney jumped up from the ground and went to meet him.

"Did you hear, Walter?" said he; "go back and play. I don't want you here."

"O, please, Sydney," said a pleading voice, as a pair of childish blue eyes were lifted up to the face of the elder boy, "I do want to see the water-mill! I won't touch it—I promise."

"You won't get the chance," said Sydney roughly. "Just you go back when you're told. You've got Madge and Johnny to play with."

"But Madge doesn't make water-wheels, and I'm tired of her play, and Johnny is indoors. Do let me watch you, Sydney!"

But all Sydney's answer was to take the little boy by the shoulders and march him back to the wall. He felt very angry.

"Now, look here, Walter," he said, "in that elder-bush there lives a ghost that comes out sometimes. I think you'd better keep away from it, for you're the sort of chap that would be caught."

Sydney, seeing the sudden fear in the child's face as he turned his eyes towards the elder-tree, thought he had hit on a very happy plan for keeping Walter away.

"I've given him a fright," said he, as he went back to where his sisters were sitting by the edge of the stream. "I've told him there's a ghost in that tree. He won't come past it in a hurry."

Loo laughed, but Lena said: "He'll really believe it, Sydney. He's such a nervous sort of a child."

"I want him to believe it," said Sydney. "He's such an inquisitive little chap that he'd have been coming down here to see my wheel when I wasn't about. I don't know what mother asked him for. He's a perfect nuisance."

"Mother wants us to be kind to him," said Lena; "you know she said so. Poor little thing! He hasn't got a mother, and he's always left with servants now."

"The best place for him," exclaimed Sydney. "Why should he bother us and spoil our holiday?"

"He's a stupid little thing," said Loo.

Lena was silent. "He's not like other children," she said, after a minute, "but how can he be? Mother says he has never had any jolly times or any children to play with."

"O, well," said Sydney carelessly, "he's got Madge and Johnny now, and that ought to be enough." And then he forgot all about Walter in the interest of fixing his wheel.

Meanwhile Walter went slowly back again through the garden, his heart full of bitter disappointment. He did so want to see that wheel! He had been dreaming about it all night, for he had known that it was to be fixed and tried the next day. He had been watching for an opportunity ever since Sydney and his sisters had gone to the stream. It came when nurse went indoors with Johnny, and Madge got sulky and buried herself in a picture-book. That was the moment when he stole away unobserved. If only he could have had one peep! He wouldn't have touched it, not for the world; he only wanted to look at the wonderful thing, and to see if he could perhaps make one some day. He would like to try now, but he was not allowed to have a knife, and he did not know where to get wood. Then when he went home there would be no stream and no new sorts of play.

Just then he heard Madge calling him.

"Come here and play, Walter," she said. "I'll be a bear among the trees and I'll run out

and catch you."

"I don't like that game, Madge," said he; "you roar so loud and then I think it really is a bear."

"You baby!" said she. "Well, Johnny and nurse will play and you can run away."

No, he could not do that. He would play too, and try to remember all the time that it was only Madge roaring among the trees and not really a bear.

The next day it happened that there was a large picnic party, to which all the elders were invited, including Sydney, Loo, and Lena. So the three younger children, with nurse and Baby and the other servants, had it all to themselves. It was rather a dull day, Walter thought. He was thinking about the wheel and wondering if it was turning merrily in the stream, or if Sydney had put it away. He would have given worlds to go and see, but he never got the chance. When the children went to the kitchen garden it was to walk round with nurse.

Johnny was bemoaning that strawberries were over, and Madge was looking vainly for gooseberries on the trees that had long ago been stripped. But Walter cast furtive glances at the thick elder-bush by the wall, and shivered a little inside when he thought of what Sydney had told him about it.

Directly after that they went indoors to have supper and go to bed. As they were undressing it was discovered that Madge had lost a coral necklace she had on. It was a fancy of her mother's that Madge should always wear this, as it was a present from a dead godmother, and the question now was where it had been dropped.

"She had it on at the gooseberry-bushes," said Walter, "for I saw it."

Nurse was just then undressing Johnny.

"You can run down the garden and look for it, Master Walter," said she. "It gets dark so fast I shan't be able to see by the time I've got you all in bed."

Madge was already in her dressing-gown, and in spite of much entreaty was not allowed to go.

So away went Walter full of importance, for the moment quite forgetting where he was going. But scarcely had he got outside the door when he remembered the dreadful tree, and fear took possession of him.

How could he go? He would have to pass the elder-bush if he went all round the path where they had walked with nurse. Dare he do it?

But if he went back the others would laugh at him and call him a baby. He could not stand that. He was not a baby, but a boy who would one day be a man and do great deeds. So he went on. Trying hard not to think of the elder-bush, Walter went bravely along, looking for the necklace. But still he could not help knowing that he was getting nearer to the dreaded spot. O, if he could but see those pink beads he would seize them and run!

He saw them at last, when he had nearly reached the tree. With mingled joy and fear he took a step forward and stopped to pick up the necklace when suddenly there was a rustling sound among the elder-branches and a hand reached out to part them, a hand belonging to a white figure. That was all Walter knew. With a cry of terror he rushed forward, not looking where he was going. Then he tripped and fell, and lay quite still. He was still unconscious when, an hour later, Sydney's mother bent over him anxiously. He had struck his head on the stones bordering the path, and there was waiting till the doctor came to know the extent of the injury.

Nurse told how the little boy had gone to look for Madge's necklace, and cook explained how she had been gathering elder-berries to make wine and, hearing footsteps, had come out from the thick branches. Just as she saw Master Walter he gave a scream and ran away as if frightened. But what could have terrified him she could not think.

Sydney looked at his mother's distressed face and at the little figure lying on the bed. He knew what had made Walter afraid, and he did not like afterwards to think of what he felt during the half-hour before the doctor came.

"But I never thought, mother," said he, "that he would be frightened at that."

His mother was too anxious to say much just then, and Sydney's conscience spoke instead. "You did want to make him afraid," it said, "knowing he was a small and timid boy." And Sydney knew that this was the truth.

Walter got better after a time, and his little heart was made glad by the kindness of all around. Even Sydney came and worked beside him, explaining all the improvements and extensions of the water-wheel. But the little boy did not know all that was in Sydney's mind, for it could not be spoken. But Sydney's unspoken thought was the stirring of true manliness within him. It was the determination to remember that those who were not so strong and big as himself needed all the more his consideration and gentleness. And he did remember that all his life.