

The Helping Hand

By CLARA SPEIGHT, GEORGETOWN, ONT.

"WELL, of all things, to send Fred Wilmor to Burton," said Joe Martin, as he and a few of the Jamestown League boys gathered outside the church door. "Yes, I know, he isn't such a bad sort of a fellow, but just think, there are so many more popular and better educated fellows than Fred. For example, there is Bob Green, the doctor's son, and young Lawyer Averson. I tell you, fellows, we should be proud of him. I know we've got the best and jolliest preacher in the whole country, but what could he have been thinking of to send that Wilmor on such an important occasion, and worse still, for Mr. Jarvis, the superintendent of the Canada Foundry, to get up and second the motion."

"Shut up, boys, here come the Wilmor now, so it's up to us to make the best of it," said Harold McCane.

Wilmor came towards them. He was a manly looking fellow of about twenty-three.

"Fellows, I don't know how to thank you for the honor the League has conferred on me. I know that there are so many more capable than I. I certainly appreciate the confidence you have shown in my poor ability, and I shall try and prove myself a worthy representative."

The boys looked at one another. At last Harold McCane gained courage enough to say, "Why, of course, you'll do splendid. Some of the boys from here must go down to hear you and clap for their leader."

The Rev. Mr. Murdoch and his friend, Mr. Jarvis, came out of the church together, and, proceeding some distance, Mr. Jarvis said, "Say, Jack, didn't the boys look rather dissatisfied when you mentioned that Mr. Wilmor as the representative from your League?"

"Yes, I'm sorry to admit that they did. This is how this special meeting occurred. A business man from Burton, our neighboring town, was staying here over night and attended our League meeting. He was impressed by the interest shown in it by our young people, so, on his return home, he told the president, and at the League's request, the secretary wrote inviting us to send a representative to take the topic for their Christian Endeavor meeting."

"But, Jack, why didn't you choose that brilliant young lawyer, Mr. Averson?"

"Indeed, he declined to go, should he be asked and suggested Wilmor's name to me. Perhaps, if I don't bore you, you would like to hear young Wilmor's history."

"Yes, indeed, he has such an interesting face. He looks such an honorable young man. He is a credit to this grand country of ours."

"Well, he was always a great student from the time he was a little chap, but owing to his father's illness and finally his death, the poor boy was compelled to go to work in the foundry. He was an industrious workman and made good wages. He and his mother were very comfortable until, about three years ago, Mrs. Wilmor took a stroke. Her illness was of comparatively short duration and poor Fred was left without a home."

"He went to the hotel to board. I remember the boys said he always complained of being so lonesome."

"At last he took to drink, and, for about a year, he went a swift pace. His former friends turned against him, and to all appearances he was lost. His manner became sullen and insolent."

Cursing was more frequent on his lips than anything else."

"Bert Averson, that clever young lawyer, took his meals at the same table, and, during his conversations with Wilmor, found him exceedingly well read and quick to calculate the results of anything."

"It seemed such a pity that the young man should degrade himself by a helping hand could save him. Averson, who was a great reader himself, invited Wilmor over to his room to see his books and talk over current events."

"Gradually, unconscious to Fred Wilmor, the influence of the delightful evenings spent with his new friend began to tell on the young man. He went less and less to the bar-room, and finally, one night in one of those heart-clashe so much, he solemnly promised his friend that he would be a man, and if he should have to face difficulties he would do so like a man, taking as his motto that famous one of Julius Caesar's 'Venit, vidi, vici.' I came, I saw, I conquered, and he has lived up to it ever since."

That night Fred Wilmor went to his



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room and, looking over his books, wondered what subject he could talk on that would interest the young people most. He thought of several important questions, but none of them seemed to satisfy him. Then, when he seemed discouraged about finding something suitable, something seemed to tell him, why not just get up and give them a heart-to-heart talk. Tell them how the influence of a brother saved you. Perhaps it may interest and help them. One who has lived in the midst of temptation and suffered understands the dangers better."

It was one Monday evening that the Burton League had a good attendance. One of the young gentlemen from the Jamestown League was to give a talk on the subject "Judge not that ye be not judged, but rather lend the helping hand." "Sounds like a good subject," said one man to another.

At the back of the room sat a dozen young men, wondering how Fred Wilmor would represent their home league. Jim Averson turned to Joe Martin and said, "Don't you worry yourself needlessly, because Fred can surely be trusted not to disgrace us. You will

be prouder of our League than ever, if I understand Fred as I think I do."

After a few introductory remarks, the president, Mr. Randal, introduced the speaker of the evening, Mr. Wilmor.

Fred rose, thanked the people for their kind invitation, and proceeded to discuss his subject, "Judge not that ye be not judged, but rather lend the helping hand." He asked them to pardon him for speaking personally. He gave them a brief outline of his own life and how he had been saved from ruin. "You may blame if you will, but when one's mother is gone—" (here his voice showed hesitation) "and one does miss so many of the little acts that make home dear, is it any wonder that one who had been saved from ruin, is offered? I didn't intend to be a drunkard, but I enjoyed company. Now, to the young man that saved my life I will always owe a debt of gratitude."

"Never be timid, backward about extending the open hand to the stranger in your town. The bar-rooms do so, all the more reason for us. Our minister was telling me the other day about one of New York's most brilliant physicians, who drew a salary of seventy thousand dollars a year. One morning he came out of a sick room. He had travelled all night, and the patient was dangerously ill, so the doctor was greatly wearied. His host offered him a glass of champagne. Thinking it would revive him and in this case could do him no harm, he drank it. It brought to life a dormant appetite that proved the man's downfall. To-day, he is one of the most degraded among humanity."

"I remember a boy I once boarded with; we played many a game of pedro and euchre together. If it had ended there there was no harm. But Kenn got tired of such humdrum playing, and said, 'Let's bet five cents apiece, it won't break us and it's more sport.' The boys were all game. Kenn was a good player and often won. From time to time larger sums were played. Kenn became so fascinated that he went to a low gambling house. He borrowed his employer's money and one night after playing high lost heavily, and to-night, boys, he is doing time in the penitentiary. Don't judge him too harshly, because maybe to-morrow night you intend to have a friendly betting game like he had many a time, but be warned by him and hesitate before yielding to temptation. If it was the first glass or the first game, I feel confident in saying, that there would be no criminals or drunkards because our country has few cowards, but it is the sneaking, underhand and cunning ways that the devil uses to obtain that which he has no right to. Don't be afraid to lend a brother a helping hand, even if you are not received kindly at first. If you are sincere and really desire to help him, I'm confident your attempt will be a failure. We are all human and there is that which is divine in all of us, so go on with the good work and give three cheers for the grand work that is done in moral reform."

After he had thanked them for their kind attention, several young men crowded around him and thanked him for the kindly advice he had given in sowing the seed of good-fellowship.

The Jamestown boys, in speaking of it afterwards to Mr. Murdoch, said, "Fred gave us all a lesson we badly needed. He seemed to give us new ambition and energy. After this we will trust to our own judgment in everything. It is a noble motto, 'Judge not that ye be not judged, but rather lend the helping hand.'"

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