

THE RED, RED WINE:

A TEMPERANCE STORY.

THE REV. J. JACKSON WRAY'S LAST STORY.

PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF
WILLIAM BRIGGS, TORONTO.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—(Continued.)

'I think you will bear me out,' said he, 'that I have always set you an example of self-restraint. There are some weak-kneed souls who claim that the only safety lies in total abstinence. I cannot agree with them, for I think that, as a rule, their self-assumed righteousness is in the worst possible taste, and it is neither wise nor gentlemanly to make one's self conspicuous, except when some great principle is at stake, and even then I often think that more is gained, in the long run, by unostentatious silence than by a loud-mouthed profession of our own belief. Still it is possible to err on the other side, and if you feel that alcohol, which should be a willing and pleasant servant, is becoming your master, I should certainly advise you to abstain entirely rather than give way to it. That, however, is a contingency which I am sure is not likely to happen to a son of mine.'

Of course Cuthbert, though on the very brink of that contingency which his father thought so remote, cordially agreed with everything said, and, indeed, he expressed his contempt of the feebly-fibred abstainer in even stronger words than Norwood Hayes himself.

'Mr. Nuncaster,' he continued, 'is a Christian gentleman, a deacon at Cod Street Chapel. He has promised me to look after you as if you were his own. (Cuthbert did not relish this piece of information). Let me beg of you, therefore, if ever you should happen to get into any little trouble, as we are all liable to do, to make as great a confidant of him as you would of me. I am sure he will advise and guide you even better than I could.'

And thus Norwood Hayes, having equipped his son's bark with a balloon by way of an anchor, launched him out upon the stormy waves of life. This, at best, risky experiment meant to Cuthbert Hayes, certain, speedy, and total shipwreck.

Mr. Nuncaster did all that could be reasonably expected of him for young Cuthbert. In the first place, he took lodgings for him in a respectable part of the town, which lodgings he vacated for more congenial quarters within a month, as the landlady objected to the unconscionable hours he kept. He also took a sitting for him at Cod Street, which he occupied twice, and twice only; and he invited him up to dinner on a Sunday, but, as he entertained him afterwards by going to sleep, this privilege was soon dispensed with likewise.

In business matters he was equally considerate. As young Hayes was only to be with them a short time and, indeed, had no need to be there at all, he did not bother him by keeping him at the desk, but at once introduced him to the brighter side of a cornfactor's life—the corn-exchange, the bar of the 'Double Locks'—the former the place where business was nominally done, and the latter the place where it was actually transacted, over a friendly bottle of wine or two, or more, as it happened. It really did not take long to learn the corn business in those days; it's just about as simple even now. It is worked on the plan of 'setting a sprat to catch a whale.' When you are buying, you lay out the 'sprat' on liquor, till you have made the other man fool enough to let you have his corn at your own price, and similarly when selling. When the bargain is concluded, you have another drink to settle it.

Cuthbert was an apt pupil. Though he had at first nothing to buy or sell, he nevertheless picked up the other part of the business with wonderful facility, and when he came to conduct some slight operations

for his firm he was an adept. Then he tried a speculation or two on his own account with phenomenal success, and as a result turned up at the office in the afternoon unequivocally drunk. Mr. Nuncaster sent him home in a cab.

On the morrow he remonstrated with him. Cuthbert was apologetic, and within the

was unable to shake himself free. Then he made a fool of himself by getting thoroughly drunk on one or two occasions before the bargain was struck, and so landing his firm in for two or three very poor things. Thereupon his governor informed him that if this occurred again he would have no further need of his services, and for his father's



AT THE OFFICE IN THE AFTERNOON UNEQUIVOCABLY DRUNK.

week was drunk again in office hours. This time he had made a splendid bargain for the firm, and somehow or other Mr. Nuncaster failed to observe his young clerk's condition.

Of course Cuthbert got into a 'capital set,' so much so that he almost forgot what it was to rise without a splitting headache in the morning, which could only be conquered by a 'hair of the dog that bit him.'

Gradually he became conscious that the drink-habit was mastering him, but still he

sake he made a valiant effort to keep himself straight, but the fatal bound had been passed, and he found himself powerless to resist the craving for drink.

At last the crisis came. Mr. Nuncaster sent Cuthbert home, and wrote to his father regretting that he had not informed him of his son's weakness, for had he done so he might then have been able to have avoided this unpleasant occurrence. He was greatly sorry for it, but when, after repeated warn-