

# Choice Literature.

## GRANDFATHER'S FAITH.

BY JULIA A. MATTHEWS.

"But, Will, I am frightened, for we'll have to confess, and it will be worse than ever now that we have denied it;" and poor Charlie looked up into Perkins' angry eyes with a very troubled face.

"Confess! I'd like to catch you at it," said Will, giving him a sudden shake. "It would have been bad enough before; but if you betray us now, Charlie Stockton, I'll—I'll!"

He was trembling with passion, and paused as if to find a threat strong enough to terrify the boy into compliance with his wishes.

"I don't want to tell," said Charlie, shrinking back from him; "but we'll have to, for Clifford knows; and when Mr. Braisted has us up to-morrow, he'll have to tell, if we don't."

"Why will he have to tell?" said Will, angrily.

"Why, Mr. Braisted will ask him, and Clifford couldn't tell a lie," said Charlie, with an assured trust in Harry's truth, which struck a chill to Will's heart.

"How does he come to know anything about it? Did you tell him?"

"Yes, I told him last night. He was awake when I went into my room. He asked me what was the matter, and I told him that we four fellows were in a scrape. I never thought of its doing any harm."

"You little fool!" said Will, fiercely. "Didn't you know that he was safe to blab it all out, if he was asked? What are we going to do?"

"Let's go right to Mr. Braisted and tell him. It will be an awful dose; but it won't be so bad as to hear it out before the school; and we won't feel so mean either. Let's us go right off."

"I won't do it, and you shan't either. I'll take care of Clifford. Where is he?"

"I don't know. But you'll never get him to lie about it, never."

"We'll see about that. You go up toward the house, and try if you can find him. If you do, tell him I want to speak to him at the brook."

"But, Will, if I do send him down, he won't promise you to hide it. I know he won't. Oh, Will, I'm miserable! I'd rather go right up to the study, and tell Mr. Braisted all about it. Let me go; I won't say a word against you or the other boys, not even if he expels me for refusing to let on; but I must tell him about myself, Will. You don't know how I've disgraced and dishonoured myself by telling that lie."

"I know how you'll disgrace and dishonour me by confessing it," replied Will, his face dark with rage. "I'd rather you'd have told everything in the beginning, fifty times rather. Why, we'll all be expelled, every one of us!"

"I won't say one word about you, Will. I promised you before that I wouldn't; but you can't possibly know how awfully ashamed I am. I promised my grandfather so faithfully never to be false again, and he believed me, and now I've deceived him, and told a lie."

It must have been a cruelly hard heart that could answer with such words the look of shame and pain and grief which was lifted to Perkins' face as Charlie spoke. But Will's heart was hard.

"And because you are sorry that you have told one lie, you want to tell another," he said scornfully. "Because you have broken faith with your grandfather, you want to play the traitor to your friend, do you? Do you think that your grandfather will be better pleased with two falsehoods than with one? Oh, Brownie, Brownie! I never thought you could be false to me!"

His angry voice had changed to one of tender reproach; and he held out his hands as if entreating the boy to return to his love. Tortured by his remorse, confused by Will's sophistry, easily led at any time, especially by words of love, Charlie

stood looking at his companion with all his bewilderment and distress plainly written on his face.

"You will be true to me, Brownie, won't you?" pleaded Will, with his arm about his neck; and Charlie faltered—"Yes, yes, I will."

### IX.

#### A BRAVE STRUGGLE.

They were still standing together, and Perkins was reflecting on the fact of Harry Clifford's knowing who the guilty parties were, and on what he had better do in the case (for he was afraid now to let Charlie meet Clifford alone, lest Harry should again turn him from his allegiance to himself), when Charlie's name was suddenly called.

He looked up into Perkins' face as if uncertain whether to answer the shout or not.

"All right," said Will. "We'll see what we can do with him. Tell him you're here."

"Hallo, Clifford! we're in the copse," shouted Charlie. "Come on."

The next moment Harry bounded through the narrow pathway which led into the secluded spot to which Will had taken Charlie and for the first time since they had parted in the hall after breakfast, the two boys faced one another. One quick look, and then Charlie's glance fell; he could not meet the grave troubled eyes which looked back into his.

"Well, Clifford," said Perkins, almost before Harry was fairly within hearing of his lowered voice, speaking in a jaunty, friendly tone, "so you are in our secret, I hear. Of course you will keep it."

"Of course I will, if I can keep it honourably."

"You could scarcely reveal it honourably," replied Will, with an uneasy laugh. "But we can trust you through everything, I'm sure."

He laid his hand in an affectionate manner on Harry's shoulder, but Clifford drew back.

"If by 'trusting me through everything' you mean that you will trust me to tell my truth to shield you," he said, "you are mistaken. Just so far as I can help you by keeping still, I will; for no one hates tale-bearing worse than I do; but if Mr. Braisted asks me if I know who had a hand in the thing, I cannot and will not say no. If I can escape telling what I do know, nobody will be more glad than I shall be; but I will not tell a lie about it; not—not even to save Charlie," he added gravely, after a moment's hesitation.

There was no mistaking his strong, fixed resolution to stand firm on this point, and Will despaired of moving him by any coaxings or persuasions. Springing towards him, with his face flushed by passion, he caught the little fellow by both shoulders, and, holding him fast in his strong hands, said angrily,—

"You dare to stand there braving me with that girl's face of yours, and say that you will inform on us. I tell you, you shall promise to keep dark."

"And I tell you," replied Clifford, calmly, "that I will if I can; but I will not lie about it. If I did such a thing, I should not feel fit to kiss my mother."

"You big baby!" said Will, contemptuously; but somehow, even though he stood helpless in the grasp of those powerful hands, Charlie had never thought his friend so manly and so brave.

"You big baby!" repeated Will; "you shall go home to comfort yourself with your mother's kisses if you don't look out for yourself, for you'll find you can't stand it here;" and he gave him a sharp, sudden shake. "You was let into our secret by accident, and if you don't pledge yourself to stand by us, I'll thrash you on the spot."

"No, No," cried Charlie, springing forward, "you shan't hurt him. I'll tell myself first. Let him up, Will! Let him up!" for another rough shaking had cost him equilibrium. He had staggered backward, and, borne down by Will's greater weight, had fallen to the ground, one arm and shoulder striking across the sharp edge of a large flat stone which had lain behind him.

"Stand off, and don't meddle," said Will, enforcing his command with a thrust of his elbow as Charlie caught his arm to drag him away from Clifford. "Now, Clifford, promise."

"I have promised to stand by you as far as I can. More than that I will not do. Perkins, you will break my arm if you are not careful."

Will's heavy right hand was pressing on the slight arm just below where it crossed the sharp edge of the stone; but it only pressed the harder in answer to the warning.

"I'll break it in earnest if you don't promise," he said, fiercely. "Will you?"

"No, I will not."

"Oh, Will, don't, don't!" cried Charlie, in an agony, as he saw the colour fade out of Clifford's cheek and lips, and his forehead gather into a frown of intolerable pain. "Let go! Let go!"

He dragged Perkins' arm with all his force, but his strength was as nothing against that of the older boy. In an instant he had flung him off.

"Promise. Give me your word."

"Nev—nev—never!" broke from the white lips; and, to Will's horror, the slender arm bent with a little snap beneath his hand.

With a cry as sharp as that which burst from Clifford, he sprang to his feet, and stood for a moment looking down into the pallid face, which lay, with closed eyes and parted lips, upon the grass, white and still.

He had not calculated the power of his own strong hand, nor the fragility of the slight figure which held that brave spirit; and he was, for the moment, paralyzed with terror by the sight of his own work. But the next instant, selfish considerations rose even above his remorse.

"I must go down to the village. Tell Mr. Braisted I've had a telegram from home, and have gone down to answer it. Get some water from the brook, and throw it in his face; and then run to the house for some one to help you. Tell Mr. Braisted he had a fall."

Charlie had been standing, gazing with a horrified face at the prostrate figure, while Will spoke these hasty words; but as Perkins turned away, he sprang towards him crying out,—

"Oh, Will! don't leave me alone. I don't know what to do for him. Stay and help me!"

But Will hurried away, disregarding his plea. It was true that he had received a telegram. It had been handed to him as he left the house, but he had not intended answering it until after school-hours. Now, however, it gave him an excellent opportunity to escape questioning until he should have had time to prepare himself with satisfactory answers.

Finding himself left alone, Charlie hastened with a heavy heart, to carry out the first part of Will's advice; and filling his hat with water at the brook which flowed close beside the copse, he knelt down at Clifford's side, and began to bathe his white face with very tender hands, telling himself all the while with bitter self-reproach that if he had been as true and faithful as Harry had proved himself, this would never have come to him.

"Clifford! Clifford!" he cried out at last, as the dark lashes still lay motionless on the colourless cheek; "can't you open your eyes? Can't you speak to me?"

The next moment the heavy eyelids lifted themselves slowly, and with a great sigh, Harry looked up into his friend's face.

"Oh!" he said, wearily, and closed them again. But the great terror which had begun to creep into Charlie's heart was lifted from it now.

"Harry," he said, gently; "Harry."

Clifford looked at him again.

"Where is Will?" he asked, feebly.

"Gone to Melville. He had a telegram from home. Is it very awful, Harry?"

"It's pretty bad. How will I get back to the house? It was mean of him to leave you alone, you poor fellow. I think he's broken my arm, it feels so queer; but I don't believe he quite meant to. We won't say anything if we can help it. He's bad enough off already. You needn't

say how I got the fall, unless we're asked. I'm afraid you'll have to go up for Mr. Braisted, Charlie. I feel so queer all over me when I try to move."

"But I'm almost afraid to leave you, for fear you'll faint again," said Charlie, looking wistfully at him. He wanted to say so much that he dared not say while Clifford was so weak, that his eyes spoke for him.

"Oh, no. I'll lie very still, and then I'll be all right. Hurry up, old man."

"Oh, Cliff, don't!" cried poor Charlie, overcome by the use of the name he had learned to love so much. "I'm not fit!"

Turning away with the words on his lips, he ran swiftly to the house, and in a twinkling stood in the school-room, breathless, eager, and half exhausted.

In their excitement, the three boys had not noted the flight of time; and the school had been in session nearly an hour when Charlie startled both teachers and taught by his abrupt entrance.

"Mr. Braisted, Clifford's sick. He's broken his arm. He's had a fall, and he's dreadfully hurt," he gasped out, catching his breath between each disjointed sentence. "He'll have to be carried home."

Mr. Braisted hurried at once to Harry's assistance; and finding the broken arm lying across the edge of a sharp stone, did not question the boy farther when he had answered his first query.

"How did you happen to fall in such a position?" asked Mr. Braisted.

"I stumbled backward, sir," replied Clifford.

"Was Charlie with you, or did he find you here?"

"I was with him, sir," said Charlie, as Harry's eyes closed heavily again.

"It was most fortunate that you were," said Mr. Braisted. "He might have lain here all the afternoon. By the way, Perkins is not in school either. Do you know anything about him?"

"He had a telegram from home, sir, and ran down to Melville to answer it," said Charlie.

"Without permission? It must have been important, or he would not have done so. Did it bring him bad news?"

"I don't know, sir. He only said he must go down, and asked me to tell you."

"He will explain it, I suppose. I am sorry he is absent in school-hours, but if there is trouble at home, it may prove excusable."

Mr. Braisted had lifted Clifford in his arms like a child, and while they talked, had been carrying him carefully toward the house. As they reached the door, and met Mrs. Braisted there, her motherly heart brimming over, both at eyes and lips, with sympathy for the injured boy, the master turned toward Charlie to send him in the school-room. But the face which looked up into his, as he glanced behind him, was almost as pale and exhausted as that which rested on his shoulder; and he saw, in a moment, that Charlie was utterly unfit for study.

"Why, my boy, this has been a little too much for you," he said kindly. "You had better go to your room and lie down."

"Couldn't I stay with Clifford?" pleaded Charlie. "I'll be very still," he added, following closely by Mr. Braisted's side, as he mounted the stairs with his burden.

"Please take me to our own room," said Harry, noticing that Mr. Braisted turned, at his wife's suggestion, toward the spare bedroom, a large apartment on the opposite side of the hall. "I like it better. And let Charlie stay with me."

"The doctor will be here in a few moments, and we will see what he says about your having company to-day," replied Mrs. Braisted. "Take him to his own room, Edward, if he prefers to go there. You may come in, Charlie, until the doctor comes; but you must not look so blue. You must cheer our boy up, now that he is laid by. Silly fellow! Can't you even stand steady on your own feet?" she added, bending to kiss the pale face which now lay on the pillow.

(To be continued.)

GENTLEMEN—I can truly recommend Hagyard's Pectoral Balsam for all cughs and colds. Less than one bottle cured my brother of a severe cold.  
MISS MAGGIE THOMPSON, Vasey, Ont.