

Ahoy! Ahoy!

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

I HEAR a shout, I hear a call to every idle rover,  
Ahoy! ahoy! each girl and boy, vacation time is over.  
Come from your rural haunts and nooks, with faces round and ruddy,  
You've had your plays and holidays, and now's the time for study.

Ahoy! ahoy! the echoes fly along the glen and mountain;  
They mingle with the running stream, and with the plashing fountain;  
And o'er the ocean, too, they go, by verdant peaks and passes,  
To marshal in the wandering clan of rosy lads and lasses.

From northern woods and breezy camps, from southern haunts of fairies,  
From rugged coasts along the east, and from the western prairies  
The signal flies—the shout goes forth to every idle rover,  
Ahoy! ahoy! each girl and boy, vacation time is over.

Make no excuse—make no delay—but with a purpose steady,  
Fall into line, like soldiers true, for every duty ready;  
Let go your fishing-lines and hooks, your bats and balls and rackets,  
And turn your thoughts awhile to books; and put on your working jackets.

Ahoy! ahoy! on ship and shore are voices loudly ringing;  
And breezes to their homes once more a merry host are bringing;  
With sparkling eyes and rosy lips, and full of youthful graces,  
They'll enter through the school-room door, and settle in their places.

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Come from your rural haunts and nooks, with faces round and ruddy,  
You've had your plays and holidays, and now's the time for study.

—The Independent.

The Worst Boy in the Town.

A CANADIAN STORY,

BY

Florence Yarwood.

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOURAGED.

"O World! so few the years we live,  
Would that the life which thou dost give  
Were life indeed!"—Longfellow.

JACK hurried down the street, a thousand angry thoughts surging within him. He felt too reckless to care where he went or what he did. After walking aimlessly for a few moments he stopped at a lively stable and hired a horse and rig for the purpose of going out to Farmer Barton's to see whether he could find work there for the summer. He had spoken to him about it once before, and partly made an agreement with him. Now, he felt that his school days were over, for the present, at least; his money nearly all gone, and the best thing he could do would be for him to apply himself at once to hard work.

As he drove down the street, the trying ordeal he had recently passed through came up before him again, making him feel so despondent that he suddenly reined his horse in front of a saloon, and tying him up, he went in, determined to forget his unhappiness for a time at least.

There were plenty inside to welcome him, and when he came out (oh, sad to say,) he was so much intoxicated that he did not know what he was doing.

Fastening his horse he jumped in, and charging to the spirited animal, he urged him on at an alarming rate of speed. By the time he reached the end of the street he was urged him on. People rushed to doors and windows breathless, to see what the result would be. They soon saw, for, as the horse turned the corner, he suddenly shied to the left, and the driver was thrown out on the hard sidewalk, while the terrified animal rushed madly on down the street.

"Poor Jack!" That was what Miss Grey

said as she saw the sad scene from her window, and seeing him fall, she hurried down the street as quickly as possible. Already a crowd had collected, and people stood back as she made her way through to the unconscious boy, for where she was known she was greatly respected.

"Shall we take him home?" asked one of the men who stood near.

Miss Grey's thoughts flew swiftly to that home where she knew he would meet with nothing but harsh words and unkind treatment; then she said in a clear, commanding voice:

"No; take him to my home, please, yonder white cottage."

A look of surprise flitted over the faces of the rough, uncultured men who stood near. Some of them loungers at the very saloon where Jack had just been, and they wondered why this young lady was so deeply interested in him.

"He is one of my boys in the Methodist Sunday-school," explained Mildred, with gentle dignity. And without another word, and with grave, earnest faces they lifted their unconscious burden and bore him to the white cottage.

Mildred hurriedly preceded them, and entering the room where her father sat, she hastily explained:

"It's poor Jack Harding, papa; he has been thrown out of a rig and very much hurt, I fear, and knowing that he would not be kindly cared for at home, I have told them to bring him in here. Did I do right?"

"Quite right, dear Mildred," said he. "I am sure the Saviour would have tenderly cared for him had he been here, and we will do as we know he would have done."

Mildred lost no time during this conversation; with deft fingers she made ready the spare room—that dainty room with trimmings all of pale rose-colour, which had been her special care and pride. When they brought Jack in he was placed on the snowy white bed, regardless of the fact that his clothes were soiled and dusty. She would give him the best she had in the Master's name.

"We must have a doctor," said Mr. Grey, with decision; "he may be very much hurt." Fortunately a doctor had witnessed the accident, and he now appeared on the scene, thinking perhaps his services might be required. After a careful examination he said his injuries were not serious, and a night's rest would bring him around about right.

When the soft flush of sunset threw its rosy light in the room that evening, Jack opened his eyes to find Miss Grey sitting by his side, and her father at the foot of the bed.

He looked puzzled and confused for a few moments; then he remembered everything, and with the remembrance came a feeling of remorse, bitter and keen. His eyes filled with tears as he said:

"Oh, Miss Grey! I do not deserve this! How could you have me brought here?"

"Because you are one of my boys, Jack," said she, kindly.

"Did you know I had been drinking?" asked he in a low voice.

"I feared the worst," said Mildred, sadly.

"And yet you would not give me up; you are indeed a true friend! I believe you would stand by me no matter what happened!"

"Yes, Jack, I would. I am determined to win you for Christ, and I can work and wait patiently long years if need be, if only I see you one of his at last."

"The Saviour has need of you in his service, my dear boy," said Mr. Grey, kindly.

"You would make a labourer worthy of his hire if only you would give yourself up into his dear keeping."

"I am sure you can hardly believe it, but I do honestly long to be good," said Jack, sorrowfully; "but everything seems against me. Only this morning the world seemed so bright and beautiful, and I said to myself that I would try to do just what is right, and oh, what a failure I made of it all!"

"It is never too late to begin rebuilding," quoted the minister, cheerily.

"I suppose not," said Jack, sadly; "but the keeping of my resolutions depends entirely on circumstances. I can be good when it is smooth sailing, not otherwise."

"Why do you drink, Jack, when you see the evil effects of liquor right in your own home?" asked Miss Grey, sadly. "Have you already acquired such a liking for it that it is hard for you to break off?"

"No," said Jack, "honestly I have not; I do not crave for liquor, but I drink because I get so desperate that I don't know what to do with myself; but I do sincerely promise you right here that I shall never again taste liquor as long as I live."

A glad light crept into Mildred Grey's eyes, while her father said:

"Let us kneel right here and ask the blessed Lord to help you keep that vow," and

they knelt down, and very earnest and pathetic was the prayer that followed.

We might just here say to Jack Harding's credit that he kept his word.

"What went wrong to-day, Jack? What brought you to this?" asked Mildred presently.

Then came the sorrowful recital of his trouble at school; he told her everything, and ended by saying:

"Miss Grey, as sure as I breathe I did not cheat any! I never knew the book was in my desk until after the essays were written! Do you believe me?"

"Of course we do, Jack!" said both Mildred and her father.

"And," said the minister, "if you will but trust in the Lord he will bring forth thy righteousness as the noon-day."

"Yes," said Mildred, "I feel confident that in some way the mystery will be solved, and your innocence proved."

"I don't know," said Jack, sadly, "everything looks against me."

"Do you suspect anyone?" asked Mildred, presently. "You need not fear to tell us; you know we are your friends."

"Well," said Jack, "between you two and me, I suspect that miserable scamp, Bob Pierce; he was the one who first spoke to the teacher about the book being in my desk; he would do anything to cause me trouble; but how he could get into the room unobserved and place that book there I cannot imagine."

"The truth will all come out, I am sure," said Mildred; and leaving her father to talk with him she got supper ready and soon returned with a tray filled with tempting eatables for Jack.

"I ought to go home," said Jack. "I am so sorry to stay here and put you to so much trouble."

"Don't you say anything about going home until morning, and not then if you are not well enough," said both Mr. Grey and Mildred.

"Will your people be anxious about you if you do not return? Will it be necessary to send them word?" asked Mildred.

"No," replied Jack, bitterly, "they will not miss me, or hardly notice my absence."

So Jack slept in that pretty room that night, and in the morning he felt almost as well as ever, and took his departure, with many thanks to the people who had proved themselves to be his true friends.

(To be continued.)

The First Tangle.

ONCE in an Eastern palace wide  
A little child sat weaving;  
So patiently her task she plied  
The men and women at her side  
Flocked round her, almost grieving.

"How is it, little one," they said,  
"You always work so cheerily?  
You never seem to break your thread,  
Or snarl or tangle it, instead  
Of working smooth and clearly.

"Our weaving gets so worn and soiled,  
Our silk so frayed and broken,  
For all we've fretted, wept and toiled,  
We know the lovely pattern's spoiled  
Before the king has spoken."

The little child looked in their eyes,  
So full of care and trouble;  
And pity chased the sweet surprise  
That filled her own, as sometimes flies  
The rainbow in a bubble.

"I only go and tell the king,"  
She said, abashed and meekly;  
"You know, he said, in everything"—  
"Why, so we do!" they cried, "we bring  
Him all our trouble weekly."

She turned her little head aside;  
A moment let them wrangle;  
"Ah, but," she softly then replied,  
"I go and get the knot untied  
At the first little tangle!"

O little children—weavers all!  
Our broidery we spangle  
With many a tear that need not fall,  
If on our King we would but call  
At the first little tangle!

THE STRONGEST DRINK.

"Now, father, I hope you did not forget to go to the post-office," said Miss Ettie Freeman, tripping downstairs to meet her father, on his return from the village, one bright morning.

"Oh, no! I went to the office," replied Mr. Freeman, as he hung up his hat, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Then I hope you brought me a letter," said Ettie, wistfully.

"Two of 'em, my dear." And Mr. Freeman produced the envelopes from his pocket, and gave them to Ettie.

"Two! Oh, how nice! Thank you, father. Now I shall reward you by bringing you a fresh drink of water, for I know you must be thirsty after your walk."

"I am very thirsty and warm, and wishing for the cool drink," replied Mr. Freeman, smiling. He waited in the hall a moment, while Ettie tripped away, presently returning with a pitcher of fresh, cold water and a glass.

"Thank you, dear," said her father, as she poured out the glass of pure, sparkling fluid. "And thank God for clear, cold water!" he added, raising the glass in his aged hand. "The best drink mortal lips ever quaffed, and one of heaven's choicest gifts to man!"

"It is rather better than strong drink, isn't it?" remarked Ettie, holding her pitcher with both hands.

"Strong drink! Why, what do you mean, child? Water, clear water, is the strongest drink on earth! What other draught has power to sustain life in man, beast, bird, and even insect? So great a power that without it we must die. What other liquid can raise the drooping plant from the earth, nourish the field of springing grain and the mighty oak tree, until even the ground cries out for water, cold water; and is scorched and parched without it? What is it that moves all the mighty wheels and engines of the manufacturing interests? Water power. What bears great ships and steamers to the farthest quarters of the globe? Water power. What falls over the cliffs of Niagara with such restless strength and force that the skill and energy of man have not yet been able to control it? Water. What is it sweeps along in mighty currents, through a thousand channels, beautifying and fertilizing the length and breadth of every land in the wide, wide world? Water.

What comes into our homes, and assists in the preparation and purifying of everything we eat and wear, of our dwellings, and even our bodies, keeping them pure temples, meet for God's indwelling? Water, again. And when our homes are wrapped in seething flames, what comes once more, and stronger even than the devouring fire, conquers and puts it out, and saves for us our household goods? Still water. And yet we take a creature which cannot be made without the help of water, and call it 'strong drink.' Here is the strong drink," and Mr. Freeman held high the sparkling glass—"the drink which makes men's limbs strong, their eyes bright, and their cheeks ruddy. Which fills home with happiness, pockets with money, and the whole land with prosperity, and is for this world the 'water of life' to man. Again, I say, 'Thank God for cold water!'"

And he raised the glass to his lips, and drank the refreshing draught, with a pleasant smile.

"Thank you for the new idea, father," said Ettie, as she received the empty glass. "When I hear anyone talk of 'strong drink' hereafter, I shall tell them what you have said of cold water, the best and strongest drink of all."

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BRYANT'S TENDER CONSCIENCE.

THE following very pretty anecdote is told of the late William Cullen Bryant, the poet, by a former associate in his newspaper office, which illustrates the good man's simplicity of heart. Says the narrator:

"One morning many years ago, after reaching his office, and trying in vain to begin work, he turned to me and remarked:

"I cannot get along at all this morning."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Oh, he replied, 'I have done wrong. When on my way here a little boy flying a kite passed me. The string of the kite having rubbed against my face I seized it and broke it. The boy lost his kite, but I did not stop to pay him for it. I did wrong. I ought to have paid him.'"

This tenderness of conscience went far toward making the poet the kindly, noble, honourable and honoured man that he was, whose death was felt as a loss throughout the land.