

## Jackson's Room-mate.

(By H. B. Hinman.)

Mrs. Westcott's boarding-house was no better and no worse than the majority of such places. The best you could say of it was that it was a stopping place; at least, it would have taken a person with a very vivid imagination to call it a home. However, I suppose that we fared as well as thousands of other young men and women who have been obliged to go out in the world and earn their own livelihood.

Mrs. Westcott was certainly not running the boarding-house, 'for her health,' and current report had it that she had a tidy sum laid away for a rainy day, although she was always complaining of poverty. We are very certain that she was not running it for our health, either, for the house was cold enough to give a frog a chill in the winter time, and the bill of fare was very scanty, to say the least, on many occasions. Our beds were so hard that my roommate remarked one night that we 'were getting our bed and board all in one.'

My companions in misery were two young ladies, clerks in Brown Brothers' department store, who had the front room upstairs; Mr. Markham, a young printer, and his roommate, Mr. Jackson, a salesman in a wholesale house on Front street, who occupied the east bedroom; two school-teachers, Miss Carver and Miss Sutton, who occupied the suite downstairs; and my roommate, George Fairfax. There were also a number of boarders who roomed elsewhere.

We were rather a peculiar mixture, take us altogether, with dissimilar habits, and tastes, and not in the least alike. However, we usually got along very well, all things considered, and had some very merry times at the table together.

I well remember the day when Frank Markham first came to the house to inquire for rooms. He was evidently just in from the country, was rather shabbily dressed, and extremely bashful. Mr. Jackson's roommate had recently left, having gone to another city to live; so Mrs. Westcott prevailed upon him to take young Markham in his place.

The first meal must have been a trying ordeal to Markham. At the beginning came the formal introduction to all of the other boarders—a ceremony which Mrs. Westcott never omitted. She prided herself on having 'seen better days,' and this gave her an opportunity of showing off her manners, which she considered to be simply superb. He was evidently unused to the society of young ladies, for when Miss Carver attempted to engage him in conversation he blushed violently and stammered in replying. The next morning Jackson told some of us that he should judge his new roommate to be a preacher instead of a printer, from the amount of time he spent reading his Bible and praying before he turned in. 'It was colder than Greenland in our room, too. I'll soon take that out of him, though,' he said. 'I'll get him down to Meyers' for a few nights, and that will settle it.'

Time went on, and the crudeness gradually wore away from Markham. His manners became more polished, his dress more genteel, and his conversation more easy. He was always obliging and considerate, and finally became a general favorite with us all, especially with our landlady. The change in his principles, however, which Jackson had predicted, did not take place. Every Sunday, both morning and evening, saw him start off for the Methodist Church a few blocks away, with his Bible under his arm.

On Wednesday evenings, no matter how tired he might be or how inclement the wea-

ther, he was sure to be found in the prayer-meeting. Many a time had Jackson invited him to go down to Meyers' with him and have a game of pool, or to run in on the way home and see how the baseball scores stood. He had even tried to get him to go in just once to see the silver dollars set in the floor and ceiling, which was one of the attractions of the place. Frank always persisted in his refusal, however, and said that he 'did not think a Christian ought to even enter such a place, unless it were an absolute necessity.'

Jackson replied: 'Oh, you're an old fool. What do you want to spoil all the best years of your life for, among those long-faced old men and women up there in the church? They're nothing but a lot of hypocrites anyway. As far as I am concerned, I am going to have a good time while I can, and I don't know where I can enjoy myself any more than down at Jake's with the boys.'

One night Markham thought he smelled liquor more strongly than was usual on Jackson's breath when he came home, and told him that he was afraid he was drinking too much, and he did wish he'd give it up.

'Oh, quit your preaching,' Jackson replied: 'I guess I am man enough to quit when I want to. A little bracer now and then isn't going to hurt anybody, and I know how much I can stand. I can take it or leave it alone, as I please, and you'll never hear of liquor getting the best of me. You'd better mind your own business, and I'll mind mine.'

The next night Markham went down to a social at the Young Men's Christian Association, and he invited Jackson to go with him, in spite of the rebuff which he had received the night before. He refused, however, with a sneer, and went down to his favorite pool-room.

Jackson was feeling in an unusually bad humor that night, and drank more than was customary for him. He was just getting ready to go home about midnight, when three or four of his boon companions, who had been out to a party, dropped in.

'Come and have a drink with us, old man,' said one of them.

'I don't care for any more,' replied Jackson. 'I've had enough for one night.'

'Oh, come; be game,' said one of his friends, and at that a couple of them took him by the arms and led him up to the bar.

'What'll it be, Jack?' said his friend.

'Oh, you can give me a glass of beer,' said Jackson.

'Beer be hanged; it's too cold for that to-night,' was the reply. 'Bartender, make it whiskey for all of us.'

He weakly consented, and, as usual, one round of drinks followed another, until they were pretty well intoxicated. Finally they started for home, but stopped in at two or three places on the way, to have 'just one more drink,' and by the time they had left the last saloon there was none of them that could walk straight enough to keep on the sidewalk without help.

Jackson finally left his companions, and reeled off alone toward his boarding-place. In going over one of the crossings he slipped and fell in the gutter, losing his hat, and cutting a great gash in his forehead. He picked himself up after a time and stumbled on. Upon reaching the door he fumbled at the lock with his key for some time, but was unable to fit the key in the keyhole, and finally sunk down on the steps in a drunken stupor.

There his roommate found him when he came down the next morning early. He was fast asleep, his hat gone, his clothes torn, and his face covered with blood from the cut in his forehead. Markham called the landlady, and together they got him quietly

to his room, and put him to bed to sleep off the effects of the debauch. Markham staying home from his work all day to nurse him.

Along toward evening he roused up, and inquired what the trouble was. He himself had scarcely any recollection of what had taken place. Markham told him simply, without any comments or criticisms, just what had happened. Jackson rolled over with his face to the wall, and lay there some time without saying a word; finally he said, 'Do the girls know about this, Frank?'

'No,' replied Markham, 'none of the boarders know anything about it.'

'Aren't you going to tell them?'

'No, certainly not,' Markham replied.

'Well, it's mighty good of you, Frank,' said Jackson, 'especially after the way I talked to you when you gave me good advice. I wish now that I had taken it. Is the old lady going to turn me out?'

'No,' Markham replied, 'she was going to, but I begged her to give you another trial, and she finally consented to.'

'Frank, you're a trump,' said Jackson. 'I wish I was half as good as you are.'

The following Wednesday night, as Markham was getting ready to go to prayer-meeting his roommate surprised him by saying that he guessed he'd go along, too.

When an opportunity for testimony was given, Jackson arose to his feet and said: 'Friends, I have been leading a sinful life, and I am sick of it. I prided myself in my strength, but I had a lesson that has shown me my weakness, and I desire your prayers that I may become a Christian like my friend Markham here. I've roomed with him two years now, and his life has been a constant example to me of what I ought to be.'

In accordance with his request they knelt together, and the pastor and several others, among them his roommate, prayed that God might pardon the past and give him strength for the future. They remained kneeling, and sang together softly, 'Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee,' and as they sang it Jackson felt the sweet peace of God, which passeth all human understanding, steal into his heart, and he knew that their prayers had been answered. After they had passed into the street, Markham grasped his hand, and said: 'Thank God for this answer of prayer. I have been praying for you ever since that first night that we roomed together.'

'Well, Frank,' said Jackson, 'it was your own consistent life that helped answer your prayers.—Classmate.'

## Take Care of Your Words.

Do you know, little maid, when you open your mouth,  
That away to the East, to the West, North and South,  
On the wings of the wind, just like bees or like birds,  
Fly the tones of your voice and the sound of words?

Do you know, little maid, that your mouth is the door,  
All the words you will say, all you have said before,  
Are imprisoned within? Some are sweet, pleasant words,  
Which, when they get out, will sing like the birds.

There are others so cross that they no one can please,  
And when they get out, will sing like the bees.  
Watch them close, little maid, when cross words stir about,  
Shut the door right up tight, and don't let them get out.

—American Paper.