

## Choice Literature.

### GRANDFATHER'S FAITH.

BY JULIA A. MATTHEWS.

He was taking aim at the great, stupid-looking creature which stood eyeing them with a heavy, sleepy look. Both boys were very pale, but rather from excitement than from fear; for they had already been told that the bears, which sometimes came down from the mountains as the winter weather drew on, were very timid and easily frightened.

"Shoot, and then give it to me, quick!" said Harry, breathlessly. He was longing to have a hand in this mortal conflict.

The animal had lifted its head at Hattie's cry, and now it moved a step forward. It only intended to turn and trot away, poor frightened thing! but in an instant the pistol snapped; there was a flash, a sharp report, a hot, stinging pain in its head; a second's pause, then another flash and report, another, and another; and as Mr. Husted, with a shout, and a face white with consternation and terrible expectation of he knew not what, dashed in upon the scene, he saw old Bruin totter and fall, while Hattie stood white and trembling against the tree; and the two boys flung their hats into the air, and screamed and cheered till the woods rang again.

"Dear, dear!" said Mr. Husted, as they stood around the vanquished foe, "I thought you'd killed yourselves, for sure; and whatever would I say to the doctor? Dear me, dear me! And to think you should have killed the first bear this season! But you needn't look so pale about it, Miss Hattie. They never attack nobody, poor creatures! They only come down to look for something to eat; they never hurt nobody unless they're angered o' purpose."

Nevertheless Hattie was very glad to turn her back on the fallen enemy, although she could not help but join in the great pride and delight of the successful young marksmen.

Striking through a by-way which only a mountaineer could have traced through its winding labyrinth, Mr. Husted led them down the mountain by an entirely different road from that by which they had ascended it, bringing them out at dusk at a little farm-house where they had their supper, for which they proved themselves, one and all, heartily ready; and, obtaining a horse and waggon from the farmer, drove his tired pleasure seekers home through the moonlit country roads.

Wearied enough they all were when they reached the cottage where Dr. Mason and his daughter, both beginning to feel rather anxious, were waiting to welcome them; but no words could tell how much they had enjoyed themselves, what glorious sights they had seen, and what glorious things they had done.

All night long they dreamed of bears, and tremendous encounters with wild beasts of every kind, and woke in the morning to find themselves, to their infinite delight, the heroes of the whole neighborhood.

Dr. Mason sent up to the scene of their exploit to have the spoil brought down from the woods. The triumph of the spoilers, as they were carried, sitting astride their victim, which they had met at the foot of the mountain as it was brought down, up the road and into the little settlement, was quite beyond description; and never did any two people sit down to a meal with more voracious appetites, than those with which the boys attacked bear-steaks on the following day.

But they came to an end at last, those three weeks of almost perfect enjoyment, and the party turned their faces homeward once more,—the doctor to his patients, Miss Harriet to her housekeeping, Hattie and the boys to their interrupted studies; each and all the stronger and the better, both in body and heart, for those happy days among the mountains.

XV.

### FAITHFUL AND TRUE.

Charlie's labors at school did not prove

very arduous during the following winter. It had been his wish to return to Melville, and Dr. Mason had thought it best for him to do so; but continued study was too fatiguing an effort for him as yet; and although he was otherwise in his usual good health and strength, Mr. Braisted was obliged to watch him carefully, and to shorten his hours of mental occupation very considerably.

But morally, if not intellectually, Charlie seemed to move steadily forward from the time of his return to the Seminary. Little by little he was making a name for himself, and establishing a standing in the school. He could hardly have been more favorably suited for such an undertaking, for the very fact of his fall, his resistance to farther wrong-doing, and his consequent suffering, had placed him before all his companions in the position of one who had made a bold stand for the right, and was determined to set his face like a flint against wrong. His temptations to evil were far less severe than in times past; every one looked to him to uphold the standard which he had set up; and, knowing that it was so, his hands were strengthened to keep it floating on the breeze.

The early winter passed rapidly away, and the time drew near for the examination which took place each year before the chief magnates of the township, previous to the breaking up of the school for the Christmas holidays. Charlie was not sufficiently prepared to take his proper share in the examination; but he kept his place in his class, and was present at the recitations, although no questions were put to him.

On the second morning of the examination, it so happened that he sat next to Robert Clements, a studious, plodding young fellow, always deep in some abstraction, and as far removed from surrounding objects, if a book were open before him, as if he had been miles away.

It was Charlie's delight, in his mischievous love of fun, to rouse Clements suddenly, by some means, from these thoughtful reveries, and startle him into doing something utterly out of place and keeping. Clements had long borne his teasing patiently and good-naturedly, for he was an easy-going, pleasant fellow, and generally laughed as heartily as any one over the mistakes and blunders into which Charlie was constantly leading him.

On this particular morning the school was to be addressed, prior to the review of the junior class in the course of history through which they had passed during the autumn and winter, by Judge Maxwell, a pompous old gentleman whose position and learning had long been the pride and the boast of Melville. The Judge was a good speaker, with a fund of excellent stories, both grave and gay, which he loved to relate, and related well, too. Generally speaking, it was Robert's delight to listen to him; and he would sit, rapt in the closest attention, with his great bright eyes fixed upon the orator, drinking in every word. But to-day his recitation was not fully prepared; and, dreading that he might fall in it, he had laid his dook on his knee, and given himself up to his lesson, hoping that, as the senior class sat in front of his own, his inattention might escape the observation of the speaker.

"But you'll get so absorbed that you won't know when to laugh," said Charlie, to whom he had confided his difficulty and his intentions, "and the old gentleman will mark you out as sure as anything."

"Oh, you can poke me," said Clements. "Give me a knock, and I'll look up with such a smile that you'd never know but that I heard every word of it. I must study up, or I'll be floored."

In another moment, he was deep in his book, so completely lost among kings and emperors, thrones and dynasties, that he did not even notice when the Judge rose from his place among the Board of Examiners, six in number, and began to speak.

Charlie sat watching Robert with dancing eyes. The sonorous sentences rolled forth one after the other, but the boy never once lifted his head. Judge Maxwell's mind happened to run in a grave channel that morning. He was speaking of lives that had been failures in consequence of this or

that hindrance to success, and told a story of a young man who had made shipwreck of his life through misfortunes which had their origin in idleness at school. It was a sad story, and the Judge told it with such gravity and solemnity that every face in the room was respectfully sober and sedate. All at once an irresistible impulse to make Clements look up with one of his broad smiles seized upon Charlie; and, without pausing to think, he gave him a sudden thrust with his elbow, whispering,—

"Time to laugh, Rob," suddenly and abruptly.

Startled from his deep abstraction, for he had been, as usual, entirely lost to all around him, Robert lifted his head, and to Charlie's horror broke out into a hearty laugh.

There was an instant silence in the room. The Judge paused; Mr. Braisted rose and looked sharply round to see who had made the disturbance, but before he had time to speak the orator went on with his story.

He had not proceeded much farther, when Charlie, who had been since his illness very subject to sudden turns of a rush of blood to his head, became very much flushed; and Mr. Braisted, noticing his high colour, motioned him to go out into the air. The room was very warm, and, passing quietly from behind his desk, Charlie went out upon the piazza, where the cold December wind soon cooled his heated face, and steadied his swimming head. He did not care to disturb the exercises by going back, and was, besides, afraid of a second attack if he returned; so, as he had no recitation to make, he obtained Mrs. Braisted's permission to go for a walk through the woods until the review was ended.

Reaching home again just as the boys rushed out from the house, the terrible ordeal over, he ran up to ask how the examination had progressed.

"First-rate," said Harry Clifford. "Only two mistakes made in the whole class; and the Board gave us no end of compliments and stuff. But Clements is in for it."

"What! Floored?" exclaimed Charlie. "I thought he'd get through."

"Oh, he was all right on the lesson; but Mr. Braisted was as mad as anything about his laughing out that way; and he called him up and lectured him right before the whole Board. It was tremendous. Why, what's the matter with you, old man? You look as if you might be knocked over with a feather."

"I did it," said Charlie. "I made him laugh; only I never thought he'd bellow out like that. I meant him to grin, and he went and roared like a dull. Where is he?"

"I don't know. He came out with the rest of us."

"I mean Mr. Braisted; not Bob."

"Oh, he's in the school-room."

"I must go and tell him," said Charlie, turning towards the house. "Oh, there you are, Clements! What a spooney you were to shout so! But I'm going to tell Mr. Braisted."

"What? That you set me on? Oh, no, Charlie! let it go. I've got through with it."

"No, I won't," said Charlie, drawing away from good-natured Clement's detaining hand. "I'm not going to let the blame rest on you."

"But wait awhile, any way," said Robert. "The Board are all in there now."

Charlie did pause at that. To face that company of six gray-haired men, to whom the whole school looked up with awe and reverence, was a serious thing; and one of them, too, the venerable speaker, whom he had thoughtlessly treated with extreme disrespect.

"Wait until they have gone," said Clements. "I tell you, if you knew how it felt to be called up before them, you wouldn't go into it of your own accord. It's all over now, what difference does it make?"

"Just this difference," said Charlie, with sudden resolution: that you have been blamed for my fault; and my letting the thing rest there, or setting it right, is falsehood or truth. If you were called up before the Board, that is the very reason why I should clear you before them;" and he turned abruptly toward the piazza.

Harry stood on the lower step with a beaming face.

"Go ahead, old man. I'm proud of you," he said, grasping his hand, as he passed

him; and Charlie went on, with a still braver heart, straight to the school-room door.

His breath came thick and fast as he knocked for permission to enter; and when, in answer to Mr. Braisted's "Come," he opened the door, the paleness of his face startled the master.

"What is it, Charlie? Are you ill?" he said, rising from his seat, and coming toward him.

"No, sir," replied Charlie, advancing to the table around which the other gentlemen were seated. "I have come in to say, to you and to these gentlemen, that I am the only one to blame for the disturbance while Judge Maxwell was speaking. I am sorry, sir," he added, turning his now burning face to the Judge, "that I was so rude; but I did not think Clements would laugh out so. He was in one of his turns, and I thought I'd make him smile; but I'm honest, sir, when I say I never thought of his shouting the way he did. It's all my fault, sir, and I hope you won't blame Clements."

"What do you mean by 'one of his turns'?" asked the Judge, gravely.

"Well, sir, he gets lost sometimes. Gets dreaming, so that he don't know where he is, nor what he's about, and we poke him up the wrong way often, just for fun. He was so this morning, and I nudged him, and told him it was time to laugh, thinking he'd look up with a big smile; and the first thing I knew he roared out that way. But he isn't in fault, sir, it's only me; for I don't believe he even knew where he was, let alone that you were speaking. I'm sorry, sir, and heartily ashamed of myself;" and Charlie frankly lifted up his glowing face toward the seven pairs of eyes which were all closely watching him.

"And why did you not go to the Judge in private?" asked Mr. Braisted, wondering if he had conjectured the true reason? How those bright eyes did shine as they turned themselves upon him!

"Because, sir, you spoke to Bob before these gentlemen, and I thought it was only fair that, as he had been blamed before them all, he should be cleared before them all. I wanted to be perfectly true and honorable about it, sir."

"And you have been so," said Judge Maxwell, rising from his seat, and taking Charlie's hand. "There is not one man here, I presume, who has so far forgotten the feelings of his boyhood as to fail to appreciate how hard a task this acknowledgment has been to a boy of your age. You said just now, my son, that you were heartily ashamed of yourself; but I think if Mr. Braisted were asked, he would say that he was heartily proud of a pupil who had the courage and the manliness to do what you have done to-day."

Mr. Braisted laid his hand on the boy's head as he stood beside him.

"I am proud of him, sir," he said, looking down with a smile into the upturned face.

"But what he has done has not surprised me, nor will it surprise his comrades. We have all learned that Charlie Stockton's truth and honor may be fully trusted, and relied upon without a fear."

Out into the open air again with the glowing face and the shining eyes, to catch Clifford by the shoulders, and to cry out half in laughter, half in tears, "Hurra, Cliff! Hurra! Cheer for me, old boy, I can't get it out fast enough."

And then, when Harry, perfectly bewildered by his wild excitement, prevailed upon him to sit down quietly, and tell him what he meant, he subsided; and with his eyes still full of light, but with a calmer manner, told him of all that had passed, ending by catching Clifford around the neck, and hold him closely, as he whispered,—

"Think of Grandpa, Cliff! Oh, only just think of Grandpa!"

But when Clements and the other boys came crowding up, hearing that the interview was over, to learn the result, his answer was,—

"Oh, it's all square, Bob. The big wigs know you're all right, and they were very easy on me too. It wasn't half as bad as I expected."

There was not a lighter heart among the dozen boys who clambered noisily up on the top of the Melville coach on the day after the examination than that which beat beneath Charlie Stockton's jacket; and certainly no one of all the twenty scholars of the Seminary enjoyed the brief holiday more thoroughly than he. And the hearts that met him in that home which was now doubly dear and precious were no less light than his.

Nor did they grow heavy with any weight of fear and doubt for his future, as the years passed on; for through all the temptations and trials of his school-days, his college life, his years of study and of travel, until he came home, at last, in the strength of his young manhood, to be the stay and the joy of those who had so loved him, and to take up the work which Dr. Mason's hands began to find too heavy, he was kept pure and true by the thought of his grandfather's faith in him, which had, in its time, borne fruit in his own faith in a loving Father in Heaven. (The end.)