

The Worst Boy in the Town.

A CANADIAN STORY,

BY

Florence Yarwood.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WRONG RIGHTED.

"I know that each sinful action,
As sure as the night brings shade,
Is sometime, somewhere punished,
Though the hour be long delayed."
—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

EVERYONE was much surprised the next morning to see Jack Harding walk into the school-room just as the nine-o'clock bell sounded. All but the teacher—he did not look so, for just a few moments before that, while Mary Stanton—one of the pupils of the senior form—had held a few moments' conversation with him.

Little Mary had always felt somewhat afraid of grave, stern-looking Mr. Seburn—the head teacher of the senior department—so it was with a fast-beating heart that she knocked at his door and asked for a few moments' conversation with him.

"What is it, Mary? Don't be afraid to tell me," as he saw her roll up her handkerchief in silent confusion, and his tone was so kind, his smile so pleasant that she recovered in a measure her self-possession, and lifting her eyes to his she earnestly said:

"It's about Jack Harding, Mr. Seburn; he did not cheat yesterday; he deserved that prize, and I can prove it, too," she said, with energy.

The teacher's face was all attention now, as he quickly replied:

"Can you, indeed? Well, I am very glad of that; tell me all about it."

Again the confused look crept into the child's face as she looked down at the floor and stammered—"But I—I was doing what you have strictly forbidden or I would not have known."

The teacher looked both grave and amused, and he lifted his eyebrows either in real or pretended surprise; she could not make out which; but his smile encouraged her to go on, so she told him the whole truth:

"Well," said the teacher, when she had told him all, "I cannot tell you how glad I am that the right of this matter has been found out! And, although I do not wish this little girl to continue to disobey orders about playing in the school-room, I am real glad she hid in there this once." And he smiled again so pleasantly that Mary wondered how she had ever thought him grave and stern.

"And now," said the teacher, "it will be quite necessary for you to come to the fifth form and tell the class what you have just told me. Will you come directly after prayers? I will speak to your teacher to send you."

"Yes," said Mary, gladly. "I was so afraid you would scold me, but you have been very kind," and she gave a grateful sigh of relief.

"Well," said Mr. Seburn, "you see, if you had not told me all, Jack's name might never have been cleared, but you have been honourable enough to tell me for the sake of clearing him, so I have no scolding for you this time."

When Jack walked into the school-room and took his seat, Bob Pierce, who sat near, contemptuously whispered:

"He's come back to write some more essays with his book open."

Jack's eyes flashed, but he remained proudly silent, for his hour of triumph was coming.

After the opening exercises everybody—save Jack—wondered why the teacher did not, as usual, begin the work of the day. He sat gravely silent, and presently there was a timid knock at the door.

"This is Miss Mary Stanton, one of Miss Seburn's pupils from the junior form," said the teacher, as he admitted her. "She has something to tell us which will be interesting to us all—particularly so to two of you."

No one but Jack Harding had the slightest idea what she was going to say, and breathlessly they all listened.

Mary felt nervous and confused for a moment to find so many looking at her—and most of them strangers—for in our large schools in towns and cities, scholars in different compartments do not all become acquainted—but presently her eyes rested on Jack Harding's face; and he gave her such a grateful look that she forgot her fears in remembering how much she was helping him, and in a clear, childish, but straightforward way she told her story.

When she ceased speaking all eyes were centred on Bob Pierce, and he looked so contrite and ashamed that I am certain a very small crack in the floor might have swallowed

him up at that moment. As one of the boys comically expressed it: "He looked as though he would like to crawl through a knot-hole, and pull the knot hole in after him."

To add to his mortification, no one spoke; the teacher sat motionless for a few moments and said nothing at all; breathless silence reigned. Then he turned to Mary and said:

"That will do, Mary; you have given your evidence very nicely, and I am truly grateful to you for your assistance in helping me to clear up this mystery."

"I, too, wish to express my thanks," said a manly voice, and Jack Harding stood up, and in well-chosen words expressed his gratitude.

Then the teacher handed him the prize, while he said:

"I, and we all, sincerely beg your pardon for suspecting you so wrongfully. I felt that you were telling me the truth even though everything looked against you; now I am glad that it has been proved."

"And now," continued the teacher, turning to Bob Pierce, who had slid farther and farther down into his seat until he was in danger of being lost sight of altogether, "if you have anything to say for yourself, any excuses to offer, we would like to hear them."

But his face grew still redder, and he said nothing at all.

"Then," said the teacher, "you are to pack up your books and go home; and do not come back again until you are ready to do what is right, and apologize to Jack here in the presence of the class."

And hurriedly gathering his books together he left the room.

Only Jack Harding heard his low muttered threat as he gathered up his books:

"I'll be even with you yet, Harding, see if I don't!"

(To be continued.)

JACK WILDER.

"HERE, Bub, hold my horse a minute, will you? I have a little business to transact and the impatient fellow will not stand hitched a minute."

Jack Wilder turned around at the sound of the pleasant voice, and with a courteous "Certainly, sir," stepped out in the snow where the high-spirited animal was prancing about in a reckless manner.

"Keep a firm hold on the reins, my boy, and if he begins to show his mettle, speak kindly to him and he will quiet down at once," remarked the gentleman, as he gave the horse a friendly tap.

"I'll take good care of him, sir," returned Jack, gently stroking the long black mane of the sensitive creature.

There was a striking contrast between the man, muffled to the ears in warm furs, and the boy, shivering in his thin jacket out in the storm, but they were both so much accustomed to the difference that neither of them gave the matter a serious thought. The stranger's minute lengthened into ten, twenty, half an hour before he returned, but though Jack's ears tingled with the sharp cold and he had to blow his fingers to keep them from growing numb, he kept his place in the face of the storm until the gentleman was ready to relieve him of his charge.

With a hasty apology for his delay the man leaped into the sleigh, took up the reins, and then, as if he had forgotten something, he took out his pocket-book and hurriedly selecting a coin tossed it to Jack, with a pleasant "Here is something for your trouble, my boy."

It fell in the snow at Jack's feet, and before he had succeeded in finding it the black horse and its driver were gone.

"Why this is a five-dollar gold piece!" gasped the astonished boy, as he rubbed the snow from the shining bit. "The man made a mistake, I am sure."

"What's the difference if he did?" said a man who had witnessed the little scene. "Put it in your pocket. He gave it to you and it will come in good place, I am sure," with a glance at Jack's well-worn shoes.

"I did not earn it, and it would be wrong for me to take advantage of a mistake," replied Jack, as he started in pursuit of the stranger. Several times he caught a glimpse of the light-running sleigh as it wound in and out among the throng of vehicles that crowded the wide street, but in spite of his increased speed it gained steadily upon him until it was lost in the distance altogether. As night was fast coming on he determined to go

home and begin the search anew in the morning.

"Look here, mother," he said, displaying the gold piece, as he entered the little bare room he called home. "A gentleman gave it to me for holding his horse, but I am sure he made a mistake."

"He certainly did," answered his mother, taking the bright coin in her hand to examine it more closely. "No doubt he thought it was a quarter, which it resembles in size and weight."

"If it were mine you should have an easy chair to rest upon and a good warm supper to cheer you up quicker than you could say 'Jack Robinson,'" returned Jack, with a foud look at the weary woman, who, after her hard day's work, was shivering over the handful of embers that served the double purpose of lighting and heating the dingy apartment.

"Money would buy us many comforts, Jack, but that does not belong to us, and we ought to be very thankful that we have no wish to appropriate other people's property," answered Mrs. Wilder. "We are very poor, but, thank God, we have been taught to be honest. You must put a notice in the morning paper about it."

"That is just the thing exactly, mother," said Jack. "I'll be up by daylight to get it to the office in time. I wonder I did not think of that plan sooner."

He kept his word, and long before dark the next day the owner of the black horse called at the widow's humble door to inquire what the boy who had held his horse the day before knew that would be of interest to him.

Jack was up to the elbows in the wash-tub when the stranger knocked, but it did not take him long to dry his hands and bring the gold piece from its place of safety.

"It was a mistake," said the young man, slipping the bright coin into his pocket. "Why didn't you put it into your purse and keep your mouth shut? Nobody would ever have found it out."

"I would have known it, sir, and I have too much respect for myself to be found in such company," Jack retorted, indignantly.

The stranger smiled and went away, but that was not the last of him, for a few days later the postman left a letter addressed to "Jack Wilder" at the door; and when he opened it he read: "The boy who has too much respect for himself to do a dishonest thing will hear something to his advantage by calling at No. 36 La Salle Street. John Rao."

In John Rao, Jack found the owner of the black horse, and the something to his advantage proved to be work—honest work—in his office. Brighter days had come for the mother at home, and it is needless to say that Jack performed his now duties well and faithfully.

BURNING HIS COSTON LIGHT.

THAT is surfman No. 4 who has now left two miles the beach fringing the white, roaring surf. It is midnight. The surfman who has become a patrolman carries a beach-lantern in his hand. He has also two or three Coston lights, or red hand-lights. Through the winter cold, over the sand and the slippery rocks, or across the ice banks high up the beach, he struggles bravely, continually on the watch for vessels in danger.

Ah! there is a dark object not far from the shore waves. It is a vessel, and the captain has ignerantly permitted it to run too near the breakers. It must be warned off. The patrolman halts. He burns his Coston light, and the red flame throws out its sharp, sudden warning.

To-morrow night it may be stormy. The wind drives in the patrolman's face. The rain pelts him. The huge waves roar at him. He pushes ahead. He eagerly searches the night for any sign of disaster. Look! A sharp line of fire springing from the sea curves its red arch in the air, and then vanishes. "A wreck, a wreck!" cries the surfman. He stops, pulls out his Coston light, burns it. He burns another as a response of hope to those on that wave-swept wreck, and then dashes away to the Life Saving Station to arouse its crew to a rescue by the surf-boat or a rope shot to the imperilled crew.

Do you know that, though young, you

are a patrolman? God has given you your beat, where you may walk and watch and warn and save. Some companions may have ventured among evil associates. He may be neglecting God's house. He may have contracted habits of profanity. He may have fallen into the trap of a bad book. Now, burn your Coston light. Say kindly, tenderly, in great love, a word of warning. Not only warn, but rescue. Not only signal, but save. There is a life-saving power to which you can go. As you look up every night, the windows of God's house of refuge in the sky are all ablaze with light. Let the rescuer's cry go up to God. Pray for souls. Don't live to yourself. Live for others. Burn your light.

A True Hero.

BY IDA SMAYRE.

You ask for a tale, dear readers,
A tale of some deed sublime,
A page from the life of a hero
Whose fame has outlived his time,
Fain would you list to a story
That, touching each youthful heart,
Would awaken your emulation,
Each nobly to bear his part.

And a tale I have to tell you;
I know you will understand
Why I give to my humble hero,
A place 'mid the great and grand;
And know that I hold, dear readers,
The story not told in vain,
If it teach there are heroes of feeling,
As well as of might and brain.

The dawn had scarce been for an hour,
Yet the depot was all alive,
And the many voices mingled,
Seemed like to a humming hive.
The morning-air through the windows
Brought the puffing engine's smoke,
And the faint, distant hum of the city
To the day's toil just awoke.

Through the waiting groups passed a collier,
With mild and expressive gaze,
Eliciting notice from many
By his kind and engaging ways.
The children roused with him gaily,
The ladies patted his head,
And the negro alone in his corner
Parted his breakfast of bread.

While this bustle went on in the station
A siding held cars apart.
And a woman washing the windows,
Was singing in gladness of heart;
Her boy, a three-year-old baby,
Was playing just at her back,
But seeing the car door open,
Jumped on a neighbouring track.

Up the self-same track came thundering
From the east the through express;
All saw, and hush of horror,
Then a sob of deep distress
Broke from the hearts of the people
As there, with bated breath,
Stood hundreds, and not a mortal
To save the baby from death.

Ah God! will none come to rescue?
Quick as the turn of an eye
The collier sprang out at the baby,
Who started back with a cry;
And by the train came thundering
With noise that almost drowned
One faint little cry of agony,
Though men grew sick at the sound.

All stand with faces averted;
When again they turn their face
They see the baby come smiling,
And there in the very place
A moment ago he had stood,
With death rushing on behind,
A shapeless, crushed mass lay Collier,
His life yielded up for our kind.

"Passengers, Pittsburgh! Chicago!
Passengers for Western train!
Passengers going East!" the cry went.
All part—ne'er to meet again;
But the faces of many were pallid,
And their eyes were full of tears,
For they saw and felt in those moments
What memory holds for years.

They were rich and poor who parted,
Old age and frolicsome youth,
That carried away from that station,
Thoughts stirred that may in truth
Ennobles the whole of their future,
And none may know but God,
What lives helped upward, onward,
The heroic death of a day
Winnipeg, Man.