

## FRANK'S SECURITY.

"BOY WANTED." That was what was written on a little slip of paper and pasted up in the window of Mr. Robinson's grocery and dry-goods store.

The little sign hung there undisturbed for several days; not because there were no applicants for the position, for half the boys in the place were anxious to get it, but because Mr. Robinson was such a hard man to suit.

He required the most unexceptionable references, as well as ample security for the boy's honesty, and so, though a great many boys went in his store to inquire about the situation, none of them were able to satisfy all the requirements.

Frank Birch saw the little slip of paper one bright Saturday morning when he had come into town to do some errands for his mother, and his heart gave a great bound of delight when he saw the words on it. Perhaps he could get the place, and what a grand thing that would be! Everybody knew that a boy was very fortunate who got a position in Mr. Robinson's store, for although there was plenty of hard work, yet the wages were very good and Mr. Robinson was not a hard master.

Frank had been wanting to earn some money so much. If he could only get this place, what a help it would be to his mother. He felt quite sure that she would let him give up school, for he could study in the evenings after his day's work was done, and then she need not work so hard day after day if he could earn some money.

"Well, my boy, what can I do for you?" asked Mr. Robinson, laying his paper down on his knee and looking over his spectacles at Frank as he entered the store.

"I saw in the window that you wanted a boy, and please sir, wouldn't I do?"

"I want an honest boy, one that can be trusted to do what he is told, whether any one is watching him or not, and that will be as faithful to my interests as he would be to his own. Are you that sort of a boy?" asked Mr. Robinson.

"I hope I am," answered Frank modestly.

"Well, I hope you are too, for then we shall suit each other very well," answered Mr. Robinson.

Frank's heart was very light, for now he felt sure of a trial at least; but Mr. Robinson's next words dispelled his hopes.

"Now, what references and security can you give me?"

"Security?" said Frank, not

quite understanding what Mr. Robinson meant.

"Yes; what friend have you who will place in my hands a certain sum of money as security for your honesty. I will return it at the end of a year, for by that time I shall know pretty well whether you are honest or not."

Frank's face clouded over with disappointment. "I am afraid I couldn't give any security," he said sadly. "How much would you want, sir?"

Mr. Robinson named the sum.

Frank shook his head. "Couldn't you take me without it, sir," he asked.

a favor from. So the little sign still hung in the window, and people noticed it and wondered how it was that Mr. Robinson couldn't get a boy when boys wanting work were so plenty and good places so few.

Mr. Robinson was in no hurry, however. "The right boy will come along after a while," he would say to himself cheerfully as he helped the clerk take down the shutters and open the store every morning.

The next Friday afternoon Frank was busily disentangling his fishing-lines and preparing for a grand fishing excursion on the

then he answered cheerfully. "All right, mother, I suppose I'll have to pick them, as the old lady is in such a bad way about them. I may as well get about it at once or I won't be through before dark;" and he began to put away his fishing-lines.

"That's a good boy," said his mother approvingly, as Frank started off whistling as merrily as if he had not just given up a long anticipated pleasure. The poor old woman's joy and gratitude when she found that her cherries would go to market the next day nearly repaid him for his self-denial. The tree was a large one, and though he worked as fast as he could, he did not have time to strip it of its contents before dark. He finished picking the cherries early the next morning, and was soon on his way to town with the fruit, which was put in panniers or large baskets.

It was a beautiful morning, and Frank could not help thinking of his intended excursion. He wondered how far the boys had gone on their way, and what sport they would have.

He did not regret his kind act, however, but walked along whistling cheerily, and now and then giving Dick, the little donkey that a kind-hearted neighbor had loaned for the day, an encouraging pat or word.

"Halloa, Frank! Where are you bound for now?" asked a voice, and Frank, looking around for the speaker, saw a boy sitting under the hedge examining the contents of a bird's nest which he had just taken from the tree beside him.

"I'm going in to town," answered Frank, recognizing the boy as Bob Morris, one of the worst boys in the neighborhood, a boy whom the good shunned and even the ill-disposed feared.

"What have you got in those baskets?" asked Bob, tossing the bird's nest to one side and walking towards Frank. "Oh, you've got cherries," he exclaimed, as he caught a glimpse of the fruit showing through the cover of the basket.

"I'm glad you came along this way, for I'm awfully dry, and some of those cherries will just fix me up," and he extended his hand towards the basket.

"You can't have any of those; they are not mine to give you," said Frank firmly, standing in front of his charge.

"Well, I don't care whether they're yours or not," answered Bob roughly. "I'm going to have some of them any way, so just stand aside."



"YOU SHAN'T LAY A FINGER ON THESE CHERRIES."

"No," answered Mr. Robinson decidedly, taking up his paper again. "I used to lose a good deal by taking boys just on references. People will often give a boy a good reference and say he is honest when they know very little about his character; but when they are willing to go security for him, then I feel pretty sure that the boy is honest and that I am safe in taking him."

Frank went slowly out of the store. He knew that there was no hope of getting the position now, for his mother had no money, and he had no friends that he could venture to ask such

next day, when his mother entered the room.

"Frank," she said, "would you mind giving up your excursion to-morrow?"

"Oh, I couldn't!" exclaimed Frank. "Why mother, what is there for me to do?"

"Old Mrs. Wilson's grandson is sick, and he promised to gather her cherries this afternoon for her and take them to market to-morrow. They are to ripe to put off picking them, and she is in great trouble about them. I told her I thought you would be willing to do it for her."

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