

THE HELPER.

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO YOUNG WOMEN.

BY M. O. ROGERS.

"God help me!" the young man trembling said, When he saw on the table the wine gleam red.

"For two long years I have kept it at bay, But all will be lost if I touch it to-day!"

But what must I do with the birthday toast? Must I slight the lady and grieve the host?"

He cried to God, though his lips were not stirred; In the highest heaven that cry was heard.

'Mid the thronging guests was a maiden there, Whose thoughts were true, and whose heart was fair.

But little she heard in her sheltered life, Of the curse of drink, with its terror and strife.

That week the story first reached her ear, Of its devastations so far and so near.

And she thought, "If drink to such trouble has led, I don't care about wine; I'll drink water instead."

And so at this feast she made water her choice; (Ah, sweeter than music that girlish voice!)

She has led the way, as the brave will do, And five other girls drank water too.

The young man watched with a beating heart, Till the host pressed him to take his part.

Then, "You will allow me, I know," he said, "To follow the way which the ladies have led."

So God helped him, dear girls, to His promise true, And God helped him that night through such as you!

Is there any of you who this honor would win, To shelter some soul from destroying sin?

When the danger is near, and the wine is bright, You may stand in the way, like an angel of light.

And by gentle deed, or soft word of might, Your God may help some one through you to-night.

—The Citizen.

JACK.

BY ELIZABETH CUMMINGS.

Something was the matter in school-room No. 1: for Prof. Hill and all the scholars were sneezing, and coughing, and wiping their eyes.

"Can any one tell me what this means?" demanded the Professor.

"I know," said a tall girl, named Martha Strong. "I've seen it done afore. Some body's been an' put red pepper on the stove."

Prof. Hill lifted his ruler with an expressive gesture, took a second thought and laid it down. "Is it possible there is a person, I will not say a young lady or gentleman, but a person, so contemptible in the academic department?"

Here the poor Professor sneezed and wept so into his handkerchief he could not go on, and the whole academic department laughed, much to his discomfiture.

"I'm going to question each one of you," he said, when he had recovered himself, "and falsehood will be punished with the utmost severity."

One after another of the scholars denied having put anything on the stove. A red-headed boy, named Frank Delano, who stuttered, blushed painfully when interrogated; but when the suspicious Professor stamped his foot, and cried sharply: "Don't dare to deny it, if you did it," Frank floundered out of his embarrassment and answered as promptly as he could: "I did-did-didn't. N-n-n-o, Siree, s-s-sir-e-e-e!"

The most unconcerned appearing boy in the school was Jack Le Duc. His dark face was quite calm as he answered quietly, "No Sir," to the schoolmaster's question, and he never had more perfect lessons than on that unlucky morning.

His chief desire was to be a doctor; and he always stood high in his classes, though the labor of study was irksome to him; perhaps because the blood ran in fiercer currents in his veins than it can in an Anglo-Saxon boy. Jack's mother was the daughter of a poor New England farmer.

She had gone West to teach when a young girl, and soon, left an orphan, had married handsome Pierre Le Duc, who was captain of a trim brig, and did a good carrying business on the Great Lakes.

Pierre's grandfather was a French gentleman, and his grandmother was the daughter of a powerful Indian chief, who gave his poor, but titled son-in-law, a rich wedding gift of lands.

His father had married the daughter of a French fur-trader, and Pierre began life a rich man; but the money soon trickled through his fingers.

Though somewhat haughty and quick to take offence among men, Captain Pierre was passionately fond of his wife and children, and when Jack would say to him: "No, Father, I'm not going to be a sailor, but a doctor, like our good Carl Jacobs at the fort," his father always answered: "You shall have your own way, my boy; and remember, a poor doctor is—well, almost as poor a creature as a poor captain. You must be of the best."

But Captain Pierre would have given all the money he possessed if Jack had wanted to be a sailor.

Jack was sincere in his desire, however, and though he could shoot a bird on the wing and manage a sail like an old seaman, he took greater pride in his perfect lessons than in his skill in any sport or exercise.

Usually, after school, he ran a tremendous race with any boy who dared run with him down the rocky hill that led from the school-house to the part of the town where his home was; but that day he walked sedately by himself, and no one dared to interfere with him, for his school-fellows knew by experience it was not well to stir up his quick hot temper.

Jack, and Mark, who was hopelessly crippled, resembled their father; but Toinette, the three-year-old girl, was the image of her blue-eyed mother, and was Indian in nothing but her patience.

No English-baby would endure the squeezing and thumping she did from her brothers, or wait so long to gain her own small way.

The moment Jack entered the house she clasped him about the legs. "Oh! Jack, I love you amillion," she began, "an' Dr. Sundown says I've got lies on my tongue."

"When did Dr. Sundown say that?" cried Jack, catching her up.

"This morning," said Mark, looking up from his basket-weaving. "He came to get me to write down his great speech, to send to his son in Kansas. It was fine, and Sundown said it was splendid when he spoke it in a voice," and Mark laughed.

"I wish every old Indian in creation wouldn't come here!" and Jack's eyes flashed. "The Indian in us is pretty well diluted."

"Iwakan is our father's relative," said Mark, with the mild patience the infirm acquire, "and in you and me, brother, the Indian blood is stronger than the white."

Jack gave a contemptuous sniff, and Toinette, patting him on both cheeks, prattled: "I told a fib, and, truly, Dr. Sandown found it a burnin' little sore on my tongue. Your tongue sore, Jack?"

Since the loss of "La Belle," with Captain Pierre and most of his crew, Mrs. Le Duc had eked out her scanty income by doing fine needlework, and did not often find time to prepare dainties; so when Jack ate little dinner and refused the cake she had made for him, she was so sure he was ill she gave him a draught of bitter medicine, and wanted him to go to bed; but he hurried away to school with unusual speed, and was the first comer in school-room No. 1, except Frank Delano, the red-headed boy.

Frank eyed him with a comic sort of awe. "I s-see-see ye," he stuttered in a whisper from his place behind Jack. "I-I-I-wa-wa-was on the s-s-s-stairs."

Jack's face turned a deep red; but he was silent.

"I wa-wa-was s-s-sort a' bl-bl-bl-owed, you-you know," continued Frank, "b-b-but I s-s-shan't let on. I-I-I-a-a-ain't a le-le-le-leak."

Every scholar was in his place. The master had struck his ruler on his desk, and was just beginning to say "the advanced Algebra class will form," when Jack stood up in his place.

"If you please, Prof. Hill," he began, in what Dr. Sundown would have called "a voice," and which at once commanded the attention of all who heard it, "Twas I who put the pepper on the stove this morning. I'm sorry, and sorry that I lied."

The Professor flumbed for his ruler. "What did you do it for?" he cried harshly.

"I—don't know," hesitated Jack "I meant no harm."

"You dare tell me that?" Prof. Hill was a nervous, irascible little man, whose anger increased at the sound of his own angry voice. "That is the second lie you've told to-day. I dismiss you from the school."

The suddenness of the schoolmaster's attack seemed to numb Jack; for he did not stir.

"Leave," cried the Professor, losing all control over himself, and advancing toward Jack. "Leave, you Indian imp! or I'll break this ruler over your head."

Jack's eyes glittered ominously. He raised one fawny hand. "Don't you dare touch me!" he said, in a husky whisper; then, calmly gathering up his books, he walked slowly from the room.

But one week would elapse before the close of the term, when all the scholars from the primary rooms would be invited up to No. 1, and there would be singing, and speeches, and compositions by academic pupils, chosen for their proficiency in their studies and their uniform good conduct.

Jack's speeches had always been the pride of the school, and for this occasion he had written what he thought was a famous one: Dr. Sundown, whose real name was Iwakan, or Medicine Mouth, though as Jack had intimated, a nasty old Indian, was for all that, a master of elocution and rhetoric, and had often been to Washington to speak for his people; and he had drilled Jack in the delivery of his speech, and had even suggested certain improvements in its composition.

Overcome with latter reflections, Jack could not bring himself to go home at once; so he strolled up to the heights where he could overlook the harbor and the quaint village that snuggled about it. It was an old town; one of the oldest in America. Before it rippled the translucent waters of the straits which connect two of the Great Lakes. Behind it rose rocky cliffs, on which stood an old fort always occupied by a small garrison. Along the ramparts, which always caught the sunshine, a fringe of grass was visible; but everywhere else the snow was piled high and white. The blue waters flecked with sail as far as the eye could see, and at the wharf lay a heavily-laden steamship.

"That's all there is ahead for me!" murmured Jack bitterly, stretching his hand toward the south.

"Ant what iss ahead?" asked a friendly voice. "Ant why iss my Jack, who needs to be learning effery tay, idling at this hour on the ramparts?" It was Carl Jacobs, the fort physician and surgeon. "So you was going to get up being a doctor. May be you was going to be a sailor like your prave fader." There was real disappointment in the Doctor's voice, and now a touch of scorn, "or may be you was going to study the speaker's trade with Dr. Sundown."

Jack's respect and affection for the Doctor were so absolute he did not think of resenting what he said, and, though outwardly as calm as one of his Indian ancestors would have been at the stake, he told the story of his expulsion from school, with real anguish of spirit.

The Doctor burst out laughing. "My Cracious! Red Pfeffer on the stuff!" Then the blue eyes behind the big, round spectacles became grave. "But for a boy as sixteen, ant as promising as you, I was ashamed. Though, what I was planning you for most was the lying. Confession can scarcely wipe away the shame of it. Of all things in this wicked world teltiver me from a liar!"

Jack shrunk back, and striking his fist on the stone wall muttered savagely: "I hate, hate, hate Prof. Hill!"

"It iss not prave to hate!" said the Doctor, judicially, without appearing to notice the boy's anger. "You was to plane, ant you did lie. He was severe, Oh, yes; but it

iss not prave to hate. There iss a wild peast in you, my poy."

"That is not all there is in me," cried Jack, looking straight at the Doctor. "I suppose you won't let me study with you now?"

The old man looked Jack over. Never in all his varied wanderings had he seen a human being so fascinating and interesting to him as this handsome descendant of barbarism and the highest civilization. "Why not?" he said slowly. "But I must meditate. A man must know many things besides phisic to be a doctor. Howeffor, you come up to—well—to-night. I should not wunter if I could gif you lessons myself eftenings, and after preakfast."

A week passed quickly. The night before school closed Jack stayed late at the fort; for the Doctor had begun to teach him the rudiments of anatomy. Now, Prof. Hill had views about the value of fresh air, and every pleasant night hung all his clothes on nails outside his bedroom window. As Jack passed the house, he saw it was the professor's Sunday suit that was out for an airing, and a wicked temptation overpowered him. He softly entered the yard, climbed the rose trellis, and took down the pantaloons. When he carried them back each leg was tied securely at the ankle and packed full of wet snow, that froze quickly in the nipping air. When Jack awoke the next morning he was conscious of hating the schoolmaster more fiercely than ever. He even hated him because he felt a secret shame at what he did the night before.

At the right of the fort the height descended to the water in a long hill, and half way up it, in a new part of the village, stood the schoolhouse, a square wooden building, two stories high, with basement. The primary rooms were on the first floor. No. 1 occupied all of the second story, except a narrow space across the front, open to the first floor and in which were two narrow flights of stairs that described a dizzy half circle from the narrow landing before the door of No. 1 and met in a flight of three steps at the bottom. There was no door at the front of the building, but one on each side of it, at the two extremities of the hall. Under the stairways kindlings were kept, and wood was stored in the basement.

Jack had read out his Latin lesson, and had spent an hour trying to find out something about the sphenoid bone, when the Doctor sent him with some medicine to a laborer who was sometimes employed at the fort, and who, now that he was sick, would have no one prescribe for him but the fort doctor. The man lived just below the schoolhouse, and Jack was almost there, when old Betty Kamp ran by him. She had been crazy many years, and, apparently harmless, had been cared for first by one plying household then by another. A long white tarlatan veil, dragged and ragged, was tied on the back of her gray head, and on her arms, from which she had torn all clothing, were many strings of the large blue and white beads worn by the Indians as ornaments. She was usually very quiet, and rarely spoke; but now she was chanting, in a high, weird recitative: "They're going, all going in a chariot of fire! All the wicked women and all the wicked children! Ring all the singing bells, in all the dizzy steeples; for they're going, all going in a chariot of fire!"

No. 1 was full of scholars and lady visitors. The little ones from the infant-room were singing, with reeely sweetness, "We come with joy to greet you," and out at each open hall door floated a tiny wreath of smoke. Jack's light feet never ran so swiftly in a race as they darted up those narrow stairs while down the street went the waver ing cry: "They are going, all going in a chariot of fire!"

Iron nerves would have quivered at the wail that rose from that helpless audience when the master told them there was fire under the front stairway. The excitable Professor was overcome by the sound and faded. But, almost before he began to speak, Jack had dispatched two boys, who were the fleetest runners, to rouse the town and, standing guard at the front door, was sending the older scholars, each one carrying a little one, one by one down the smoking stairs. Mothers with children in their arms shrieked at him. The older boys tore at him; but, for a few precious minutes, with the help of Frank Delano, who came to his aid, Jack controlled the door. Then there came a clash of bells, and such a cry of fire