

The Oldest Christian Hymn.

(From the third book of Clement of Alexandria, said to be the earliest known hymn of the Primitive Christian Church.—*Reformed Church Messenger*.)

SHEPHERD of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth,
Through devious ways:
Christ our triumphant King,
Join we thy name to sing,
And our dear children bring,
Shouting thy praise!

Most high and holy Lord,
Glorious, revealing Word,
Healer of strife:
Thou didst thyself abase,
That from sin's deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race,
Giving us life.

Thou art our great High Priest;
Thou hast prepared the feast
Of holy love:
In all our sin and pain
None call on thee in vain;
Help thou dost not disdain,
Help from above.

Ever be near our side,
All-wise and mighty Guide,
Our Staff and Song.
Jesus, thou Christ of God,
Taught by thy living Word,
Lead us where thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

Thus now, and till we die,
Sound we thy praises high,
And joyful sing
With all the holy throng
Who to thy Church belong,
Join we to swell the song
To Christ our King!

The Worst Boy in the Town.

A CANADIAN STORY,

BY

Florence Yarwood.

CHAPTER I.

MAYFLOWERS.

"I love the season well
When forest glades are teeming with
bright forms,
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming of storms."—*Longfellow*.

ALONG the shores of Lake Ontario, in the county of Durham, lies the beautiful town of Port Hope. So beautiful and picturesque is this little town that a stranger, being borne swiftly through in a railway carriage cannot refrain from glancing eagerly out of the window charmed with the brief glimpses he has of it, and filled with a desire to see more.

It is exceptionally beautiful on the afternoon of which I write, for it is the glad season of spring.

"The birds sing in the thickets,
And the streamlets laugh and glisten,
And the air is full of fragrance."

The surrounding hills were beginning to assume a tinge of green, and the trees in neighbouring forests were shooting forth thousands of fresh, green leaves; while underneath their graceful branches, on many a mossy bank, might be found clusters of violets and sweet mayflowers.

Rambling through one of these forests might be seen a handsome lad of some eighteen years of age, with head bent down searching for these woodland treasures.

"These dark blue ones are beauties!" he said to himself, as he gathered a cluster of them, and placed them in his already well-filled hand. "How pleased Miss Grey will be!" and gathering some ferns and dainty moss he arranged a border around the flowers with delicate taste and skill. Then slinging his gun over his shoulder—for he had been out for an afternoon's sport—he hastened towards the town.

But perhaps the reader would like a more formal introduction to my hero. His name is Mr. Jack Harding, but a large number of people call him "the worst boy in the town." But his figure is upright and manly, his forehead broad and high, his eyes quick and intelligent, and as I watch him handle with gentle fingers and careful touch those dainty flowers, I feel sure that there must be a great deal of good in him, if he only had the power to call it out.

The afternoon sun was slowly sinking to rest when he emerged from the woods: the quiet twilight, with its hush and peace, rested over hill and vale; the warble of birds had almost ceased; one dear thrush was softly pouring out his song; and down over the pretty town the shades of night were falling, draping every thing in a quiet robe of twilight gray. Away to the south stretched the blue waters of Lake Ontario, so calm, so peaceful; no restless waves were visible; only now and then a low, broken murmur could be heard, as the water washed sleepily back and forth on the beach.

Jack took in the beauty of the scene before him, and appreciated it too, for his was an appreciative nature. He drew a deep breath as he said to himself:

"I don't see why a fellow can't be good all the time! Perhaps I could if I always tried; but I don't always feel so much like trying as I do to-night."

Turning down South Street he suddenly confronted Bob Pierce, the hotel-keeper's son, a lad for whom he had no great regard, and who returned that feeling with interest.

"So you've got some posies for your Sunday-school teacher, have you?" said Bob, sneeringly. "How pleased she will be!"

Had it not been for fear of losing the flowers and spoiling them, Jack felt sure that the hotel-keeper's son would have measured his length on the ground just then, but as it was he drew himself proudly erect and walked silently on.

Presently he reached Miss Grey's home, and in answer to his knock she opened the door herself.

I would like to describe this Mildred Grey, Jack's Sunday-school teacher, if I can. She is about three-and-twenty years of age, tall and graceful in appearance, with fair complexion, earnest, tender blue eyes, and mouth firm and sweet.

She is not strikingly beautiful; no! a careless observer would call her only ordinary perhaps, and yet I call her beautiful, for the peace of God which passeth understanding is written on every feature of her face. Certain I am that the plainest face is made more than beautiful in that way.

"True religion beautifies and adorns its possessor." Who has not looked into tender, patient eyes, which the world would not call beautiful, but to us they are more than that, because they reveal to us the noble, self-sacrificing soul within—the great capacity to suffer for others, even for us, without complaint! "Suffer and love, love much and suffer long." Their lives are beautiful, hence to us they can never be ordinary or commonplace even though the world may call them so.

Jack Harding liked Miss Grey, because she was so good, so earnest and true, so ready to help him always. Indeed there were times when the only friend he had in the town was Miss Grey—times when the people called him "drunk and disorderly," and gathering up their dainty skirts, would keep as far away from him as possible for a number of days after. But Miss Grey never did that; she was always the same kind, true friend, no matter how he acted.

Oh, how sad that this noble, manly-looking lad, only eighteen years of age, should ever have tasted liquor!

But how could we expect it to be otherwise when his father spends more than half his time in the bar-room, and his step-mother, instead of trying to make home attractive, scolds and fumes from morning until night, and is in every respect a coarse, uncultured woman!

Poor boy! It might be almost said that he had no home or friend in all that town excepting Miss Grey!

But while we have been relating all this, Jack has been presenting the flowers to Miss Grey. I wish you could have seen the tender, joyous light that crept into her eyes as she said: "Oh, thank you, Jack! How very kind and thoughtful of you! I shall wear a bunch of them to Sunday-school to-morrow. Come in and have some tea, do! I am sure you are tired and hungry after your long tramp."

Jack made a faint attempt to refuse, but Miss Grey would not listen. She told him it would not take any longer to eat his supper there than at home. Jack, knowing full well that the table would be cleared by that time, and if he got any supper it would be seasoned with too many harsh words to be palatable, wisely consented to remain.

He was shown into the cozy sitting-room, where a scholarly looking man, with scant gray locks, and kind, blue eyes—so like his daughter's—rose to meet him, and gave him such a cordial handshake that Jack felt himself quite a gentleman, and certainly he was one at that moment. If people could only always be what they are when they are in good company, how much better it would be! If they would only always abstain from all ap-

pearance of evil and cleave only to that which is good!

If Jack Harding could only always associate with such people as this minister and his daughter—for this gentleman is a Methodist minister retired from active service—I think he would always be noble and true. How true are the words someone has said on this subject: "Be noble, and the nobleness that lies in others, not dead but sleeping, shall rise in majesty to meet thine own."

But Jack must go out of this peaceful home into the great world, where there are saloons and ruin thousands of precious boys.

"Do you know, Miss Grey," said Jack, as he watched her handle the pretty china and pour the tea, "that one reason why I like to come here is because you put me so much in mind of my mother. You don't look like her either, for her eyes were dark, but the expression is so much the same—she had that same gentle, patient look."

Mildred Grey did not blush at this compliment, as many a society girl would have done; she only said in a low, earnest voice:

"Come often, Jack; our home is open to you at any time."

"Yes, indeed!" said the minister, "you are always welcome here."

He knew all about this class of boys his daughter was so interested in, and in the true Christian spirit he was yearning to help her lead them heavenward.

When Jack arose to go, Mildred stepped out with him into the porch, while she gently said: "I was upstairs, Jack, by the open window, when you were coming down the street, and I heard the unkind words Bob Pierce said to you about the flowers. I am so glad that you did not answer his ungentlemanly remark."

"But, Miss Grey," said Jack, his eyes flashing, "I just ached to lay him on his back. He is the torment of my life; if it were not for him I almost think I could be good."

"God does not place us in a position where it is utterly impossible for us to serve him," answered Miss Grey, earnestly.

"No, I suppose not," said Jack, slowly; "but really you can't imagine how much that fellow annoys me! It's all because he is jealous of me at school. The teacher has offered a prize to the one writing the best essay, and if I happen to get it I'll hardly be able to live in the same town with him, I expect."

"They tell me you are very clever at school," said Mildred, proudly. "I am so glad to hear it: I expect you will be a great man and fill an able position some day."

"I shall be more apt to get into some racket and run away to sea," said Jack, with a careless laugh, as he bade her good-night and ran down the steps.

Mildred Grey stood listening to the sound of his retreating footsteps until it died away, and naught was heard but the low murmur of the waves.

There, to the south of the little town, stretched the beautiful lake, looking ward an idyllic picture with the pale moonbeams resting upon it. How dearly she loved that lake, for it seemed to speak to her of the unchangeableness of God. The One "in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

(To be continued.)

HOW JOHN GRANT GOT TO MEADOW BROOK.

JOHN GRANT leans over the railing of the bridge that spans Meadow Brook. John is a good-natured boy. No one dislikes him. He is the friend of everybody save John Grant. He lacks "stick." He is very ready to take up with a project, and still more ready to drop it. He wonders why it is that other young people go ahead of him. However, he is talking to himself as he leans, in the warm April sunshine, over the railing, and we will not disturb his soliloquy:

"Meadow Brook! Meadow Brook! April fills you up and makes you stronger, but still I don't see how you ever get down to the big river. It is real rocky between here and the woods. Then in the woods the trees have fallen and almost choke you up. Then there is Frog Pond beyond. How you ever get through Frog Pond I don't see. I should think you would be lost in it. Then there are the rapids, where the stones stick out every foot of your way. I should think you would be tired to death after your journey and bumping over the rocks. Dear me! how is it you ever get to the big river? Do tell us, Meadow Brook!"

Now he leans harder against the railing and looks persuasively at the sparkling water:

"Tell us, Meadow Brook! I have a lot of wood to pile, and it is such slow work! Dear me! it is so hard to get through with things! How do you get to the river?"

Hark! Is that a noisy swirl under the bridge or a voice? Think of it as a voice to John Grant:

"How do I get to the river? I start, John, and then I keep at it. I push through the woods somehow. And Frog Pond stop me! I am like a beaver when he cuts through a tree: he thinks of two things beginning with 't'—'tree' and 'tooth.' So there are two things before me beginning with 'p'—'pond' and 'push.' Well, I come to the rapids, and I keep at it there and come out all right. Got a lot of wood to pile? Think of two things beginning with 'w'—'wood' and 'work'—and go at it and keep at it!"

"Don't know; don't want to hurry," groans John.

Hark! Another voice!—a warning crack-k-k! Hurry to your wood-pile, John!

Ho! lingora.
Crash-sh-sh! Then it is a splash-sh-sh!
The railing has broken; and if it were a mystery to John Grant how Meadow Brook could get to the river, it was no mystery how John Grant got to Meadow Brook.

The Rain.

BY A. SIMONS.

Oh! for the patter of the rain
The drouth makes everyone complain;
See! even now the clouds o'erspread the sky,
And we must seek a shelter nigh!

Patter, patter, comes the rain
Over vale, and hill, and plain,
Drenching now the thirsty earth
Bringing buds and flowers to birth.

Patter, patter, comes the rain,
Soaking fields of corn and grain;
Trees put on their best array,
Flowers aspire to look more gay.

Patter, patter, comes the rain,
Reaching o'er a wide domain,
Making harvests full for store,
Bringing food to every door.

Patter, patter, come the rain,
Hardly now the clouds refrain
Sending down their precious drops
On the waving, growing crops.

The patter of the rain is stilled,
Nature with gladness now is filled,
Insect, beast, and birds on wing,
Worship to their Maker bring.

"FOR ME"

LITTLE CARRIE was a heathen child about ten years old, with bright black eyes, dark skin, curly brown hair, and slight neat form. A little while after she began to go to school the teacher noticed one day that she looked less happy than usual.

"My dear," said she, "why do you look so sad?"

"Because I am thinking."

"What are you thinking about, Carrie?"

"Oh, teacher! I do not know whether Jesus loves me or not."

"My dear, did Jesus ever invite little children to come unto him?"

The little girl repeated the verse, "Suffer little children to come unto me," which she had learned at school.

"Well, who is that for?"

In an instant Carrie clapped her hands with joy, and said, "It is not for you, teacher, it is for you are not a child. No, it is for me, for me."

From that hour Carrie knew that Jesus loved her, and she loved him back again with all her heart.

Now, if the heathen children learn that Jesus loves them, and believe his kind words as soon as they hear them, ought not we, who hear so much about the dear Saviour, to believe and love him too? Every one of us ought to say, "It is for me!" and throw ourselves into the arms of the loving Saviour.