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Edward Blake: College Student.

By Charles M. Sheldon. Author of "In His Steps," "Malcolm Kirk," "The Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," etc. Copyright, 1901, in U. S. A., by Advance Publishing Co., Chicago.

Edward read this letter like the first he had received from Willis' mother, and he was moved by it almost as deeply. He had anticipated Willis' coming with more or less anxiety on account of Freeda, although she had never shown by word or letter that she had any special interest in him.

September had come on, and the fall term had opened, and college was fairly under way again when Willis returned. Edward went down to the station to meet him, and quite a crowd was present there.

As they walked up the hill together Edward was surprised to note how well Willis looked. His enforced illness had apparently left no mark of weakness on him, and his bearing was even more jaunty and careless than ever. There was an additional mark of a soldierly bearing also, and, as he wore his uniform, Edward soon began to realize that Willis was a good deal of a hero to the students and especially to the girls, who clapped vigorously the first time Willis came into chapel.

"Shoulder straps are more popular than wings nowadays," said Willis, with a careless laugh. "Tell you, old man, you need to enlist in order to get popular. There's nothing like it. You don't have to be good looking nor know very much. Just put on a uniform, and that will do all the rest."

Edward had difficulty in picturing Willis as his mother had described him. He wondered if he had given up the drink and ventured to question him about it that evening. Willis was getting ready to go out to a little banquet that his old society had arranged in his honor.

"Are the boys going to serve wine at the banquet tonight?" asked Edward as Willis was arranging his toilet.

"I suppose so. Champagne and a little beer perhaps."

Edward was silent a moment. Then he went over to Willis' side of the room. Willis had put on his coat and had made a step toward the door.

"Promise me you won't drink any tonight, will you?" asked Edward, and as he spoke he had in mind Mrs. Preston's letter, written at the bedside of her son in that southern camp.

Willis paused, and a look of embarrassment, mingled with some vexation, appeared on his face.

"The fellows will think it very queer if I don't respond to the toast 'Our

Flag at Home and Abroad.' What difference does it make to you? I'll promise not to get drunk if that's what you mean. I can control my appetite if I want to."

"It makes more difference to your mother than to any one else. Won't you promise not to touch the drink for the love you have for her?" Edward found himself for the first time pleading with Willis.

Willis hesitated. Then he said, with an abruptness that startled Edward: "I've promised mother several times and broken it. What's the use? The sight and smell of the stuff put the very devil into me."

"What makes you go where it is, then?"

"You tell," replied Willis carelessly. "Don't worry about me. I'll come out all right in the end."

"I'm afraid you won't," said Edward sorrowfully. "There's a verse somewhere in the Bible that says, 'At the end— You know the rest as well as I do.'"

"I know. 'Bleth like a serpent— Oh, pshaw! What's the use of borrowing trouble for the future? It's the last good time I'll have with the boys. When I get into active service in the

Philippines, I'll settle down all right. So

"Landlord, fill the flowing bowl Until it doth run over, For tonight we'll merry, merry be; Tomorrow we'll get sober!"

Willis began to sing as Edward irresolutely stood facing him, wondering if there was any influence strong enough to make Willis see his danger.

And yet Edward himself, with all his growing horror of the drink evil, did not have any convictions deep enough on any Christian basis to plead with Willis from any other standpoint than one of moral expediency. After he had, as he thought, done his duty in urging the love of Willis' mother upon him as a motive, no other argument or motive appealed to him, and he let Willis go his way without having said a word to him on the side of spiritual life. Edward could not speak any such word because he had no personal Christian faith. He guided his life so far by his sense of moral uprightness. The still higher plain of Christian discipleship was unknown to him. If he had known it, it is possible—but that thought came afterward, long after Willis had gone with his regiment and was fighting in the swamps and jungles of Luzon.

It was very late when Willis came in, and Edward, who was wakened by his entrance, felt sure he was more or less under the influence of liquor. He slept it off, however, and the next morning appeared as bright and confident as ever.

"Hear me come in this morning?" he asked as he began packing up his things preparatory to his departure. He was going home that day to spend a few days and then going direct from there to join his regiment in San Francisco.

"Yes," replied Edward shortly. "I didn't make much disturbance, did I?" asked Willis gayly. "Didn't put my shoes in the stove and my collar in the coal bin, did I?"

Edward did not answer, and Willis went on packing his things. After quite a silence he said, with the abruptness that sometimes marked his usual careless indifference:

"I've got the same little volume of poems with me. Going to take it to Manila for good luck."

Edward was silent again, and Willis put the volume into his grip, and after a moment he said, "Ned, if I never come back, think of me at my best instead of my worst, will you, and I'll do the same by you?"

It was the only serious word that Edward heard from Willis before the train started with him aboard that afternoon. It touched him in spite of the other things that annoyed and even angered him. When the familiar figure vanished from sight that afternoon down at the station, with the memory of a great crowd from the college present to see him off and shower ribbons and flowers on him, Edward carried back up the hill a kindly and even tearful remembrance of the handsome, smiling Willis. And as the distance between them daily widened and he pictured the dangers that awaited that regiment in those faroff islands Edward Blake, with thousands of others in America, wished godspeed to the ones who had gone, while still in his fast forming and developing mind he had his doubts concerning the righteousness of the struggle there and wondered if his increasing horror of bloodshed and his growing dislike for war were a morbid streak in him on account of the great majority of college opinions that were so different from his.

It was at this time in his college career, with all the excitement of these historical events adding to the interest he already felt in his life since leaving home, that Edward Blake began the practice of writing, which had so much to do with the shaping of his mind and the crystallizing of his thoughts.

The president suggested the idea to him, and Edward eagerly adopted it. The literary tone of the debating societies and the college journalism was at a low point. The editors of the monthly paper were elected every fall at a mass meeting of the students, and each class had a proportionate representation. Edward was elected with two others to represent the sophomore class. Talking over the matter with the president a day or two later, the president asked Edward if he had ever written very much.

"No, sir. I used to do a little scribbling at home on the farm winter evenings, but that's all."

"Ever had any of it printed in the papers or anywhere?"

"No, sir," replied Edward, smiling some to think of the impossibility of such a thing.

"Tell you what I would advise this new board of editors to do. Why don't you form a little circle among yourselves for the express purpose of raising the standard of composition in the college? Let each member of the board write at least one article a week for some well known paper or magazine and submit it for publication. After all, there is no test quite so severe for what you write as the test, 'Will any paper or magazine want it and pay for it?' I know that very often this is no test of the real worth of a piece of literary work, but, on the other hand, it is more or less of a severe test of good work. Then, if you have any articles accepted and printed by other papers, reprint them in the college paper, by permission, and invite criticism of the articles from other writers among the student."

Edward was so impressed with the president's advice that at the first meeting of the new board, where they talked over the interest of the college publication, he advocated the formation of such a circle as the president suggested.

To his great delight every member of the board favored the plan, and the circle was organized then and there. There were six seniors, four

juniors, three sophomores and two freshmen. As it happened, they were nearly all above the average age for students in their respective classes. Some of the seniors had done considerable writing during the college course. All of the editors were ambitious for the success of the paper, as it was the college rule that all profits from it should be divided proportionately among the editors. This rule was afterward modified so as to leave a portion of all profits in a sinking fund, to be used for the development of the paper itself.

Edward was very busy now, what with his paper route, his special work for the president, some of which continued even after the return of his secretary, and his regular studies. The football team was "after him again," and matters had taken a turn in such a way that Edward was seriously considering the possibility that he might play again. Persons had not come back, and, under President Royce's management, it was exceedingly unlikely that the custom of hiring nominal students would be continued. But the fascination of attempting something for publication attracted Edward especially at this time, and for several weeks he wrote one article a week and submitted it to the other editors for criticism. According to the simple rules of the circle, these articles became the property of the college paper only if they were accepted and paid for by some other paper, and before being sent out they were subjected to the severest criticism and discussion.

It would be almost a separate story by itself to relate all the experiences of that little circle of inexperienced but persevering literary aspirants for publication. The history of it would reveal a great quantity of brain effort apparently expended for nothing. It was an event when one of the junior editors proudly displayed a check for \$5 that he had actually received for an article on college athletics he had sent to a magazine devoted to outdoor sports. The circle learned, several months afterward, that he was so elated by his success that he wrote half a dozen more articles for the same paper, all of which were promptly rejected. But at the time of receiving his check he was the most envied and admired member of the circle, although one of the sophomores, who boarded at the same table with this selfsame junior, said the junior's head was so turned by his success that the girl who waited on the table had to turn his chair around in front of his plate because his mouth was in the back of his head.

A man's first money earned with his pen is an event, however, that brings with it a thrill that is distinct and separate from every other he has ever experienced. And one morning when Edward found in his letter box a letter from the editor of a well known periodical in the east, inclosing a little yellow slip of paper good for \$10, it almost took his breath away. The little note that accompanied the check was a complete surprise also. A personal note from the president of the United States inviting him to dinner would hardly have pleased or astonished him more. This editor was perhaps a rare exception among editors, but he had a kindly feeling toward young writers and encouraged Edward in a few words of discriminating praise to work hard and develop the best that was in him.

Your article was accepted by two of the three readers in the office on account of its practical value to farmers' boys, many of whom are among our subscribers. You did not try to tell about something in Africa or Manila that you never saw, but you described actual experiences that were of interest and value to you at the time, and you evidently wrote for the purpose of helping others who might try the same thing that you tried and accomplished. For these reasons we can use the article, for which we beg you to accept the inclosed check," etc.

So the editor wrote, cautioning the young writer against being too much puffed up over his success.

Edward's first impulse was to show the letter to Freeda. So that evening he went over to the hall, where Freeda was now living again, and showed her the letter and the check.

She was much pleased and proud of him.

"What was the article about?"

"You remember that winter that I had more than usual spare time on the farm and I trapped the coyotes, skinned them and made the skins into carriage robes, mittens and caps? I simply told it just as it happened and drew a diagram of the new trap I made and sent it with the article. You remember, Freeda, how you helped dress the skins and how we studied up the taxidermy a little and mounted one or two of the best specimens?"

"Yes," said Freeda, with a smile. "Did you put me into the story?"

"Of course I did, and I want you to take the check. You need some gloves or things, don't you?"

"What's the reason I can't earn a check of my own?" asked Freeda suddenly.

"Girls can't do literary work," was on Edward's tongue in the excitement of his newborn authorship, but the recollection of the editor's caution stopped him. He looked at Freeda rather dubiously, however, and Freeda read his skepticism concerning girls as writers.

"What would you say if I received a \$10 check some time for an article?"

"I should say, 'Good for you!' But I didn't know that!"

"Didn't know what?" asked Freeda promptly.

"Why, the girls in Hope don't ever read the daily papers. They don't know where Manila is. I heard one of the girls ask another one the other day if Manila was off the coast of Guinea."

"Ned Blake, that's a piece of action."

"No, it isn't," said Edward, with a grin. "It's a fact that college girls don't read the daily papers, and they don't talk about anything in the dining room but the boys or their lessons or the teachers or something like that," concluded Edward, rather tamely. He was always a shy person in the company of the girl students and in the habit of criticizing them rather deeply.

"Some of what you say is true. We can change it perhaps. What would you say to a rival literary circle of girls who had more articles accepted and paid for than yours? Girls are smart as boys with the pen."

Edward looked his doubts.

"We'll print all the bona fide articles you girls have accepted," and paid for in the college journal and pay you \$1 apiece for them besides," he said, making the offer on the strength of his editorship.

"Done!" exclaimed Freeda, laughing. Edward went away feeling sure that Freeda herself would do something, for he had great admiration for her and genuine pride and affection in his thought of her. But his doubts amounted almost to positive convictions that a girl's literary circle could not be made to succeed.

All of his experience came to him after his second football trial. He had finally yielded to the pressure early in the fall term and had gone into the team as right tackle, where he was doing magnificent work. In the first game that was played with a rival college he had distinguished himself by making a field goal by a difficult play that had not been attempted for years. The students were wild over it. The enthusiasm could not have been higher if he had captured Aguinaldo by personal combat. The girls worshiped Edward Blake, the silent, and, after the mysterious fashion of girls, admired him all the more apparently because he paid no attention to any of them.

And then came an event that put the whole question of college athletics before Edward in a new light and stirred up Hope college with an internal war that rivaled the one across the sea.

The captain of the team who had succeeded Reynolds was a good fellow, a fair student and a young man with plenty of means. He could afford to devote all his leisure time to football, because he was not obliged, as Edward was, to work his way through college. And that was one factor in the trouble that now arose between Edward and the rest of the team.

In making out the schedule of games with other college teams at a distance the captain arranged for a six days' tour. Hope college team to play four games in that time. They were to start Monday morning and get back to Raynor the following Sunday afternoon.

When the schedule of games was first talked of, Edward objected on account of the time it took from college work.

"Why can't we arrange all the games necessary nearer home? If the game is the main thing, I don't see what we make by going such distances and taking so much time from the studies. Besides, I have my paper route. It will be hard to arrange to leave that with any one else. I could fix it for a day or two, but not for a whole week very well. Besides, it's too much to make up all the studies. I don't have the time that most of you fellows have."

"Oh, pshaw, Blake! Even old Quad will pass a football player through on exams. Burroughs same as said at last university game that he would guarantee to pass all the fellows in his division if they won the game. (Burroughs was a tutor in German who was an old football player himself.)"

"Besides, old man," said the captain, "the president likes to have the team

"What's the reason I can't earn a check of my own?"

make these long trips away from home. It advertises the college, and that's what he wants. Why, the football team did more to advertise Hope last year than anything else."

"Perhaps it did," replied Edward slowly. He was facing a really serious condition, for the loss of time out of his studies was something he did not like to face. He was a slow student, but very conscientious, and it did not appeal to his sense of fairness that he should be passed in any department unless he had actually done the work. If he went on this six days' trip, it would mean that he must pay some one to take his paper unless the football association would do it, and even then no amount of money could make up the loss of college time.

The team all urged him not to drop out. The pressure brought it near was something which every college boy can easily understand.

At last Edward said: "I want to do the right thing, of course. Will you leave it to the president? If he says it's all right and approves of the schedule, I'll go."

There was a moment's hesitation on the captain's part. He was not sure of the president. Still, in the short time he had been at the head of affairs he had said very little about athletics and had not yet dictated anything. Besides, he was popular as a young man and a teacher and had been present on the ball field as an interested spectator at the last game.

"All right," said the captain. "I'm agreed." The rest of the team assented, and that afternoon Edward, the captain and one other member of the team called at the president's office. As they went in Edward, who knew the president better than any of the other students knew him, thought he knew what his decision would be. And yet even he was surprised at the interview that followed, as the president welcomed them and sat there facing them, his kindly but serious look going quickly from one to another of the three students.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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"I have taken a great many different medicines for stomach trouble and constipation," says Mrs. S. Geiger of Dunkerton, Iowa, "but never had so good results from any as from Chamberlain's Stomach & Liver Tablets." For sale by S. E. WELCH, JR.

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Table with columns for School, Living, and Total Expense, listing items like incidental fee, hospital fee, books, etc., and their costs.

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