Edward Blake: College Student.

By Charles M. Sheldon.

Continued from last issue

"Dr. Royce, I came in here on purpose to ask you to allow Mr. Preston to remain in college if possible. I have been praying for him all winter that he might be saved. A number of other men in the association are doing the same thing. We feel deeply interested in him. He will be a man of great power if the Lord once wins him. It is a critical time with Preston, right now, and it may prove the turning point in his whole life."

The president looked at Wheaton kindly.

"Then you bear him no grudge for his share in last night's destruction of your room."

"No, sir; how can I? Are we not told to love our enemies? Besides, I do not regard Preston as by any means the worst of the set in Hope. I have always had a personal drawing toward him, and there has not been a night for two years that I have not prayed for his conversion."

The president was silent again. Then he turned to Edward.

"Is that what you came to see me about too?"

"Yes, sir," replied Edward in a low voice. "That is, I—to tell the truth, I hardly knew at first what I came over for. But I want Willis to stay and have another chance. I don't feel quite easy about my part. I haven't kept my promise to his mother as I ought."

It cost Edward Blake more than the president could understand to say all that. There was really a struggle going on in him all the time over his own duty to Willis. If he pleaded with the president not to discharge him from college, there was Miss Seton, who—and then—his own relations to Willis—what could he do more than he had done?

The president sat eying the two young men thoughtfully.

"I had fully made up my mind before you came in to advise the faculty that Preston be dismissed once and for all. What Mr. Wheaton has said, Blake, changes my views somewhat. What you have said changes them more. Of course, you understand I am powerless to remit all punishment; that would not be fair. Mr. Preston deserves suspension, at least, for his part in the night's work. But I can promise this—that his case shall be carefully considered, and, if possible without injustice to others, he shall be allowed to continue his course."

Wheaton thanked the president and rose to go. Edward, knowing how busy the president always was, rose also.

"Wait a minute, Blake, please. I want a word with you," said the president. And Edward sat down again as Wheaton went out.

"I want to ask another thing about your relations to Preston. You have not been rooming together now for several weeks. Do you think you could help him by going back and resuming your old relations?"

"I might," Edward answered slowly.

"Then I would say by all means go back to him."

"That is, supposing he wants me to come back."

"Of course," replied the president quickly. "I do not know how he feels toward you. That is for you to find out. But if the faculty of the college are to help Preston we must ourselves be helped by any of the students who have it in their power to use good influence. Besides, you said you felt as if you had not quite kept your promise to his mother."

"Yes, sir, I said it, and I can't help feeling that I might do more."

"Whatever that is, Blake, I rely on you to do," said the president gravely as he turned to his papers on his desk. "Don't forget that the future destiny of a soul may rest with you to determine." And Edward, with this last sentence impressed almost painfully on his mind, went out of the office.

He walked slowly over to his room, went in and sat down by his table. He was really having a fight over his personal inclinations and his sense of what he really owed to Willis and his mother at this particular time. He really did not care to room with his old chum again. He had come to like the quiet of rooming alone. He had grave doubts concerning his influence over Willis in the matter of drinking, although he was obliged reluctantly to confess that he had probably not exerted all his influence to its full limit. But all through his conflict of feeling he could not shut out the generous side of Willis' nature, and certain passages in Mrs. Preston's letters at different times appealed to him.

At last he got up and went out and crossed over to Rankin hall.

The living room was in great confusion, and there was an open trunk standing near Willis' bedroom door. Edward did not see any one and at first thought that Willis was not in. But as he took a step into the room a number of articles, including a hairbrush, a pair of tennis shoes and a sweater, were thrown out of the bedroom toward the trunk. The sweater and the hairbrush dropped inside, but the shoes missed and fell on the other side of the trunk near a number of other things that had evidently been flung near the middle of the room in the same way. Suddenly Willis appeared at his bedroom door with an armful of things. As he caught sight ward he pulled up rather hastily, n threw the whole armful in a the trunk.

"What are you doing?" asked Edward, rather unnecessarily.

Willis laughed boisterously.

"Don't you see? I'm getting ready to 'abandon Hope,' to quote from Dante. I'm going to anticipate being fired by going off before the trigger is pulled, as the gun said to the little boy who thought it wasn't loaded. Goodby scholars, goodby school, goodby Prexy—no, I don't think the rest of it is right to say. He's always treated me square enough. I'm the one that's been a fool."

Edward walked over to the table and sat down on one corner of it.

"I came in to see you about matters generally. I don't think you need to leave college."

"Why, is Wheaton circulating a petition to have me stay, so he can have the pleasure of my company?"

"Not quite that, but he has begged the president not to dismiss you from the college."

"How's that?" asked Willis in evident astonishment.

Edward told him about the scene in the president's study and what Wheaton had said. Willis listened with increasing emotion.

"Well, Wheaton is square. He's worth a hundred thousand men like Rankin, with his money and his sneaking, stingy ways. And after we had pulled his room to pieces too; seems like a lot of sympathy wasted on the wrong party, though, don't you think? Did you say he was praying for my soul?"

Edward repeated Wheaton's words as nearly as he could recall them.

"It looks as if his prayers hadn't been heard very much, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't it? But I didn't do the work on the tower. I'm not quite so bad as all that." Here Willis confessed to Edward the truth about his statement that he was the guilty party. "Honest, now, I don't want to be kicked out of college just now. It will just about kill mother. I don't care for myself, but I hate to deal her the last and hardest blow of all." And, to Edward's surprise, Willis put his head down between his knees and gave a sob that was the result of being unnerved generally over the events of the last 24 hours.

After an awkward silence of several moments Edward managed to say:

"There's another thing I came to see you about. I haven't kept my promise to your mother that I would do anything I could for you. That was before she went out to San Francisco last fall. Do you want me to come back here and room with you?"

"Not if you're coming back just out of pity for me," replied Willis, lifting his head and staring hard at Edward.

"Not pity, but because I want to."

"Come on, then," said Willis, his face changing. Then he added: "What's the use? I'm fired, anyway."

"No, you're not. The president same as said that Wheaton's statement changed the case against you. I tell you, Willis, if you will let drink alone and cut the set you've been going with and steady down to hard work, you can finish your college course with credit."

Willis got up from the trunk and began to walk up and down through the room, tramping over the articles scattered on the floor. "I'll do it!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I'll turn out a credit to mother and you yet. Since you left me I haven't given a row of burnt brass pins whether I went to the devil or not. But if you come back, and Prexy lets me off, I'll show you what I can do!" he repeated, with increasing excitement, as Edward sat silent, looking at him. If Wheaton had been present he would probably have said to Willis: "Will you do all this on your own strength? Don't you need divine help to overcome your passions? Aren't you afraid these good resolutions will fall you when you are severely tempted?" And most of the boys in college would have called him a crank for saying it. Edward kept still, because he had no higher standard for moral strength than Willis had.

At last Willis quieted down, and Edward and he talked over the whole matter of rooming together again. Edward finally agreed to come over the next day, and when he went out Willis was soberly picking up his things and straightening out his room.

The whole affair in which Willis had figured was settled at last by the summary dismissal from college of three of the worst men in it, against whom it was finally proved that they had been guilty of the picture painting. A few others were suspended. Willis and half a dozen more were called before the faculty and severely reprimanded and compelled to make good the furniture and other articles destroyed in Wheaton's room. Willis himself and one or two others apologized to Wheaton personally, and the atmosphere of Hope college cleared up generally with the elimination of some of its worst elements.

Then Edward and Willis resumed their old life together. It was not quite the same, however. For awhile Willis attended strictly to his college work and kept good hours, and Edward could find no fault with him on that score. But as the term went on there were many little things that annoyed Edward and made Willis' company unpleasant. He bore it all silently and kept very busy with his work. Nevertheless, more than once he wished he was rooming alone and almost repented him of his own overstrict interpretation of duty.

It was about this time that President Royce began his chapel talks on war, which attracted attention outside of the college owing to the interest of the world not only in the conflict in the Philippines, but for the war in the Transvaal between England and the Dutch republics. The recent debate in the college between Edward and Wilson had also excited a good deal of talk, and when the president announced one Friday that he would begin a chapel talk on war in general the entire college listened with an intense interest never before shown for any of the previous talks.

"The existence of war in this age of the world," began the president, "is reasonable evidence that we are, as a world, still clinging to the barbarous

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methods of might, rather than living according to the golden rule or the sermon on the mount. To quote from one of our American men of letters:

"This is a mad world—
"The great church crowded.
"The ancient, torn battleflags are hung high on the walls, where the dusty red and yellow rays from the stained windows strike them.
"The monuments of generals who died fighting look down at the multitude, among whom we see here and there uniformed soldiers from the garrison.
"And the priest drones, 'But I say unto you love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.'
"Yet no one smiles—but the devil.—E. H. Crosby.

"Or to quote again from an English newspaper, published in London:

"OUR BLOODY WORK IN SOUTH AERICA.

"We are not all mad with the war fever. Some of us are still sane. We see through the mist of lies and know that there is murder being perpetrated.

"When passing along the streets, we read the flaming newspaper posters, 'Brilliant Work,' 'Splendid Cavalry Charge,' 'Boers Cut to Pieces,' and the like headlines; we see men hurling missiles of concentrated destructiveness at their fellow men or rushing at each other thrusting their cold steel into their fellows' quivering, sensitive bodies; we see them falling, lying on the ground, to be trampled underfoot, bleeding to death; we do not see any glory. It matters nothing to us whether the killed and the wounded are British soldiers or Boers; they are our brothers. Talk of 'Boer treachery!' On both sides the war is treason against humanity. It is all unmitigated savagery and diabolism, the work of darkness and delusion. There may be a little more or a little less military etiquette on this side or on that, but etiquette does not disguise the savagery to any one that remains sane. When a missile from one of our naval guns comes crashing along, it does not stand on ceremonies. It kills every body within reach. That is war.—From Brotherhood, London, December, 1899.

"War is the argument of the savage, not of the civilized man. It is the resort of brute force because one side or the other or both have not enough Christianity in them to be willing to find brotherly ways and means out of a difficulty other than physical force, which is contrary to God's higher law and always results in enormous loss and misery.

"A glance at the cost of war will give us some idea of the awful waste of life and property which this un-Christian method of settling human disputes entails.

"Take the cost of a war vessel like the Oregon, $3,701,777, and that is only a small item to begin with, for the cost of equipment, ammunition, pay for its officers and crew, cost of moving it or even of letting it lie idle in any port, is something enormous. The coal bill of Admiral Dewey for one month two years ago was $81,872. During our brief war with Spain in Cuba we spent $17,748,385 for additional vessels to use as transports, ferryboats, supply ships, etc. A single gun with its mount costs as high as $80,000, and it costs $60 to fire it each time. The total expenses of the Spanish war in Cuba for the United States are difficult to estimate, but for every day of that war the government paid out $800,000. If we add to that the destruction of public and private property, it would be safe to say that for every 24 hours during the war in Cuba over $600,000 was practically consumed. And, in addition, for several weeks after the war actually closed this same expenditure went on, owing to the expenses which the war involved, for sustenance of troops, etc., which continued just the same as if war were in progress.

"The entire amount of money paid out by the United States during March, April, May, June, July and August of 1898 was $98,000,000. All this money, remember, was expended to destroy life and property. No matter what the cause of a war may be, whether it is for freedom or rights or anything else, the expense is the same. And that is all we are discussing now. A cannon fired in defense of one's country kills and destroys just the same as one fired in conquest of tyranny. It is the awful waste of property that war brings that makes it such a fearful way of settling human quarrels. The wars of the world have drained it of vast resources and left a legacy of pauperism and bankruptcy and suffering that ages cannot make good. Napoleon's wars cost Europe over $6,500,000,000 and 1,900,000 lives. The Crimean war of only two years cost $1,500,000,000 and 600,000 lives. These 600,000 bodies laid side by side would extend in an unbroken line from here to Chicago. The Franco-German war cost a third of the entire French army in killed and disabled, over 200,000 lives, and an expense of $1,500,000,000.

"Our civil war, beginning in 1860, cost us $2,500,000 a day for five years. It cost us in actual, direct outlay $3,400,000,000, and counting destruction to property north and south $10,000,000,000 would hardly cover the cost, a sum representing nearly one-fourth the entire valuation of the United States in 1860. Single battles in that war cost in lives up into the thousands. Bull Run, 5,000; Shiloh, 24,000; Gettysburg, 55,000, on both sides; Vicksburg, 31,000; the Wilderness, 38,000; Stone's Run, 37,000. The entire number of northern soldiers killed was not far from 350,000. If every man killed in the civil war had had a private funeral, the hearses would have made a solid line from New York to San Francisco. Add to these killed all the losses incidental in the families that were bereaved and beggared and you have only one of the awful chapters which war has always written in the history of a sinful world. In the last century it is estimated that Christian nations have destroyed $20,000,000,000 worth of property and killed 5,000,000 men. Put these men in single file and they would make a procession that would stretch clear across the United States from Portland, Me., to Los Angeles, Cal., and it would take them two months to march past a given point, marching day and night without rest. [These figures have been compiled by Hon. Frank A. Vanderlip, assistant secretary of the United States treasury, and George B. Waldron.]

"And yet these statistics of war do not begin to tell the story of the brutal education of men made in God's image. The sorrow and the anguish and the havoc wrought by all the long list of succeeding events that follow every war are simply appalling. This resort to brute force inevitably leads to horrors that are indescribable in their effect upon body and soul. Read the detailed accounts of some of the battles recently fought in the Philippines and South Africa, and we are sickened by the mere reading.

"But some one may say: 'Some wars are surely justifiable. Those wars that were waged for human freedom, like our own for independence, and, again, in order to defend the Union—these wars must have been necessary and right.'

"But even if we grant that certain wars like these have better reason for being waged than other wars, war itself as a method of settling disputes is never the Christian way of doing it. In other words, in any war that the world ever saw, one nation or another, one side or another, was to blame for resorting to war It is easy to see that a nation or a person unjustly assailing another is more to blame than the one assaulted, and under certain well known and undisputed conditions a nation or an individual might be justified in protecting self against assault, even as we would be justified in resisting the murderous attack of an insane man or a mad dog if we or our dear ones were in danger from their attacks.

"But it is doubtful if the Christian nations have ever done all in their power to avoid war, even war of the kind that might be called a war of self defense. The more Christian the nations become the less and less even outward excuse for war can be found. England was too far advanced along the line of Christian knowledge and training to provoke the war with her colonies. It was an inexcusable war from her standpoint. England today has no righteous excuse worth naming for carrying on the war in South Africa. It is a monstrous proposition to advance that in this age of the world, with all England's Christian knowledge and training by the Prince of Peace, there was a necessity to precipitate war in order to settle the comparatively unimportant differences that existed between her and the Dutch republics. Granting that the injustice complained of was all it has been claimed, still it could not by any possibility justify war in the sight of God or men. Can we imagine Christ exhorting his disciples to wage war for such a cause? It is easier for us to imagine him saying again as he said when on earth 'Turn the other cheek.' It would seem that Christ's teaching meant anything, even loss of life, rather than a resort to force, to brute violence, in order to gain our ends.

"War has changed the history of the world more than all its inventions or its arts. It has kept the world back in barbarism and educated it in cruelty. It has wiped out whole peoples living in a chosen life of peace. It has carried wrong and sin and shame and loss into countless homes and hearts. It is a thing abhorred of God and directly contrary to the teachings of his Son, the Prince of Peace. To speak and sing and act in its behalf is to keep alive a spirit that ought to be no more a part of the civilized life of humanity. God speed the day when the battleship shall rust at the wharf, and the big guns shall be silent so long that the birds shall build their nests in them; when the vast armies that stand as a drain to a country's real need shall be sent home to till the fields and fill the shops of useful industry; when the fabulous sums now spent by the world to equip and maintain its navies and armies shall be used in producing food and clothing and the things that humanity needs for its comfort and progress; when the whole earth shall be filled not with the 'glory of war,' for the 'glory of war' is the glory of the lowest pit, but with the glory of the Lord, who came into this world to teach men that they were brethren and ought to live together in love."

There was a good deal of discussion over this talk of the president's, and the college was divided in its sentiments. But there was a growing number of students who began to look at the subject as the president did. Among those was Edward. There was something in his heart and mind that responded with real feeling to the president's presentation.

Willis had begun to fall back into his old ways again. There was no excuse for him. But Edward bore with everything up to a certain point with almost Christian patience. Willis had not begun his former card playing in the room, but Edward soon learned that he was meeting almost every night either with one of the boys in the upper hall or at the old society rooms down town. He did not seem to be actually drunk when he came in very late from these occasions, but Edward knew he had been drinking, and the first time he noticed it he spoke to him about it.

"You remember, Willis, what you agreed to do if I came back? You promised to let the stuff alone."

"Well, haven't I?" asked Willis, with some indignation.

"No, you know you've been drinking lately."

"Nothing but a little beer," replied Willis doggedly.

"You've been drinking," repeated Edward slowly. "And you know one condition of my coming back was that you let every kind of drink alone."

Willis went over to the window and began to whistle. Edward boiled up suddenly, as he did once in a great while.

"If you break your word with me again, you know what I shall do," he exclaimed, and his usually quiet, almost stolid, face fairly blazed with passion.

"All right," said Willis briefly, not turning around. Then after a moment of silence he faced Edward with a queer look.

"I may not stay in college another year. I've got a plan for the future that may mean leaving here for good. So I won't bother you very much longer."

And then, to his great surprise, Willis sat down near his table and said:

"Ned, old boy, I have made a big fool of myself, but I'm going to turn over a new leaf, and I don't want you to go back on me. You won't, will you?"

"You've turned over so many new leaves that I don't have much faith in you."

"I don't blame you, Ned. But honest ginger, I mean it this time. Want to see what I can do? Just watch me for the rest of the term."

Edward made no answer, and Willis opened his books and began to study.

It was after this scene that Edward received a great surprise in the shape of a remarkable letter from Mrs. Preston.

Willis had been even better than his word. He had cut entirely loose from his fast friends, had stopped going out nights, and to the real astonishment of Edward he had applied himself with zeal to his studies. Not a man in all Hope could have excelled Willis at that time for real, downright, hard, faithful study. He was agreeable, too, so much so that Edward began to have a pleasure in anticipating the intervals between study and recitation, periods when he could talk with Willis and especially hear him describe events in his short army experience. Willis was a good talker, and when he chose to do so he knew how to make himself very agreeable. The girls, with most of whom Willis was a great favorite, always spoke of his manners as fascinating, and he seemed to be especially gifted in this direction during that short time immediately following his last talk with Edward and his promise of reformation.

Edward opened Mrs. Preston's letter to him, expecting a line or two of thanks for his continued influence over Willis. He had received a long and very gratefully worded letter at the time he went back to room with Willis and one or two short letters since that time.

But he had read only a short distance when he was startled by some news that upset him completely:

I feel that it is only right to tell you something of Willis' future plans, even if he has not confided everything to you. And I am quite sure he will forgive me if I speak a word in his behalf.

It may be no secret to you that Willis has always thought a great deal of your sister Freeda. Before he sailed for the Philippines he confessed to me that he loved her and hoped some day to marry her. When he was at home, after the loss of his arm, I found this feeling had undergone no change, unless to become even more emphatic. You know he carried that little volume of poems with him through all the fighting around Manila. There is no question that his feeling for your sister is more than a fancy. It is a real, deep, honorable feeling that I am sure has helped to keep him from much that is evil.

Now what I am about to say may take you by surprise; but for the sake of Willis I pray that you will not dismiss it as unworthy of your thought.

Willis is determined to leave college this summer and enter a business to which his uncle in New York has invited him. It is really a very good position for a young man, with an assured salary and a prospect of promotion. Willis is competent to do the work required. My brother wants him to become a member of the firm eventually.

This is what I hesitate to tell you, but it is what I want you to consider calmly. Willis wants your sister to leave college, to marry him and go to New York to live. Foolish as this sounds at first, as I have already told him, there is something to be said for it. In the first place, Willis is older than the average college student, and so is your sister. The loss of the college course is a serious thing to consider, but other young people have occasionally done this, and they have had happy, useful homes. Of course there is the matter of your sister's feeling. I know nothing about her thought of Willis. Probably you do. My only thought of the matter is that if she does care enough for my son to become his wife and leave her college course you will not dissuade her from it. Somehow I feel as if Willis' future depended on the wife he has. If he should be disappointed here, there is no telling—

There was a step outside, the door opened, and Willis entered.

"Hello, old man! What are you reading?" he asked as he noted Edward standing by the window with the letter in his hand.

"A letter from your mother. Want to hear it?" asked Edward grimly.

"Yes, go ahead," replied Willis, carelessly sitting down at his own table and putting his feet up on it, as his custom was.

CHAPTER XII.

Edward began the reading of Mrs. Preston's letter in a low voice, but with a good deal of excitement. He was deeply roused by what she had written and tremendously angry with Willis, although if he had been asked to tell exactly why, he might not have been able to tell very clearly.

He read the letter entirely through without once looking up, and Willis listened in silence without changing his position. When Edward finished and looked over at him, he was evidently angrier than ever, for he suddenly walked over to Willis and exclaimed harshly:

"What business have you to be thinking of such a thing as this?"

"Hello, old man, what are you reading?"

Willis took his feet down from the table and looked at Edward quietly. His answer partly calmed Edward, who never remained angry or excited very long at a time.

"I have no business to be thinking of it if I have no business to care for a girl whom I have always honored in my thought."

"You have not honored her in your thought. If you had, you would have stopped drinking and going with the fast crowd all this time."

Willis turned pale, and for a moment Edward thought he was going to strike him with his clinched fist. Then he turned his face away and remarked in a low voice:

"That's true enough. At the same time, I've said the same thing to myself. I know this is true also. If I have ever had a good thought for the last two years, it is due to her. That much, at least, is to be said of my feeling for her."

"At the same time, this is impossible," continued Edward, striking the letter with his hand.

"I don't know whether it is or not. It depends altogether on your sister to say."

"I shall have something to say about it," retorted Edward, his passion rising again.

"You will not have anything to say if she actually cares enough to go with me."

"She doesn't care for you, and never will!" said Edward almost savagely.

"You don't know," replied Willis quietly.

Edward was silent a moment. He did not know anything about Freeda's feelings in the matter. Since his own unexpected feeling for Miss Seton he had come to learn that in cases of love people could not always determine with mathematical certainty just what a person might do under certain conditions. On the point of Freeda's probable action he was really in doubt. Only it seemed like a monstrous proposition for Willis to entertain or for Freeda to consider for a moment.

"There is one way you can find out," Edward ventured to say.

"Yes, and I intend to find out pretty soon too."

"I can't wish you success," replied Edward, as he walked back to his own table. As he sat down he added in a milder tone:

"Willis, of course I don't need to say that I believe it would be a calamity for my sister to marry you. She has been brought up in an entirely different world. She is poor; you are rich. She is a church member; you are not. She has a perfect horror, as I have, for all the vices that are familiar to you. You could not make her happy."

"I could, if she loved me as I love her."

"It's impossible. You are too far apart even to sympathize with each other. Besides, she never will care for you as long as you continue to drink and gamble."

"But I've quit all that. Haven't I shown you that I can master myself? Haven't I lived all straight enough lately? And all for her sake too?"

Edward did not reply. He had little faith in the spasms of Willis' reform.

"Can't I live down the past all right? Is your sister never going to marry any one but an out and out saint? There are mighty few of 'em among the men."

"I don't think it does any good to talk about it. I have my opinion, and it won't change. One thing I'm very confident of, and that is that Freeda will never care anything for you. She is here in college to get an education. She is not old enough to get married. She is the last person in the world to think of such a thing. It is all as absurd as it can be."

To be continued.

Rev. Sheldons famous story, "In His Steps" will soon appear in this paper.