

for her. One day, for instance, I saw an old woman signalling to me. She had a huge basket on the ground, and I guessed that she wanted me to put it on her head. I was a bit puzzled, for she was actually waving me away and here now is a digression but a good bit of information to have. When an Italian waves his hand, palm downward, he does not mean "scram" as we do, but "come on over." In other words their signal is just the opposite to ours. This causes great confusion, as you can imagine—when a beautiful Signorina smiles most invitingly and signals you to be on your way, all at once—but, let that pass.

But keep their mouths shut, never. When they are not crying they are singing and when they are not doing either they are talking. Loudly, vigorously, and stridently they talk. Watch a group at work on the road—one has an idea. He starts to explain and in a minute shovels are dropped and the whole group is in a huddle, all talking at once. Watch dirty, hungry looking little children in doorways—they are singing some old or new popular song. Listen to them picking olives—youngsters of seven or eight years—all singing together.

Ask them to work, but never ask them to keep quiet.

THEIR CRIME—NOT HIS

Almost as regularly as the clock struck five each afternoon, little Charles Lauder made his daily visit. It had become a habit with him and one that we enjoyed immensely, for Charles was one of those boys no one could help liking. His sparkling blue eyes and radiant smiles reflected his happy nature and endeared him to all.

He was now eight years of age and was attending St. Mary's Convent. His mother always allowed him to bring his report card over to us and his steady progress gave almost as much pleasure to us as to his parents. We hated to see him grow older, for we knew that, sooner or later, we would have less and less of his company.

Then one evening he failed to come, the second day no sign of him; but on the third evening he arrived at his regular time. Something seemed to tell us that he felt

guilty over his neglect to call, but no one said a word to him about it. After a while he said, "I didn't get over for the last two days. I went to play with Jackie Harper."

Being asked who Jackie Harper was, he began the story he really wanted to tell us. "Jackie is a new boy at the convent. His people came here only two weeks ago and they live down on King Street. He hasn't many things, so I took my tricycle down and let him ride it. He is nine years old and is in grade three."

After a few weeks his visits became fewer and fewer. An idea struck us. We would invite Charles to take his chum along and play in our yard. In this way we could have his company and he could still play with Jackie.

The first evening they arrived, I was not so sure that Charles's choice of a playmate was such a good one. I had not expected to find him well dressed, but at least I had hoped to see him tidy and clean. On the contrary, his face and hands were dirty, and his clothes were anything but clean. He was a chubby little fellow that looked the part of a rowdy.

As they played on the lawn, I listened to their conversation. They seemed so different in appearance that I was not at all surprised at their opposite view of things. In fact, if they had agreed on everything, I should have been disappointed.

Suddenly putting the ball in his pocket, Charles edged over to Jackie and asked, "Do you like music?"

"No," he replied, "that's only sissy stuff for girls, not for boys."

"Well," Charles urged, "I like it and some day I am going to be a great musician. I can play the piano now. Would you like to come in and hear me play?"

"No, I hate that old stuff."

There was a note of finality in this and well Charles felt it, but he was not dismayed. He soon attempted to continue the conversation on another topic. "You like the convent better don't you?" he inquired.

Jackie shrugged his shoulders and his face bespoke the answer that came slowly from him. "I hate it. I am

not going back any more. My mother said they would send me to Parkview School."

"But that is a very long walk and you don't know anyone there," Charles insisted as he took Jackie by the arm.

"Oh yes! I do. Jimmie Burns goes there. He told me about all the fun they have. They don't have to study at all, and the teachers are not cross."

That evening I wondered about the future of those two boys. Something seemed to tell me that their lives were already shaped and that very different futures were in store for them.

Now and again I made inquiries about the Harpers, but no one seemed to know much about them, except they were poor, despite the fact Mr. Harper earned good money as a carpenter. Besides Jackie, they had a daughter who attended a public school nearby.

It was not long till the Lauders realized that Charles would have to give up his playmate. He had come home one evening and had given utterance to some foul language. Jackie had used it, and had heard it from his father.

Once more Charles was near us. His life continued to be a quiet one with his every spare moment devoted to practising on the piano. His music teacher had encouraged his liking for music and already her efforts were beginning to promise good results.

Every once in a while he and Jackie met for a talk. He had a liking for Jackie, and Jackie in return must have thought something of his friend when he often left his rough playmates to chat with him.

When Jackie was eleven the Harpers moved once more. Nothing was heard of them. It tormented Charles. "Each morning," he told me, "I pray for Jackie during Mass, and I know I shall hear from him again."

About four years later, one morning Charles came rushing into the house. Under his arm he had the morning paper. Slowly he opened it and showed me the headlines. John Harper, 15, Held on Charge of Robbery.

The robbery had been committed the evening before.

in our city. He had revisited it to perpetrate a crime. Something of his former life had surely attracted him here again. Why we phoned the jail for a description of the prisoner I do not know. We knew, when we read the account of the crime, that it was the Jackie we used to know.

I accompanied Charles to the jail on several occasions. Our visits to the prisoner seemed welcome, but we learned little of his life during the past few years.

Each time the Chaplain went to see him a deep resentment came over him. Religion was something remote from his life, and he was now in no mood to hear about it.

In a week his trial came on. It was short. He pleaded guilty to the charge and refused any further statement about his life or actions. The judge sentenced him to five years in York Reform School.

Before he left we paid him a last visit. The two boys talked about a few things. Charles told him that on the following night he was to give a musical recital. It was to be his big night. Even this had little effect on the doomed youth. Jackie's fate had a deep effect on Charles; his hope in his friend was shaken.

The next night Charles took down the house with his renditions. His success in the world of music was almost assured. His course was set and he was prepared to make the best of it.

About two months later Charles received a letter from York Reform School. He brought it over and we read it together. It was a pitiful letter, but in it we found the secret behind Jackie's failure and temporary removal from society.

It read:

March 8 1944

"dear Charlie

"Praps you will not read this i shoodnt rite you after all the bad things i did but i got to write to someone. it is so lonesome hear and i was very sick, i think i will die soon it wood be better if i did. i never told you of when

i was wating for trile i hated you becaus you were good. now im difrent. i think you were rite on evrything. after we lived in Yorkton we lived in a little flat in robson. i was never home and i didnt go to school. every night we used to go roun the toun. none of us got any money from home but we use to steel what was home. then we went roun lookin to steel more to get tobaco and licker. it was a bad time and we were smart and the cops coodnt get us. but i got too smart and looked to get a big pile of money at wonce. now it is over and i think i know y i was so bad. me father and mother were not good. i never was in a nice home like you. i never had nice things to eat or ware and i never went to chirch much. they didnt take me there very offen. i didnt go to school enuff. my father was drunk wen he cood get licker and he and my mother use to fite all a time. my father went in the army wen the war started. he was a soljer before. my mother went to work in a shop an i never seen her much. i wood be gon wen she come home in the evening. she started to smoke and drink licker to and she use to go roun with men to. they were not good men like your father. my sister left home and i dont no wear she is now. i wish i cood see her agin. i wish i lived in a nice home like you and i wood a been good. all the boys in the gang had bad fathers and mothers thats the reson we wer bad to. i wish all the homes like your home was good and then we wood all be good boys. i would like to get a leter from you some time.

"I never praid much but i know one prair i say. will you say some for me and rite if you can soon.

"Jackie."

—Francis J. O' Keefe, '46.