

**Converted by a Mouse.**

[From a paper read at the Annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union.]

I am going to relate to you how I was converted from the heathen god worship of my fathers by a little white mouse. I was just seven years old at the time, and was residing with a spinster aunt at Brighton, England. My parents were in India, my father being a colonel in a Madras regiment, and it was necessary for our health and education that we children should be placed under the care of the said aunt in England. She was a second mother to us, and brought us up as little Christians. I learned from her how Christ had died to save us because Adam had stolen an apple, and I remember feeling at the time rather ashamed of my forefather, Adam, not because he had robbed an orchard, but for the greater fault of getting nabbed in the act! I learned also that God was the all-giver, and that prayer would win from him all that we might desire. I thought what lucky people we are to be possessed of this all-giver, from whom we can obtain anything we may require by a few words of prayer. And, when repeating the Lord's prayer, on coming to the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," I seldom forgot to add, "With lots of jam, please, dear Lord!" and, as the jam never failed (I knew where it was kept) I thought it was all O. K.

Now, all the boys in our neighborhood with whom I was acquainted possessed a pet mouse of some hue or other—brown, black, white or pie-bald. I alone was mouseless. This threw me in the shade and gave them a superiority over me which was gall unto my young spirit; and I was so desperate that I offered to fight the biggest boy in our crowd for his mouse against my peg-top and a bag of marbles. He took the offer—and walked off, leaving me still mouseless, and with a couple of black eyes in lieu of top and marbles.

A few days after this I went down to No. 9, Dane's-lane, where lived the mouse merchant, and tried to induce him to let me have a certain white mouse and cage on credit, promising to pay for the same as soon as I became a man, but he declined to deal with me except on a cash basis. Then I began to lose heart, till one day the idea struck me to make a direct appeal to the all-giver, and that night, kneeling at my cot-side, the appeal was made. Leaving out the Lord's prayer and sticking strictly to business, I told the Lord I wanted a mouse in the worst way, and (thinking there might possibly be a scarcity of mice just then in heaven) directed him to No. 9 Dane's-lane, Brighton, explained the sort of mouse I wanted, and informed him that the cost of mouse and cage would be 2s. 6d., and told him to

be sure and put it on the chair I had arranged at my bedside. Then forgetting to tell him to "make me a good little boy for Christ's sake," I shut the bedroom door (to keep out the cat), jumped into bed and fell fast asleep.

On awaking the next morning, to my intense disgust I found that the mouse and cage had not been delivered according to order! Highly indignant I sprang out of bed and went straight to my aunt's room. I woke that good lady up and informed her that I was not going to say any more prayers! She, half asleep, asked me "Why?" Then I told her how I had asked God for a mouse, and had got left. She said, with a smile she tried to conceal:

"That may have been your fault, my dear boy. If you were not always such a naughty, naughty boy, you might have got your mouse. Try and be a good boy for a whole week and you may perhaps get one." I kissed her kind face and promised to try and be good. And so I did, boys (and ladies), I tried my darndest; it was the toughest job I had ever tackled. But I succeeded, for just that day week I awoke to find the cage and the long coveted mouse from Dane's-lane inside of it, on the chair by my bedside. Jumping out of bed I knelt down and returned thanks to the all-giver, telling him from the bottom of my grateful, glad young heart that he was out and out the best god going, better than any three gods put together, and that I would stick to him through thick and thin. I went down to Dane's-lane that day to make sure it was the very mouse I had wished for. I entered the store and found the well-known cage gone. I asked the mouse man who had taken it away. He replied, "A lady bought it yesterday." "Do you know where that lady lives?" "Oh, yes; we sent it to No. 11 Portland Place"—my aunt's address! It was she who had rewarded my good conduct, she who had answered my prayer. She was the all-giver as far as I was concerned. There was no other! My faith in God was shaken, and the absurd stories in the old testament that I read later on shook it more and more, until, at the age of ten, I was a confirmed Agnostic.

A Sunday school teacher was talking to her class of the necessity of a divine friend, both in life and death. Finally she said: "Charlie, if you were about to die, what would you want most of anything?" And Charlie replied, with practical wisdom: "A doctor."

He was recently matched, however, by another small boy. "Johnny," asked his teacher, "what must we do before our sins can be forgiven?"

"Sin," replied Johnny.—[Investigator.]

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